

**TOWN OF GRANBY
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
May 13, 2025**

PRESENT: Kara Marshall, Zachary Donais, Jim Szipszky, David Desiderato arrived after the meeting was called to order

OTHERS PRESENT: Mark Fiorentino, Stephanie Harper, Peggy Larue

ABSENT: Will Madsen, Kent McCord, Andy Small

1. CALL TO ORDER

It was noted no motions can be made as there is not a quorum present. Kara Marshall called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

P. Larue noted she did not have any comments at this time.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 8, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

J. Szipszky sent his corrections to the minutes to Kathy via e-mail:

- The bullet point regarding the First Selectman attending in May should be split into two bullets and updated.
- I indeed noted that I was copied on an email communication to Kara from the First Selectman stating that he would attend the May meeting.
- Kara summarized the topics to discuss with the First Selectman after some group discussion. I appreciate if you can make this change separating this as a stand-alone bullet point.

D. Desiderato arrived at 7:15 p.m. and the minutes were reviewed. On A Motion by Z. Donais the minutes were approved unanimously (4-0-0) as amended to include J. Szipszky's comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT - At this time more members of the public were present and K. Marshall inquired if they had any comments.

Stephanie Harper stated she is present to listen to the Barndoor Hills property discussion as she is an abutter to the property.

P. Shaw noted the link on the website did not work.

4. BARNDOR HILLS FARMLAND

K. Marshall inquired if there could be a role for the Conservation and Agricultural Commission with monitoring and management of the farm property.

M. Fiorentino reviewed the process regarding the Town's creation of farm leases and the bidding process, particularly with the farmer leasing the Barndoor Hills Property. He also discussed DEEP's response to the complaint filed against the farmer, the farmers follow-up and the town's

subsequent discussions with him. M. Fiorentino noted he believes the requirements for town-owned farmland and private-owned land should be the same. J. Szkipszky noted there are some differences, such as farmland that is adjacent to trails used by the public. He suggested the Agricultural Commission and Conservation Commission work together to make recommendations regarding the leased properties.

- P. Larue believes that any town-owned land that involves a threat to natural resources has to be treated the same as private property and she would like Conservation Commission to weigh in on this as a health and safety issue.
- K. Marshall stated it is important Granby remain a proponent of farmers. She would like the commission to make some suggestions for future RFP's.
- Z. Donais stated holding town-owned farmland and private property owners to the same standards regarding pesticide use can create issues and if too many restrictions are put into place, the town will not have any farmers interested in the leases. He suggested the practice of IPM (Integrated Pest management) which tends to mitigate the use of some chemicals.
- Stephanie Harper does not want to make restrictions beyond what DEEP allows but would like to know ahead of time what is going to be used.
- J. Szkipszky would like to see more communication and suggested other pest management strategies be considered, such as IPM and the NRCS conservation plan used by the Granby Land Trust.
- Kara Marshall would like to continue the discussion on IPM, continue to work with the Agricultural Commission and continue the discussion at next month's meeting to make recommendations.

5. PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT – MARK FIORENTINO

M. Fiorentino explained the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) needs to be revised every ten years and is due September 2026. He explained the Planning and Zoning Commission oversees the process and noted a representative from various committees/commissions will sit on the review committee, including one representative from the Conservation Commission. K. Marshall will reach out to Abby Kenyon to get more information and see what the expectations are.

6. SUSTAINABLE CT

K. Marshall would like to speak to M. Fiorentino to get his thoughts regarding Sustainable CT. Z. Donais agreed and noted some categories may be hard to attain.

7. COMPOSTING

Due to W. Madsen's absence, this discussion will be moved to the next meeting.

8. ENERGY CONSERVATION

J. Szkipszky and D. Desiderato attended a meeting with the Town Manager to discuss energy conservation. No decisions were made at this time but they agreed to continue talking about solar and mechanical systems. K. Marshall has information on energy conservation she will drop off to the Town Manger.

9. POSSIBLE IN-PERSON MEETNGS

K. Marshall is not opposed to meeting in person this summer and Z. Donais inquired if a room is available. D. Desiderato asked if a hybrid meeting is a possibility and it was noted some meetings are. Kathy will investigate meeting space options.

10. MEETING TOPICS FOR JUNE 10, 2025

- Continued Farm Lease Conversation
- Identify Representative for POCD
- Energy Conservation
- Composting

Z. Donais noted the agenda item "Library Conversations" was skipped. K. Marshall stated the next library discussion is scheduled for May 22nd. She will represent the commission and Connor Hogan will discuss insects. Will has volunteered to present on composting, D. Desiderato will speak in October and J. Szipszky confirmed November with Connor. K. Marshall asked everyone follow-up with Holly regarding dates.

11. FINAL COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

J. Szipszky would like to have a conversation regarding continuing dialogue with the Agricultural Commission and what that will look like going forward. K. Marshall will provide an update on that engagement to the next meeting.

Z Donais thanked the neighbors to the Barndoor Hills property for bringing issues before the commission.

12. ADJOURN

ON A MOTION BY Z. Donais, seconded by J. Szipszky, the commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Kane
Recording Secretary