

FINAL

**LEBANON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Remote Via Microsoft Teams
LebanonNH.gov/Live
March 12, 2026
6:30 PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sarah Riley (Chair), Erling Heistad, Barbara Hirai, Chris Johnson, Donald Lacey

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bruce James (Vice Chair), Susan Almy (Alt.), Ernst Oidtmann

STAFF PRESENT: Mark Goodwin (GIS Coordinator)

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A. Chair Riley called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. January 29, 2026

*Ms. Barbara Hirai MOVED to approve the minutes as written
Seconded by Mr. Erling Heistad*

**The MOTION was approved (5-0)*

B. February 12, 2026

Minutes will be approved at the April 9, 2026 meeting.

3. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

4. PERMIT REVIEW:

**A. Robert J Oakes (Property Owner), Oakes and Son Construction, LLC (applicant),
Laplante Rd. Lebanon, Tax Map 138, Lot 270-A.**

Review and Comment on Zoning Board Special Exception application. Applicant proposes a Planned Unit Residential Development and is proposing encroachment on the wetland buffer for grading, stormwater, and grass lawns. Applicant requests a Special Exception pursuant to Article IV, Section 401.4 (Permitted Uses) of the Zoning Ordinance. **CC2026-02**

Mr. Chris Guida spoke on behalf of the project owners. Mr. Bobby Oakes attended remotely.

Mr. Goodwin said that their charge (ConCom) is to review and comment from a natural resources perspective to the Zoning Board about this applicant's application, which is needed because of the grading in the wetland buffer and some sheds that are below the threshold.

Mr. Guida shared a map of the current topography also showing the area of the proposed construction, circled in orange. Next, he showed a map of the proposed grading.

There is no proposed cutting of trees (this is former farmland) or anything along the slopes. He showed where the septic tanks will be positioned; they have downgradient nitrate setbacks, centrally located, and they will be maintained on this site.

Conservation Commission had the opportunity to look at the project map and ask their questions about this project. Mr. Guida confirmed that this project will not change the watershed hydrology at all and that the only change is that it will slightly redirect the flow.

As far as what is allowed as special exception in the buffer, under Section 401.4, this is allowed, confirmed by Mr. Mark Goodwin.

Chair Riley asked if the driveways could be shortened and the 10'x10' sheds moved closer to the road, and ideally out of the buffer, to reduce the buffer impacts. Mr. Guida said that the driveways are based on town requirements and engineering; he will check to see if these could be tightened up, but he does not think that these changes would significantly change the proposed impact or the grading that is needed.

Mr. Guida agreed to ask about these and get some answers. Chair Riley said that there is a scientific reason for the 100' buffer requirement from a high value wetland because it helps to mitigate sediment and nutrient inputs into the wetlands.

Ms. Hirai inquired about the proposed walking paths and if they will be permeable or impermeable? Mr. Lacey added that this project adds a great deal of impermeability compared to how it currently is. He reiterated that the 100-year storms are now happening every year or two. DES is aware of this as well.

Chair Riley said that the HOA policies that are developed for this new neighborhood/community could ideally educate and limit homeowners' use of fertilizer and chemicals and salt especially on the back sides of residents' properties, and any chemical that might get into the wetlands. Anything that tries to minimize the size of lawns in this buffer will be worthwhile (to help reduce potential contaminants). Mr. Guida made notes to take back to the owners.

These suggestions all need to be part of ConCom's recommendations to the Zoning Board.

Mr. Heistad said that he'd like to see a maintenance schedule for this proposed project, particularly the pathways, of how these surfaces will be treated. He added that if they are not maintained correctly, they will over time fill up with sand, and ultimately become impermeable, which could be problematic for this new community.

Ms. Hirai said that she would be opposed to any impermeable pathway surfaces within the buffer. Chair Riley added that the HOA could stipulate strongly how dog waste is managed, so that for example, waste is not left in the buffer.

Chair Riley recapped on behalf of ConCom, for Mr. Guida, and this recap is the stated conditions below :

Chair Riley *MOVED* that the Lebanon Conservation Commission recommend that the Zoning Board (ZBA) grant Special Exception to Robert J. Oakes (Property Owner), Oakes and Son Construction, LLC (applicant), Laplante Rd. Lebanon, Tax Map 138, Lot 27 – A, with the following conditions:

- Regarding the walking path(s), if any, within the buffer, be unpaved and that salt is not applied to this surface.
- Dog waste disposal stations be located at the entrances to pathways and also have a stipulation within the HOA that dog waste be picked up and not discarded or left on the land.
- No snow disposal within the buffer
- HOA requirements that all sheds be placed outside of the buffer (to reduce the likelihood of chemical contaminants)
- Have the project attempt to do some minimization of any buffer impacts by shortening driveways where possible, and reduce lawn areas where possible, with the goal being to reduce the total square foot impact to the buffer.
- ConCom also asked that wildlife friendly erosion control measures be used during construction. Solid actionable items could be to encourage native plantings, allow for pollinator meadows in front yards, and not require lawns, to name a few. This new neighborhood could be an example for others. The more education that happens, the better for residents here in Lebanon.

Seconded by Mr. Don Lacey

****The MOTION was approved (5-0)***

The Conservation Commission complimented Mr. Guida on his thorough and easy-to-understand presentation, adding that the detailed large maps (and in the room on an easel) were extremely helpful to envision the project.

5. STUDY ITEMS: None

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Biodiversity Group (Invasives)

Lynn Fisher has taken her exam and is awaiting the results.

Mr. Lacey made some applications of herbicides at Baker's Crossing; Winter is a good time to do this when there are no leaves on the trees and no native plants growing up that would be damaged by him trampling on them.

Ms. Hirai tried to cut a tree at Alana Cole (near the rope swing) trying to reroute it, but her chainsaw wasn't sufficient for this task. She asked that rerouting this section of the trail be put high on their list of projects to be done.

B. Stewardship

Mr. Lacey will be having knee surgery – in April and in June, if all goes as planned. So, he will not be mowing at Two Rivers consistently this year, as he has done in the past. They also need the path at Signal Hill mowed as well. It was agreed it is nice having those trails; Chair Riley said they will try to find

someone to volunteer to do this work, possibly starting in early June. If the call for volunteers doesn't work, then they will need to find paid help.

- Ranger
- Trail Coordinator
- Monitors and Stewards

Ms. Hirai and Ms. Riley walked at Two Rivers earlier this week and only wore low top boots but the trails had not been heavily traveled so were rather precarious; they post holed there. In spite of this, Sarah was still able to get many beautiful pictures of both the Mascoma River (lots of ice on it) and the Connecticut River which looked mostly clear.

Mr. Lacey said he put up stakes at Baker's Crossing last year, to help the DPW not mow so close to the river and thereby limit access. and asked Mr. Chris Johnson to convey to the Ledyard Canoe Club rowers to please be careful not to displace these poles. Mr. Johnson will do so. There are also some wires crossing the river there to be aware of, downstream of the bridge.

Mr. Johnson said that the Ledyard Club is aware of past issues and they want to be good stewards of this area.

- C. Wild about Lebanon
- D. Amphibian Crossings

Mr. Chris Johnson has completed an updated map to include data from the last few years. Mr. Goodwin said that it is under the Program page for the Conservation Commission. Mr. Johnson said that looking forward, it would be helpful to have GPS coordinates from people as they note sitings, or even the closest street address, or telephone pole numbers on named streets.

Mr. Johnson will continue to keep this siting map updated.

The City of Lebanon site was changed quite a lot recently, and in ConCom's opinion, does not put the focus where it needs to be. For example, instead of leading with what The Conservation Commission does, it leads with the opportunity to join ConCom.

- E. LUCT/Current Use

Chair Riley got a 2025 year end statement for the Lost Fund, but it is not itemized for anything. She is going to request an itemization for the year, which should be readily available. The balance as of 12.31.25 was \$1,450,000 approximately. The net gain was \$48,000 approximately.

Mr. Goodwin maintains a spreadsheet for the properties and keeps a running track of these property transactions.

Chair Riley said that in Hanover, this type of account is managed by the PDIP, the Public Deposit Investment Pool, and Hanover is trying to get viewing access, so that they can look at their funds and details of transactions, at any time. New Hampshire PDIP has this ability. Chair Riley is going to ask Finance if that is where Lebanon's fund is managed, to see if they too can have access to view PDIP.

- F. Other Subcommittees

Chair Riley said that the Tree Board is trying to get 200 trees planted in the City of Lebanon this year. Any private property owner of Lebanon that is interested in adding a tree on their property, visible from the street, can contact Deanna Armstrong @ 603-448-3112 or visit: lebanonnh.gov/1943/Green-Streets-Initiative to request a tree. The trees will be free to the homeowner. There are several trees to choose from, and the City will do the planting. A copy of this flyer is being included in these Minutes and it includes a QR code.

7. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. FYIs

Ms. Hirai said that there was a presentation by a consultant for the Mascoma Lake Watershed Base Management, done at the City of Lebanon and open to the public. Ms. Hirai said that it was an excellent and clear presentation. Chair Riley is going to see if it was recorded or available another way, for people to see.

Chair Riley will try to locate this presentation.

Chair Riley said that recently she was looking at the DES website, and that there has been a wetland application for the Interstate 89 bridge, in March of this year, but she hasn't heard anything about it yet. She will call DES on Friday, to learn what this is about.

B. Follow Up

C. Workshops and Educational Opportunities

Mr. Lacey plans to go to the Saving Special Places conference later this year and will put in a request for this with Crystal Taplin.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

9. ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Hirai acknowledged that Chair Heistad is no longer a City Council representative. He has been serving in this role for 15 years.

The Conservation Commission thanked Mr. Heistad for his great contribution to serving on the Conservation Commission in his City Council role.

It is believed that there will be another slot made for ConCom, and if so, Mr. Heistad will continue to serve on The Conservation Commission.

***Mr. Chris Johnson MOVED for adjournment
Seconded by Mr. Don Lacey***

****The MOTION was approved (5-0)***

The meeting ended at 8:47P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Cinda Mersel
Recording Secretary

Attachment: **GREEN STREETS FLYER**

WOULD YOU LIKE THE CITY OF LEBANON TO PLANT A SHADE TREE ON YOUR PROPERTY?



Be a part of

LEBANON'S GREEN STREETS INITIATIVE

supported by a grant from the USDA!

OUR GOALS:

- Plant 200 new trees in the City
- Provide much-needed shade to cool our City streets and public spaces
- Make Lebanon a more pedestrian-friendly and beautiful place

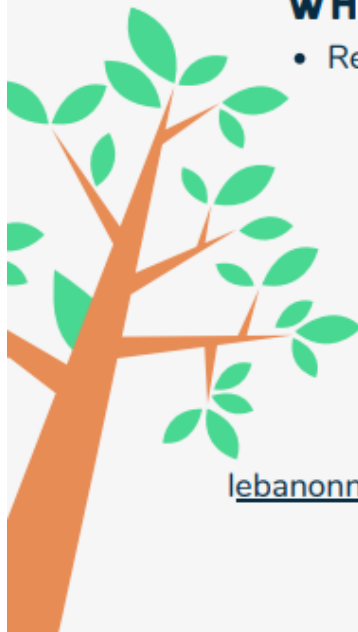
WHAT DO WE NEED NOW?

- Residents who want trees!

The City will plant you a tree at no cost to you.

The tree must be on the street side of your property.

We will help you choose the species and placement.



QUESTIONS? INTERESTED?

Contact Deanna Armstrong
at 603-448-3112
or visit

lebanonnh.gov/1943/Green-Streets-Initiative

to request a tree.

