Town of Scarborough Conservation Commission

July 22, 2026 | 6:00 pm | Hybrid: Town Hall and via Zoom

Minutes

Present in person:
Commission: Kate Borduas, Carrick Gambell, Christine Labaree, Cathleen Miller
Staff: Jami Fitch, Autumn Speer

Present on Zoom:
Commission: Randi Hogan, Crescie Mauer, Abel Plaud
Town Council: Karin Shupe

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. Abel motions to accept minutes from the 5/27/25 meeting, Christine seconds. Rollcall vote is 5 in favor, 1 abstain. Motion passes.

Public Comment

1. None.

Old Business

1. Low Impact Development Ordinance
   - Jami shares an updated anticipated adoption timeline. A public meeting will be held in the fall. The meeting will be open to all members of the public. There will not be a separate meeting for developers.
   - The public meeting will focus on DEP-mandated standards and where Scarborough intends to set a high standard than the state minimum. This will not be a Town Council workshop, but staff will provide a workshop if requested.
   - Scarborough is moving the ordinance process forward despite the State pausing the process due to an appeal by another municipality.
   - The Commission discusses messaging around the ordinance, including it being a DEP-mandate as part of the Town's federal Clean Water Act permit, Scarborough is seeking higher standards due to the importance of the marsh and amount of development happening in town.
   - The Commission discusses avenues for public notification, including an article in the digital Leader, e-newsletter, social media, etc.
2. Tree Removal and Site Disturbance

- Autumn provides an update on the tree ordinance. The Ordinance Committee will review it again in August.
- Autumn shares the definition of Heritage Trees and asks the Commission's feedback. The Commission would like the definition to include reference to size and rare/unique species.
- Randi suggests relying on objectivity, e.g., size, species, historical significance, etc.
- Christine suggests referencing Maine's list of species of special concern.
- The ordinance will apply to non-residential development. Residents who want to remove trees will need to check with the Town before moving forward to ensure the trees can be removed. Some newer subdivisions have no-disturb buffers on private lots, so the trees cannot be removed.
- Autumn encourages members to apply to serve on the newly-formed Tree Board. Only one person has applied so far.
- **ACTION: JAMI will send the volunteer application to the group.**

3. Planning Board
   - No projects require Conservation Commission review this month.
   - Autumn shares that tree cutting for the Elmwood Subdivision (near Maple Ave.) has started.

New Business

1. Community Stewardship Guide
   - Cathleen shared a draft outline with the group before the meeting.
   - Kate suggests the guide include the "why," which in this case is clean water.
   - The Commission discusses additional efforts that will support the guide, such as talks and workshops.
   - The produced document should be short, aesthetically pleasing, and include a lot of pictures.
   - The Commission discusses the format for the guide. There should be options for homeowners and renters. An online version makes sense, and a brief pamphlet or fact sheet can direct people online for more information.
   - The Commission will be responsible for developing the content for the guide. Jami will help with formatting.
   - Randi suggests a recognition component for people who use the guide, similar to the summer photo contest.
   - Karin notes that Saco's Conservation Commission is very active at community events. She suggests the Commission make an effort to be at more events in Scarborough.
   - The Commission suggests having a table at the November election. The guide may not be available for the election, but it will be an opportunity to engage with the public. It's also an opportunity to get input from the community on a certain topic or topics.
   - Christine suggests aiming to have it ready for spring when people are ready to start thinking about their yards.
   - Karin encourages the Commission to plan to table at Summerfest in 2027.
   - Commissioners should work within the shared document to add ideas and information.
   - Jami shares that the Town is in the process of developing an online dashboard to help communicate the work the Town is doing.

Updates

1. Town Council
   - Town Council is amending the Rate of Growth Ordinance.
   - Karin hopes the Tree Ordinance will go to the Town Council in September.
   - There is a workshop on data centers happening in September.
   - Karin will being to provide more substantial updates related to the LID Ordinance.

- Maine Audubon reached out to Karin related to bird-safe building ordinances. She plans to meet with them to learn more.
- Eastern Trail Close the Gap ribbon cutting scheduled at the end of July.

2. Parks and Conservation Land Board
   - Scarborough Land Trust is under contract to purchase ~50 acres of land near the Gateway Apartments. The parcel includes wetlands and a vernal pool.
   - The 30x30 display will be updated at the August Town Council meeting.
3. Transportation Committee
   - Greater Portland Metro will hold a public meeting on the Transportation Committee's regular meeting time to help finalize the microtransit zone.
4. Sustainability Committee
   - Sustainability Committee will write a memo to the Town Council recommending the Zoning Ordinance be updated to not allow data center development in Scarborough.
5. Climate Action Plan
   - The draft plan will be available soon. An Town Council workshop is scheduled on 9/16.

Next meeting: August 26, 2026 at 6:00 pm.
Meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.