Town of Scarborough Conservation Commission

October 22, 2025 | 6:00 pm | Hybrid: Town Hall and via Zoom

Minutes

Present in person:
Commission: Christine Labaree, Randi Hogan, Crescie Mauer, Cathleen Miller, Abel Plaud, Pete Slovinsky
Staff: Jami Fitch
Guest: Andrew Mackie, Scarborough Land Trust

Present on Zoom:
Commission: Crayton Silsby
Council: Karin Shupe
Staff: Autumn Speer

Meeting recording

Call to order

1. Meeting is called to order at 6:02 pm.
2. Cathleen offers a land acknowledgement to recognize the Wabanaki People as traditional stewards of Scarborough.
3. Able motions to accept minutes from the 9/27/25 meeting, Pete seconds. Rollcall vote is unanimous. Motion passes.
4. Christine would like to add Scarborough Land Trust's request to include a representative from the Commission on their outreach and engagement committee for the NOAA grant to the agenda under New Business.

Public Comment

1. Andrew Mackie of Scarborough Land Trust (SLT) shares about an upcoming event at Print Bookstore in Portland with author Caroline Sutton.

Old Business

1. Spurwink Marsh Restoration and Sawyer Street Removal Project
   - Jami provides an update on the Spurwink Marsh project. The Scarborough Town Council voted on10/15 to move forward with the Sawyer Street discontinuance process. The Cape Elizabeth Town Council voted not to move forward with the process, effectively killing the project. The Scarborough Town Council will still have a public meeting on road discontinuance on 11/5, but the project is unlikely to move forward without Cape Elizabeth's participation.
   - Pete asks if it is possible for Scarborough to discontinue the road without Cape Elizabeth's participation. Technically, Scarborough could still move forward with discontinuance, but it is unlikely we will do so.
   - Crescie asks if there is a sense of why support for the project changed so quickly. Jami explains that the public started paying attention to the project once work got underway. The project experienced delays through the contracting process, and there were no major storms in 2025 that caused the road

to close, so people were in a different frame of mind. When the grant was presented in the joint Town Council workshop in 2024, the January storms were still fresh in everyone's minds. Randi notes that development of the project, approach, and grant were open processes.
- Jami notes that more outreach should have happened in the intervening time between when the grant was received and when the funding became available.
- Scarborough will need to determine the plan moving forward. The culvert is in poor condition and will need to be replaced. The road surface and shoulders are also deteriorating. These improvements will be expensive.

2. Sustainable Scarborough Day
   - Jami provides an overview of Sustainable Scarborough Day. Attendance was lower this year than in years past, which may be attributed to the beautiful weather on the day of the event.
   - Cathleen shares that the Cape/SoPo/Scarborough e-paper printed the timing of the event as 10:00 – 12:00, so people may have thought the event ended earlier than it did.
   - The Commission members report they had good conversations with people who attended and the kids were engaged in their leaf-rubbing activity.
   - Randi shares that she was at a recent event that with a display from Within the Whale, a life-sized inflatable humpback whale that people could walk through. The display taught about whale anatomy. She suggests looking into it for future events.
   - Jami would like to include a marine touch tank at a future Sustainable Scarborough Day.
   - Cathleen shares peoples' feedback and suggestions at the event:
     - Outdoor benches at schools and local businesses
     - Community garden
     - Library programs
     - Stop tree cutting
   - Sustainability Committee has suggested not holding the event in 2026. The Commission would like to see the event continue and don't think the event should end because on one year with low attendance.
   - Andrew suggests including a live birds of prey demonstration.
   - Autumn suggests incorporating the event into the farmers' market. The event could move to the high school parking lot, which would be closer to the farmers' market.

3. Planning Board Submittals
   - Nothing for the Conservation Commission this month.

New Business

1. Goal Setting
   - The Town Council will hold its 2026 goal setting workshop in January. It is helpful for Council goals to align with Commission goals.
   - Jami provides a brief overview of the findings of the Vulnerability Assessment.
   - Crescie asks if the comp plan will be updated to deal with LD1829. Autumn does not believe the Comp Plan will be updated at this time. Zoning and subdivision ordinances may be updated. There is a growth workshop on 11/19 that will speak to some of the challenges posed by LD1829.
   - Low Impact Development (LID) Ordinance should help address the rate of development. This ordinance will be a high priority for staff in 2026, and the Commission will have a role in that process.
   - Autumn notes that LD1892 inly affects residential development, so there is still a lot the Town could do to address commercial development.
   - Pete asks about the effectiveness of the wetland setbacks and the update to the floodplain management ordinance. Developers are working within the wetland setbacks without issue. The Town should consider increasing the required setbacks.

- Randi suggests a goal be to support the recommendations of the Vulnerability Assessment.
- Pete shares that there is a state initiative to have county-level staff support local municipal efforts to complete the Community Rating System process. With Scarborough's current staffing levels, we are not able to move that process forward, so having regional support would be helpful.
- Karin shares that it's helpful to have the Commission's support of efforts when they go to Council.
- Scarborough has three urban impaired streams: Long Creek, Red Brook, and Phillips Brook. Scarborough is part of the Long Creek Watershed Management District, which is tasked with restoring the stream. Watershed Management Plans have been developed for Red Brook and Phillips Brook. Red Brook's plan is in the process of being updated, since it was completed in 2011. A restoration project identified in the Phillips Brook plan was complete in 2021, but no additional work has occurred in that watershed since that time. Many of the projects identified in the Phillips Brook plan are culvert replacements, which are very expensive.
- Crescie notes that wider buffer widths are a low-tech way to protect the streams and address some of the development pressure in the watersheds.
- Autumn notes that the Tree Care Ordinance for public rights-of-way is moving forward. The Council has expressed interest in addressing tree preservation during commercial development.
- Randi notes that invasive plants and pesticides are frequent topics in town. Autumn says it will be helpful for the Commission to provide guidance on how to address invasive plants.
- Cathleen suggests homeowner stewardship recommendations would be a helpful education and outreach effort the Commission could take on. This was also a recommendation of the Open Space Plan.
- Pete asks for an update on the Town's 30x30 goal.
    - Jami shares that an additional 328.5 acres have been conserved since the Open Space Plan was adopted in the spring of 2025, bringing Scarborough to 24% conserved.
    - Andrew shared that SLT has requested that some Town-owned parcels be placed in permanent conservation. He will share the information with the Commission (see attached).
    - An online dashboard to track 30x30 progress recently launched.
- This conversation will continue at the next meeting.

2. Scarborough Land Trust NOAA grant representative
    - Christine shares that SLT is inviting local groups to participate in the outreach committee for the NOAA marsh grant.
    - Crayton volunteers to be the Commission's representative.

Updates

1. Town Council
    - Karin reiterates her support for the Sawyer Street project.
    - The Commission no longer has a Planning Board liaison. A member of the Planning Board needs to be appointed to the Commission. An official liaison to Conservation Commission has been created, but it is currently vacant.
2. Parks and Conservation Land Board (PCLB)
    - PCLB is working on realigning its land evaluation form with the Open Space Plan. A GIS-based app to help the group evaluate parcels is in development.
3. Transportation Committee
    - There is a Complete Streets Workshop on Thursday, 10/23, at 6:00 pm at Public Safety. The workshop is part of a Complete Streets and Traffic Calming Manual that is in development.
4. Sustainability Committee
    - Sustainability Committee is exploring opportunities for rooftop solar on municipal buildings.

- The Climate Action Plan is getting underway. A representative from the Commission will be asked to participate in the Advisory Group for that project. The Advisory Group will meet three times starting in 2026. Jami will share more information about the Advisory Group with the Commission.

5. Vulnerability Assessment
   - The Town Council adopted the Vulnerability Assessment at their 10/15 meeting.

Next meeting: December 10, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.