

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SUFFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MAY 12, 2026
7:00 P.M.

RECEIVED

By Michele Urch at 8:18 am, May 20, 2026

Town Hall
83 Mountain Road, Suffield, CT

Commissioners present: Chairman Art Christian, Vice-Chairman Glenn Neilson, Norm John Noble, Ray Wilcox, Gary Phelps and Kathy Bielonko – Alternate

Commissioners absent: Beth Fanous, Tom Elmore – Alternate and Jessica McCue

Also present: Keith Morris, Conservation Consultant (Via Zoom)

CALL MEETING TO ORDER – 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Christian called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and assigned voting rights to Commissioner Bielonko

Consultant Morris read the agenda aloud.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION

1. 4034 Mountain Road – Retaining Wall Replacement

The Commission addressed the unpermitted work on the retaining wall at 4034 Mountain Road, where boulders and grass had been installed without the proper permits. The original wall, constructed of railroad ties, had rotted and fallen into the lake. The homeowner presented photographs and drawings of the wall and discussed erosion issues, which are now under control. He also discussed his communication with the Town of Southwick and the Town of Suffield regarding the work being done. Commission members reviewed the information provided, asked questions, and considered whether to approve the work through an “after-the-fact” permit.

Vice-Chairman Neilson MOTIONED and Commissioner Wilcox seconded to approve, on a declaratory and “after-the-fact” basis, with the understanding that the homeowner will provide the Conservation Commission with a final letter from the Town of Southwick confirming unconditional after-the-fact approval. Consultant Morris will also be required to review the property and the completed work. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

DECISION

1. Permit #1745 DiLorenzo (owner) – Barn-Thompsonville Road. This property is located at 480 Thompsonville Road. Assessor’s Map 63H, Block 44, Lot 65B

Vice Chairman Neilson MOTIONED and Commissioner Bielonko seconded to approve the application with standard conditions 1–11. Silt fencing shall be installed, as needed, to protect the wetland areas during construction. The applicant is also required to file a connection permit with the WPCA and schedule a site visit with Consultant Morris. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Permit #1741 – Peak Mountain Development LLC (applicant) – 7 single family homes – South Grand Street. This property is located on the west side of South Grand Street. Assessor’s Map 18, Block 21, Lots 15 & 15A

At 7:13 p.m. Chairman Christian opened the public hearing for Permit 1741, a proposal by Kirk McNaughton of Peak Mountain Development LLC for seven single-family homes on 39.1 acres on South Grand Street, and noted that this was a continuation from April 28th. New information from the applicant was presented for the commission to review.

The discussion focused on wetland compliance issues and proposed septic system modifications. Consultant Morris provided an overview of the application and noted that Mr. McNaughton had submitted revised plans at Town Hall earlier that day. Questions were raised regarding whether the Commission could take action that evening, given that there had been insufficient time to review the revised plans in advance of the meeting.

Commission members and members of the public reviewed the newly submitted plans, and several questions and concerns were raised and discussed in depth. The applicant stated that the Commission should base its decision on facts rather than perceptions, asserting that he had complied with all requests made by the Commission. He further stated that the information demonstrated the project could be completed as proposed and expressed concern that the Commission was not considering the town engineer's review and other professional opinions.

Chairman Christian acknowledged Mr. McNaughton's comments and thanked him, along with his team of professionals, for their professionalism and willingness to assist the Commission by providing additional information as requested, and for allowing two continuations to ensure that an appropriate decision could be made.

George Logan, a soil scientist retained by the Commission, was unable to complete a wetland boundary assessment after being asked to leave the property by neighboring landowner Mr. Evans.

Mr. McNaughton presented revised septic system plans showing that the system had been relocated outside the 150-foot setback area with approval from the North Central Health District. The revised design included updated PERC and soil testing that met health code standards, with drainage rates of approximately 10 to 20 minutes per inch, which were within acceptable limits.

The Commission discussed several ongoing concerns, including the need for additional monitoring of high groundwater conditions, proper identification and documentation of trees greater than six inches in diameter, and potential impacts to a nearby vernal pool. The applicant maintained that the revised plans complied with all applicable regulatory requirements and noted that the town engineer had approved the design. Additional discussion addressed property line disputes and recent changes to the septic system layout.

Discussion also addressed culvert conditions and drainage management on the property. Mr. McNaughton explained that culvert maintenance is the responsibility of the Town, although the applicant may voluntarily undertake improvements as part of the project. Concerns were raised regarding stormwater runoff from bare agricultural fields versus established lawns. Mr. McNaughton stated that properly designed septic systems and footing drains would address drainage concerns, particularly given the clay soil conditions. Consultant Keith Morris provided additional commentary to Mr. McNaughton's statements.

At 8:14 p.m. Vice-Chairman Neilson MOTIONED and Commissioner Phelps seconded to close the Public Hearing on Permit #1741 – Peak Mountain Development LLC (applicant) – 7 single family homes – South Grand Street. This property is located on the west side of South Grand Street. Assessor's Map 18, Block 21, Lots 15 & 15A. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

A brief discussion ensued among the commissioners regarding the ability to vote on the revised plans being presented due to the limited timeframe for review.

Commissioner Noble MOTIONED and Vice-Chairman Neilson seconded to approve Permit #1741 – Peak Mountain Development LLC (applicant) – 7 single family homes – South Grand Street. This property is located on the west side of South Grand Street. Assessor's Map 18, Block 21, Lots 15 & 15A. Vote: 0 in favor – 5 opposed. Motion failed.

Chairman Christian noted that the motion was denied without prejudice, meaning that Mr. McNaughton can return with a new plan at a future date.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CONSULTANT'S REPORT

Consultant Morris provided a brief report updating the commission members on the status of the new dock assembly project, the remaining balance in the Park Maintenance account, copper sulfate treatment permits, fish deliveries for White's Pond, and other miscellaneous items.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 28, 2026 MEETING

Commissioner Noble MOTIONED and Commissioner Bielonko seconded to approve the minutes from the April 28, 2026 meeting as presented. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Noble MOTIONED and Commissioner Phelps seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary