Cornish Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Date: September 23, 2026
Time: 7:00 PM – 8:35 PM
Location: Cornish Town Office

I. Call to Order & Attendance
The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

- Members Present: Glenn Griffin (Chair), Reyer Jaarmsa, Julie Foote, Robin Kilfeather-Mackey, Jody Schubert.
- Members Absent: Cindy Heath.
- Alternates Present: David Haseman (seated for Cindy Heath), Rickey Poor.
- BOS Representative: Keith Beardslee.

II. Conservation Plan - Working the Plan

- **Priority 1: Land Use Regulations & Master Plan Integration (Items 27, 29, 34-37) - Joint Meeting with Planning Board:** Cindy, Jody, Robin, and Keith attended the September 3 Planning Board meeting. Jody provided a recap of the meeting, and noted that Cindy, Jody and Robin then drafted revisions to the Recommendations Section after hearing the Planning Board's feedback. Members are asked to review proposed edits prior to next month, when Cindy will present an overview. Robin will check with Moosewood Ecological regarding any potential editing costs. The revised Plan will then be shared with the Planning Board.
- **Priority 2: Regional Conservation Collaboration (Item 21)** Glenn and Robin will attend the Sullivan County CC Roundtable in Newport on October 5 (6:00–8:00 PM) and report back in October. Glenn will seek minutes from the previous meeting, and Jody will lead this initiative.
- **Priority 3: High-Value Parcel Conservation (Items 4, 1)** With no designated lead yet, Robin offered to design a data-driven policy for handling conservation easement funding requests. She will apply the draft framework to the recent UVLT request for funds and present both for a vote at the October meeting.

III. Operational Procedures Recommendations
Operational Procedures: Following up on the August tabling, the Commission voted to replace formal bylaws with operational procedures grounded in governing RSAs.

- Motion to Repeal Existing Bylaws: Moved by Glenn to formally repeal the 'Bylaws of the Cornish Conservation Commission' (amended March 25, 2026) pursuant to Article X, effective upon passage of replacement procedures; seconded by Robin; **Approved (6-0-0).**
- Motion to Adopt Operating Procedures: Moved by Glenn to adopt the 'Cornish Conservation Commission Operating Procedures & Statutory Guidelines', as amended, as the official operating document; seconded by Jody; **Approved (6-0-0).** (Guidelines attached).

IV. Outreach Updates & Administration

Public Engagement: Jody reported on the upcoming October 20 Garden Club talk on the Kestrel project, NHACC statewide coordination efforts, writing a letter about CCC for the Cornish Welcome baskets for new residents, and reminded members of Steve Roberge's Forest Health presentation on October 6. Commissioners suggested 2027 educational topics: the land conservation process, a wetlands series (including beavers), and Cornish avian populations.

Annual Monitoring Visit: The Commissioners also briefly discussed the status of open monitoring walks / dates.

Finance: No invoices were presented for payment.

Minutes Approval: Motion: Moved by David, seconded by Reyer, to approve the August 26, 2026 minutes as presented; **Approved (6-0-0).**

UVLT Funding Request: Glenn presented a request from UVLT to help conserve 26 of 28 acres owned by Mark Patkowski at 488 East Rd (excluding a 2± acre homestead envelope; Map 11, Lots 86 & 89). The easement protects Geer Brook frontage, ~18 acres of prime agricultural soils, and high-ranked NH Wildlife Action Plan habitat. The donation will be made to UVLT, with CCC funds requested for transaction and stewardship costs. The Commission will vote on the request in October.

Mail/DES: Glenn reported no DES applications or any other mail received.

V. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Minutes Prepared & Submitted By: Robin Kilfeather-Mackey, Secretary

Approved September 23, 2026

Cornish Conservation Commission
Operating Procedures & Statutory Guidelines

Section I: Name, Mission, and Authority

1. Name: The official name of this body is the Cornish Conservation Commission (hereafter referred to as the "Commission").

2. Mission & Purpose: The Commission is dedicated to protecting the Town of Cornish's rural character, natural environment, and working landscape by encouraging and supporting land conservation efforts, public education, and careful Town planning. The Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the Selectboard, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Adjustment on regulatory and environmental protection matters.

3. Statutory Authority: The Commission was established by vote of the Town Meeting in 1972 pursuant to **RSA 36-A**. These Operating Procedures define internal practices and reference relevant New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSAs) to ensure statutory compliance.

4. Core Functions & Duties (RSA 36-A:2)

- Promote the protection, development, and proper utilization of Cornish's natural and water resources.
- Maintain an index of open space, wetlands, and natural resource mapping in coordination with Town boards and residents.
- Recommend and assist with the permanent protection of land, prioritizing parcels with high agricultural, scenic, historical, wildlife habitat, or recreational value.
- Exercise statutory advisory, intervention, and management roles regarding wetlands and surface waters (**RSA 482-A**), sand and gravel excavations (**RSA 155-E**), and municipal forest management (**RSA 31:110–113**).
- Monitor all Town-held conservation easements annually.

Section II: Membership & Governance (RSA 36-A:3)

1. Composition & Term of Office

- **Regular Members:** The Commission shall consist of not fewer than 3 nor more than 7 regular members, appointed by the Selectboard for staggered 3-year terms expiring March 31 of the applicable year.
- **Residency:** All members must be residents of the Town of Cornish.
- **Selectboard Representative:** A member of the Selectboard may serve as a non-voting liaison to facilitate communication.

2. Alternate Members

- The Selectboard may appoint alternate members as recommended by the Commission.
- Alternates may vote when designated by the Chairperson to fill a vacancy of an absent regular member or to establish an odd number of voting members.

3. Attendance & Vacancies

- Members are expected to attend regularly scheduled meetings and participate in annual property monitoring.
- Missing three consecutive meetings without prior communication to the Chair constitutes evidence of non-interest. Following outreach, the Commission may vote to recommend removal by the Selectboard.

- Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as original appointments.

Section III: Officers & Appointed Roles

Officers are elected annually by a majority vote of Commission members at the first regular meeting following Town Meeting. Officers serve one-year terms.

1. Chairperson

- Serves as primary liaison to the Selectboard, Town Administrator, and public.
- Prepares and finalizes monthly meeting agendas.
- Drafts the Commission's contribution to the Town Annual Report.
- Coordinates new member recruitment, formal orientation, and annual easement monitoring schedules and final reports.

2. Secretary

- Manages public postings of meeting notices and agendas on the Town website and Town Office in compliance with **RSA 91-A:2**.
- Records statutory minutes for all regular, special, and public meetings.
- Transmits approved minutes to the Town Office for web posting within 5 business days (**RSA 91-A:2**).
- Maintains official Commission records in coordination with Town Office digital storage policies (**RSA 33-A:4-a**).
- Serves as backup presiding officer in the absence of the Chair.

3. Treasurer

- Oversees the Operating Budget, Conservation Fund, and designated special accounts (**RSA 36-A:5**).
- Prepares annual operating budget requests and warrant articles for Selectboard review.
- Tracks accounts and provides quarterly financial summaries to the Commission.
- Processes invoices and reimbursements in accordance with Town policies.

4. Standing Coordinator Position (Non-Officer)

- **Public Engagement Coordinator:** Appointed annually to plan workshops, educational programs, manage non-regulatory website/social media content, and lead the annual Conservation Award process for Town Meeting.

Section IV: Meetings & Public Records (RSA 91-A)

1. Regular & Special Meetings

- Regular monthly meetings are typically held on the fourth Wednesday of each month.
- Meetings are open to the public in accordance with **RSA 91-A** (Right-to-Know Law).
- Special meetings may be called by the Chair provided at least 48 hours' public notice is given (**RSA 91-A:2**).

2. Quorum & Voting

- A quorum consists of a simple majority of regular members (or seated alternates).
- Decisions are reached through consensus where possible; formal determinations require a majority vote of voting members present.

3. Public Recordkeeping (RSA 91-A:2 & RSA 33-A:4-a)

- Draft minutes must be available for public inspection within 5 business days of a meeting (72 hours for public hearings).
- Minutes shall include: meeting type, date/time/place, attendance, agenda summaries, records of motions/votes, and adjournment time.
- All official records are retained permanently at the Cornish Town Office.

Section V: Regulatory Review Protocols

1. Dredge and Fill / Wetlands (RSA 482-A)

- Applications filed with the Town Clerk (Standard, Minimal, Expedited, or PBN) are distributed to the Commission.
- **Intervention:** Under **RSA 482-A**, the Commission has the sole authority to delay DES consideration to perform local review by filing written notice of intent to investigate within **14 days** of the Town Clerk filing date.
- Upon filing for intervention, the Commission may conduct site walks and hold public review sessions.

2. Sand, Gravel & Excavation (RSA 155-E)

- The Commission advises the Selectboard and Planning Board regarding environmental best management practices for local gravel/sand operations.

Section VI: Financial Administration

1. Operating Budget (RSA 36-A:5, I & RSA 41:29)

- Operating funds are appropriated annually by Town Meeting vote.
- Disbursements are processed through the Town Treasurer (**RSA 41:29**). Unexpended operating funds lapse at fiscal year-end unless transferred to the Conservation Fund by Town Meeting vote.

2. Conservation Fund (RSA 36-A:5, III & RSA 79-A:25)

- The Conservation Fund receives allocations from the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) as voted by the Town Meeting (currently 60% allocation). Funds roll over annually and are available until expended for RSA 36-A purposes.
- **Real Property Acquisition:** Expending Conservation Fund monies to acquire real property or easements **requires a public hearing** and final approval by the Selectboard (**RSA 36-A:4**).
- **Non-Acquisition Conservation Projects & Operational Support:** Money in the Conservation Fund may be expended by a majority vote of the Commission **without requiring a public hearing or additional Town Meeting approval** for activities that advance the statutory purposes of RSA 36-A, including:
    - **Natural Resource Inventories & Planning:** Professional mapping, GIS layers, wetland evaluations, wildlife corridor mapping, and updates to the Town Conservation Plan.
    - **Stewardship & Property Management:** Boundary surveys, baseline documentation, trail construction/maintenance, signage, structural repairs, and invasive species control on Town-managed lands or town forests (**RSA 31:110–113**).
    - **Due Diligence & Professional Services:** Hiring qualified consultants, legal counsel, title examiners, or environmental scientists to assist with project reviews, intervention reviews (**RSA 482-A**), or easement monitoring.
    - **Public Education & Community Programs:** Publishing educational guidebooks, hosting public workshops, sponsoring guest speakers, and printing community outreach materials.
    - **Commission Capacity & Training:** Dues, workshop fees, or educational materials for commissioners participating in conservation training programs (e.g., NHACC events)

3. Special Dedicated Accounts

- **CREA Fund:** Restricted to improvements and stewardship at the Cornish Recreational and Educational Area.
- **Palmer Fund:** Dedicated to environmental and conservation education benefiting local students and citizens.
- **"Bunny" Barker Fund:** Reserved for extraordinary operational or conservation expenses.
- All special accounts remain under the custody of the Town Treasurer with expenditures authorized by Commission vote.

Section VII: Ethics and Conflict of Interest

- Members shall maintain high ethical standards in accordance with **RSA 500-A:12**.
- Members must recuse themselves from introducing, discussing, or voting on any motion or matter in which they have a direct or indirect personal or financial interest.
- No individual member may speak publicly on behalf of the Commission without prior authorization by majority vote.

Section VIII: Revision & Maintenance

- These Operating Procedures shall be reviewed annually following Town Meeting.
- Amendments or updates may be adopted by a majority vote of the Commission at any regular meeting with prior notice.
- Updates to statutory references (RSAs) shall automatically take effect upon passage of state legislative revisions.