

Minutes of the Bethlehem Conservation Commission
Thursday, May 21, 2026, 5 pm
Library Meeting Room

Attendees: Cheryl Jensen, Rachelle Lyons, Joanne Jones, Wendy Aldrich Jordan, Colin Lunetta, Veronica Morris

Public: John Schatney, Margaret Gale, Chris Jensen (alternate)

Meeting called to order at: 5:03pm

1. Minutes: April 16, 2026

Motion to approve (as amended): Joanne

Seconded: Wendy

Approved: Unanimous

2. No Hunting in the Tellman-Johnson Town Forest policy discussion

John raised the issue of RSA 435.4 requires marking the perimeter at not less than 100 yards.

Neighboring properties, including Bretzfelder, are not signed. The Conservation Commission is aware and has been working to bring the signage into compliance.

Cheryl reviewed the history of the no hunting policy in the Town Forest. It has always been a no hunting property. When the large sign at the road entrance was installed in 2014, there was a discussion with the Selectboard about this, as well as extensive research with the NH Association of Conservation Commissions, other Conservation Commissions in the state, and a re-affirming vote by the Conservation Commission.

Rachelle raised the issue of whether there are community members being alienated by not permitting hunting in the Town Forest. Is there a relationship to be built with a hunting community in Town.

John clarified that townsfolk are unlikely to be alienated by a lack of hunting on this property.

A brief discussion was held about the possibility to permit hunting at a future date on an as-needed, limited basis to help alleviate deer pressure.

Veronica noted that the state laws now require that cameras, game stands to be labeled in the same manner as arrows. This may allow for improved identification of hunters who do cross the property line from the adjacent properties that do permit hunting. If something is found, this makes it possible to have a conversation with the hunter before calling in Fish and Game.

At the end of the discussion, the general consensus was to make no changes and to continue posting the property.

3. Treasurer's Report

The balance in the appropriations account is \$633. No charges were made in April.

The balance for the savings account \$15,282.43. This includes a deposit of \$155 as a result of an audit that discovered a current use payment that had not been credited in 2024.

4. Town Forest and treating Japanese knotweed

Joanne and Wendy visited with Brett. He indicated that he had not been to any training on Japanese Knotweed. Joanne has attended webinars. An information sheet was provided from the NH Department of Agriculture.

Conservation Commission members and Town Employees both need a “Not for Hire” Commercial Pesticide Application License to apply herbicide. Two commercial applicators were recommended to the Commission. This may need to go through public bidding.

The consensus was to continue to do research, speak with consultants, and take action in 2027.

5. Report on Franconia meeting in April among surrounding conservation commissions
Bethlehem had three members attend. Twelve towns had members attend the meeting, as well as Grafton County Conservation District, Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust, and other local organizations. Different issues faced by local commissions were discussed, from common problems like invasive species control to location-specific issues like gold dredging in Bath.

6. Information sheet for the building inspector (and town employees in general) with guidelines to explain the sign/lighting and C&I noise ordinance for enforcement purposes.

Feedback from Mary Moritz was that a fact sheet would be helpful. Rachelle and Veronica will make informational handouts about the new ordinances and set up a meeting with Bob Francis.

7. Updates:

A. Littleton Dam

Wetlands application is expected. Cheryl and Veronica have had the opportunity to review a draft of the application. The project appears favorable as it will be restoring the Gale River. Veronica will reserve the right to comment and circulate the application for review by the commission.

B. Legislation

HB707, Landfill Site Evaluation Committee, with the Governor for signature.

SB439, Data Center Permitting, Tabled by a large majority.

HB639, Cryptocurrency Bill, sent to committee. Only two committee members are thought to be opposed to the bill. Cheryl has been in contact with Sen. Fenton to express concerns.

In Nottingham, a private developer has just proposed a data center.

C. C&I noise ordinance and site plan review

At an upcoming Planning Board meeting, the board will discuss incorporating the noise ordinance into the Site Plan Review. The public hearing is anticipated to be on June 10, at Town Hall.

D. Transition

Cheryl needs to decide when she would like to step down as Chair, not immediately, but she plans to do this in the next few months. Planning for the transition is in progress.

E. Adopt-a-Spot

Wendy and Cheryl have information from Vivian to review. The re-launching of the program, the re-invigoration of the community effort is an opportunity to help both improve the roadside but also involve people in larger conservation issues, such as a bottle bill.

Other:

Joanne, Colin, and Rachelle had a meeting with Kurt Yuengling at DES about the Climate Access Plan that he is drafting.

Margaret Gale raised that she has heard that there may be something afoot at the State, a policy change, that would require hunting, fishing, and trapping on Conserved Land. Margaret will see what she can find out and send information to Joanne.

Motion to adjourn made by: Cheryl

Seconded: Joanne

Approved unanimously.

Meeting ended at: 6:37

NEXT MEETING DATES and LOCATION:

June 18, Library meeting room

August 20, Library meeting room

September 17, Library meeting room

Minutes prepared by Veronica Morris