Town of Scarborough Conservation Commission

May 27, 2026 | 6:00 pm | Hybrid: Town Hall and via Zoom

Minutes

Present in person:
Commission: Carrick Gambell, Crescie Mauer, Cathleen Miller, Will Sedlack, Crayton Silsby
Staff: Angela Blanchette, Jami Fitch, Autumn Speer
Town Council: Karin Shupe
Guest: Denise Hamilton, resident; Averyl Hill, resident; Andrew Mackie, Scarborough Land Trust (SLT)

Present on Zoom:
Commission: Randi Hogan, Christine Labaree, Abel Plaud

Meeting recording

Call to order

1. Meeting is called to order at 6:01 pm.
2. Cathleen offers a land acknowledgement to recognize the Wabanaki People as traditional stewards of Scarborough.
3. Crayton motions to accept minutes from the 3/25/25 meeting, Christine seconds. Vote is unanimous. Motion passes.
4. Jami suggests adjusting the agenda to take up new business first, since members of the public are at the meeting for that item. The Commission agrees.

Public Comment

1. Andrew Mackie shares information about SLT's upcoming native plant sale.
2. Averyl Hill shares comments about the clear cutting at 741 Route 1 and the draft tree cutting ordinance (attached).

New Business

1. Tree Removal and Site Disturbance
   - Members of the public are invited to participate in the discussion.
   - Autumn introduces the draft ordinance.
   - Autumn asks the Commission what scenarios they hope to prevent with the tree cutting ordinance.
     - Karin shares feedback she heard related to the cutting at Eight Corners. She notes that the cutting was authorized and that the larger issue with that site was the lack of visual buffers that remained after the cutting.
       - Autumn suggests updating Ch. 405B to require a certain percentage of the tree canopy remain in place. The Low Impact Development Ordinance may also address this issue.
       - Will suggests canopy standards are more appropriate for non-shoreland areas than buffer requirements.

        - Crescie suggests requiring mature trees be preserved on the site.
            - Autumn notes a tree survey could be required through the site planning process.
        - Randi notes the importance of preserving champion trees on a site.
        - Cathleen suggests that the developer be required to post signage about the project so the public knows that the appearance of a site will change.
        - Karin suggests increasing fines as a deterrent to illegal cutting.
    - Autumn notes that the suggestions discussed so far address cutting on commercial property where development is proposed. The Commission needs to consider cutting on commercial property where no development is proposed, as was the case of the recent cutting on Route 1.
        - Will suggests using the State's language to define a clear cut.
        - Will notes that a typical harvest from a woodlot would be about ¼ acre. Autumn suggests revising the proposed ordinance language to require administrative approval for cutting of ½ acres.
    - Recommendations:
        - Commercial properties planning to cut an acre or more to must complete a tree survey to identify trees over a certain DBH.
        - A perimeter of trees must remain in place or a minimum tree canopy must be maintained.
        - A a wetland and vernal pool inventory must be completed prior to any cutting of an acre or more.
        - Set the threshold for administrative approval for cutting at ½ acre.
        - Don't offset or reduce fines to require additional planting/restoration. Require maximum fines in addition to appropriate restoration.

2. Low Impact Development Ordinance
    - Staff walks the Commission through the table of LID requirements, which outlines DEP's minimum requirements and proposed requirements in addition to DEP's requirements.
    - Based on past discussions with the Commission, staff proposes all projects subject to the Town's site plan or subdivision ordinances would need to comply with the requirements. DEP's minimum is 1 acre of development.
    - Recommendations:
        - Define "protected natural resources" – don't rely on the State's definition.
        - Add tree preservation requirements and require a tree survey.
        - Remove exemption from requirements around artificial channelized streams (protect natural drainage systems section).
        - Reduce allowed impervious cover overall in addition to setting impervious cover maximums on individual parcels.
        - Require vegetated ditches only in certain zones.
    - Cathleen notes that it would be helpful for the Commission to have talking points to support the ordinance when it goes to the Ordinance Committee and Council.
    - The Commission discusses how to engage the public on this issue, including developers. The Commission considers replacing its July meeting with a public meeting on the LID ordinance.

Updates

1. Town Council
    - Councilor Shupe asks if 17 Broadturn Rd. came before the Conservation Commission.
    - Councilor Shupe also shares that Public Works has proposed to expand a cemetery into 40 acres of forested land between the marsh and the Eastern Trail. The project is deferred for at least a year.
    - The Town has yet to respond to IF&W's letter related to the Animal Control Ordinance.
    - Angela shares that MaineDOT is starting a new process to study the traffic congestion in North Scarborough.

2. Sustainability Committee

- Sustainability Committee will write a letter to the Town Council in support of the data center moratorium.

3. Climate Action Plan
   - Please take the third quick poll. There is a link in the agenda.

Next meeting: June 24, 2026 at 6:00 pm.
Meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm.