

FINAL

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sarah Riley (Chair), Bruce James (Vice Chair), Barbara Hirai, Erling Heistad, Donald Lacey, Ernst Oidtmann

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Susan Almy (Alt.), Chris Johnson

**STAFF PRESENT:** Mark Goodwin (GIS Coordinator) , Brian Vincent, City Engineer

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**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

A. Chair Riley called the meeting to order at 6:33PM.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A. January 8, 2026

Pg. 2, Line 28, add the letter u to Spaulding

*Mr. Ernst Oidtmann MOVED to approve the minutes as amended  
Seconded by Ms. Barbara Hirai*

*\*The MOTION was approved (6-0)*

**3. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:**

**4. PERMIT REVIEW:**

**A. City of Lebanon, Hanover Street Ext., unnamed stream** – Review and Comment on NHDES Wetland Major Impact Application for the replacement of a 60” Reinforced Concrete Pipe/Corrugated Metal Pipe with a 12” wide by 4’ high open bottom box culvert. **CC2026-01-DES #2026-00115 (Department of Environmental Services)**

Mr. Brian Vincent, City Engineer, and Mr. Mike Vignale attended today’s meeting representing this project. They shared a site plan map of the area to be discussed, with areas where the work is to be done outlined in red. Mr. Vincent provided them an overview of what they are proposing. The current pipe is in very poor condition, including the 60’ pipe, so much so that this resulted in a sinkhole last fall. A temporary fix was completed on it. . The proposal is a replacement of this culvert with a 4’ tall by 12’ wide reinforced concrete culvert with concrete footings on either side.

It will have concrete head walls, and they are proposing river stone with the inlet and outlet along the entrance and exit of the head walls so that these protect the stream bed with the river stone. Construction would be done working dry so to speak with a dewatering basin and the bypass there would be with cofferdam on either side, to help keep the work zone dry.

He calculated that there will be a permanent wetland impact of 2,046 square feet, 2,255 linear feet of stream impact and temporary wetland impacts would be 3,403 *square feet* as well as 24' feet of *linear feet*.

The wetlands were shown in red for the impacted areas. The plan allows for a minimization of wetlands impact. He also showed a wetland overlay view, so that they could see the sinuous route this stream currently take. Currently it angles slightly diagonally through the areas. Chair Riley said that there are wetland impacts and stream impacts on both sides of the road. She likes that they are proposing an open bottom box culvert going in here. She asked them to comment on removing some of the sinuosity of the stream and show where the stream is now versus where it will be, noting that this stream is perpendicular to the road but that it is also significantly shifted and therefore will involve shifting the route of the stream.

She asked to discuss the culvert and also, she thinks it is moving a little bit of the sinuosity of the stream, and generally speaking, complicated streams are better. Mr. Vincent shared that what he is seeing is more of a linear connection so it does not have as much cross flow, but he's happy to look at again and discuss with ConCom. He also added that he thinks it is less of a scour problem.

Chair Riley added that in general the wetland impacts are one thing, but that stream impacts are another, and in general, what is good for a stream is to encourage sinuosity as this can slow down the water.

She continued that best management practices for stream crossings also includes reducing wetland impacts and any vegetation removal, and these would certainly be reduced if the routing of half the stream was not altered. She understands why they want to go orthogonal to the road (at a right angle). In this case it might prove worthwhile to still cross it in the slightly diagonal route that the culvert takes today, because it allows the stream to maintain its curvature.

Vice Chair Bruce James asked what relationship this new culvert might have with the upstream water flow, and particularly the Brickyard Project. He thinks they have plans for their stormwater management, but asked if this change has any impact or will it be sufficient for increased flows from that development area?

Mr. Vincent answered that that development did not increase flows, therefore there is no change. He elaborated that they have detention and treatment systems in place that mitigate the additional hard surfaces that are being designed.

Mr. Erling Heistad added that the velocity will increase and that will in fact then increase the scouring, because it straightens; if you have the same starting elevation and finish elevation and shorten the distance between the two, you will have a much steeper stream flow.

Chair Riley spoke some about the Brickyard Project, and how they got into some of the parameters that DES is looking at when you are crossing a stream, such as the entrenchment ratio, what is the ratio between the flood width and the normal bank width and what are the flows and what is the watershed

area? So, for that project, they are proposing an alternative design for the crossing because the stream crossing calculations would dictate a much more expensive and larger span. That is what the formulas say, but she does not know about DES.

Mr. Don Lacey asked if this is the main outlet for the entire watershed into the Mascoma River? He, along with Vice Chair James agreed that this shows how important and extraordinary the function of the wetland becomes because even with the heavy rain flows, we have had in that area, this massive wetland area along Mount Support Road deals with this. Without these wetlands, this area would get washed out every time the area has a “100-year storm”, which have become very frequent in recent years. It speaks to the importance of the wetlands, and the bigger culvert is better. This culvert goes all the way up to the intersection of Lahaye and Mount Support Road. All of these details are in today’s meeting packet. Mr. Mark Goodwin shared a watershed map with ConCom.

Chair Riley said they can also go to Stream Stats, a mapping tool from the U.S. Geological Survey.

Vice Chair James said that with the bigger culvert and given how effective this very large wetland is compared to channeling efforts, along with them putting in a bigger culvert with an open bottom, environmentally, in terms of wetlands, this should be beneficial.

Ms. Hirai confirmed that this water flows from west to the east. Mr. Vignale said the map is for general use, and is not directional, rather it is a detail but not of this specific project. It is not a plan view, but rather a section view.

Mr. Ernst Oidtmann asked if there have been any previous issues with this culvert, wondering if it really needs to be replaced? It does. Mr. Vincent said it is extremely old, and in terrible condition, and there has already been a recent sinkhole there, with a temporary fix.

They have never seen any flooding issues here, none going over Hanover Street. The proposed capacity will provide even more capacity. He added that for pre and post flows for all the developments upstream of this, they always control their stormwater flow. So, there isn’t an increase in peak flow in any one storm, at least by the models they run. They are not concerned about flooding.

Mr. Oidtmann wanted to know what is going to happen with the beautiful pieces of granite there now. Mr. Vincent said they are proposing reinforced steel concrete rather than reusing the granite, mainly due to cost and resiliency. Hand stacking the granite would add to the cost of this project.

He said there should be no more conveyance than there has been in the past; the impact should only be what they see in these plans.

Chair Riley asked about the slope if it is a two to one. Mr. Vignale confirmed it very closely matches the existing slope. It is not being “daylighted” much more than it currently is.

Ms. Hirai asked how far the stream is actually going to be moved, at the intake and outtake, Mr. Vincent said the upstream side is about 10’ and on the downstream side about 15’. They plan to put in river stone for the re-creation of the riverbed, all rounded stones, for a natural continuous streambed.

Chair Riley asked what the native substrate would be, as her studies indicated it would be silt and clay. Mr. Vincent said that it is engineering practice, and that over time, the silt and clay will naturally occur over time, but in the immediate term, they need to protect the area from erosion.

Chair Riley requested for them to use a Northeast native erosion control seed mix as opposed to the seed mix described in the packet. And she wondered if it is actually necessary to use a fertilizer. Mr. Vignale said these are acceptable.

Mr. Lacey asked if there is any vegetation being removed, and if so, whether or not they are replacing it? For any trees and vegetation replacements, ConCom will ask for native plants and native wetland shrubs in their comments to DES.

Ms. Hirai asked if anything was going to be done with the current dried-up slopes of the stream. Mr. Vincent said his understanding is that the side slopes will be vegetated, to stabilize them, and that anything they impact along the edges of these hedge walls will be restored. They have tried to minimize grading as much as possible for this project. The old stream bed will be left to allow for whatever grows naturally.

The reason the culvert is 4' higher and not higher is that there is a large sewer line that is there and cannot be relocated, due to the cost of doing a major relocation.

They are not proposing any fencing, rather they will return the guardrail on the west side of the road. They will recommend a guardrail on the east side of the road, but the far side of the sidewalk, with perhaps shrubbery closer to the sidewalk. Mr. Vincent and Mr. Vignale think a guardrail is the AASHTO ( American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) standard; they will confirm either way.

Chair Riley asked about the tree line; Mr. Vincent shared a map. Mr. Heistad said they do need to know about any trees coming out. Mr. Vincent agreed to address this local request.

Mr. Vincent thinks that the Brickyard stream crossings were approved by DES, though he is not sure of exactly what that entailed.

***Chair Riley MOVED that the Conservation Commission recommend approval of the NHDES Wetland Major Impact Application for the replacement of a 60" Reinforced Concrete Pipe/Corrugated Metal Pipe with a 12' wide by 4' high open bottom box culvert. CC2026-01 – DES #2026---115 with the following conditions:***

***1-We request that the project maintain more of the natural sinuosity in the stream, which would also reduce the permanent wetland and stream bed and bank impacts.***

***2- We request that DES insure that the alternative design for the stream crossing is adequate for this location.***

***3- We ask that all erosion control materials be wildlife friendly and that silt fences and other erosion control materials be removed when the project is completed.***

***4- Require the use of Northeast native erosion control seed mix be used for the roadside. Also, we question the need for the fertilizer application that is specified in the seeding plan.***

**5- Add wetland shrubs to the revegetation plan for the stream bank and the wetland.**

**6- Generally, limit the removal the of vegetation along the banks of the stream and the wetlands.**

**7- Minimize, if possible, the guardrail on the East side of the road.**

**8- Try to time the project during low flow conditions.**

**Seconded by Mr. Don Lacey**

**\*The MOTION was approved (6-0)**

Ms. Hirai suggested that they involve the Hanover Street School about having their students get involved in helping to rename this stream. Chair Riley will initiate contact with the District regarding this initiative. Reusing the granite blocks might also be something the local school wants to pursue. This can help all people learn more about the history here and also be part of a new history. The Heritage Commission was also mentioned as an interested group for this naming project.

Chair Riley said this could also be an easy and informative field trip for local students.

## **5. STUDY ITEMS:**

### **A. Review of the Mascoma Lake Watershed Based Management Plan**

Mr. Mark Goodwin told ConCom about the New Hampshire SADES (Statewide Asset Data Exchange System) program which is a municipal-scale information depository. They collect extensive information on culverts and one can look at legends, the condition of these areas, aquatic organism passage if any, etc.

USGS Stream Stats is also an excellent resource as noted earlier.

Mr. Goodwin said that the levels on Mascoma Lake rarely drop, but they'll drain, so if we have low water flows, they'll start to drain the lakes to the East, like Crystal Lake as an example. He said he's heard that people who live on Mascoma Lake have put their foot down and said you are not going to impair our ability to enjoy the water, right up to the edge of our grass.

Mr. Goodwin said that as he understands this Plan is less about a reaction to some water quality issues and rather more about water quality issues that have been avoided, so that will be the focus. Mascoma Lake has for the most part avoided many water quality issues in comparison to other nearby bodies of water. Mascoma Lake has an active and engaged Lake Association. This includes checking canoes being launched.

The graphics on pages 22 and 24 were referenced to help clarify the various contributors to phosphorus load in the watershed. Some of the numbers did not seem to tally.

Page 26 shows total phosphorus load by regions. Vice Chair James said that the levels are not that bad. He said that if you control soil erosion, you control phosphorus. So, erosion control is key.

Ms. Hirai inquired if ConCom has the capacity to do anything based on these suggestions and this study. Chair Riley thinks there are many action items that different parts in the City would be asked to

implement. The Executive Summary in the report states that this information is only as good as a committee to implement the action items and tracking and developing best practices.

Vice Chair James said that one thing they can do is to encourage protection of riparian zones, both through Zoning and their own decision making. Trees in riparian zones also have a positive and dramatic effect. Forest vegetation helps too. He said sometimes landowners like to take out riparian zones for a dock or a better view; education is imperative.

Mr. Goodwin said they have the riverbank bank protection district as a regulatory tool for Mascoma Lake; that is one mechanism. Also, the Watershed Association uses a carrot approach to encourage desired behaviors and outcomes.

He posed the idea that the Conservation Commission possibly take for example 6 action items and then send out a mailer or flyer to Lebanon residents. The remaining ones could fall under DPW (e.g. less salt) or perhaps zoning. His concern is that no one takes responsibility and so it simply sits on a shelf. Who is going to be the person in Lebanon that takes responsibility? The Conservation Commission could be the reminder to The City Council or the City Manager to ask who is going to be working on these action items.

Mr. Lacey said that most projects like these need an enthusiastic point person who takes it and runs with it. That is when these projects can be successful. He said this might come up in the presentation.

Chair Riley said that Table 16 has a chart of the strategy along with specific recommendations for Lebanon, Enfield, and Canaan. One issue noted is enforcement; DES asks for people to speak up.

Lebanon has a very small portion of the Mascoma Lake. Canaan has a majority of the lake, and then Enfield. Canaan has no zoning, which affects many things in terms of clearing land, erosion control, protecting riparian zones, etc. Shoreline Protection laws still apply to Canaan.

The City Council is meeting next Tuesday, and Chair Riley said she is curious to see what happens at that time.

She was trying to locate some narrative about dirt roads but will locate it again later.

Mr. Goodwin complimented the Conservation Commission for protecting the property just north of the lake, LeBrun Meadow, which now has permanent protection as a direct result of ConCom initiatives and funding. They have also been responsible for allowing natural vegetation to grow uninterrupted there. This is the ultimate lake buffer.

## **6. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **A. Biodiversity Group (Invasives)**

Chair Riley said that two people (Lynn Fisher and Eric) have now completed their training but still need to take exams, and then they will be Supervisors like Mr. Don Lacey. Mr. Lacey said that Lynn is already thinking ahead about work the Ticknor property. Eric has been working at Goodwin for years and he wants to continue with this. He wants to leverage that license to do more, including supervising non-license holders as those opportunities arise. If these 2 had a team of 5 people, they could accomplish a lot. Chair Riley said that Eric could benefit from seeing Mr. Lacey's record keeping.

This new team plans on making a spreadsheet listing all locations where they have worked on projects, and then in turn share it with the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Lacey got his special permit again for Baker's Crossing and Mill Road.

Chair Riley said that if the vernal pool project moves forward, one goal was to have boots on the ground and have a vernal pool workshop outside. For staff (ideally) to see what a vernal pool looks like at different times of the year. It is voluntary but they can get this messaging out and perhaps entice attendees with food.

B. Stewardship  
-Ranger

Mr. Goodwin has the opportunity to socialize and meet with Ron B (former steward) and Ron was asking about ConCom. He repeated for planners to leave their desks and get out on the land.

-Trail Coordinator

One exciting fact they spoke about was the fact that animals can save up to 40% of their energy by following on another animal's trail or a path already in existence.

Chair Riley shared on Chris Johnson's behalf that the Ledyard Canoe Club reached out to him this week to ask about holding Riverfest at Baker's Crossing again this year. The date will be Saturday, April 18, 2026. They appreciated that this is the first time they have actually been notified in advance. Chris will be the point person, and he wondered if there are any questions or anything pertinent that ConCom has for the canoe club.

Parking has historically been an issue, so carpooling would make sense. Last year, many parked on Karen Zooks' lawn (it is now fenced in). ConCom can make it clear that they should not park on any peoples' lawns or private property. Parking at the Northern Rail Trail parking lot is ideal. It is typically just a morning event. Cleaning up after themselves and removing any strings is expected.

Mr. Lacey said that usually there is a student leader or two that takes responsibility for cleaning up after themselves.

-Monitors and Stewards

Mr. Ernst Oidtmann had a question about the rescue system and if they have a ready-to-go system, ready to rescue someone or something? The answer is yes. Hanover and Hartford come and train here and our Fire Department would probably come and try to rescue someone.

C. Wild about Lebanon

D. Amphibian Crossings

Chair Riley has not heard back from the DPW Director, regarding the mobile digital signs. She is hopeful that they can be deployed this year, for the anticipated amphibian crossings.

E. LUCT/Current Use

F. Other Subcommittees

**7. OTHER BUSINESS:**

A. FYIs

There is proposed State legislation to take away the ability of Con Com to use its optional powers without going to the City Council. Years ago the City voted to approved optional powers for the Conservation Commission. Approximately two years ago ConCom used these optional powers at a public hearing to give some open space trust fund money (Lost Funds) to the Land Trust, so that they could purchase Martin Brook.

There was discussion about whether or not this proposal got any support. There will be a vote on February 17, 2026. Chair Riley said that people are allowed to comment online.

Mr. Goodwin said that with the powers ConCom currently has ConCom, controls their Lost Fund monies and they could spend a lot of money on, for example, someone conducting a butterfly inventory without approval needed from anyone. But if they want to spend that money on a land acquisition project, and it is land that is not coming to the City, the additional powers allows ConCom to spend that money for land protection, again without outside approval.

This new proposal is an attempt to strip that and make it where any expenditure from the Lost Fund would require the approval of City Council. As a result of the City Council giving them powers, they have the authority to spend money for land protection projects that do not necessarily come back to the City.

Chair Riley said she watched the meeting, and it was incorrectly stated that the public is not aware of what ConCom is doing, which is an inaccurate portrayal of the system, because ConCom had a very well publicized public hearing, it was in the newspaper, and it was well-attended.

Mr. Goodwin and Chair Riley agreed that it came across as these actions are in conflict with housing, but they are not. Chair Riley sits on both ConCom as Chair, and as a member of the Housing Task Force, and these members are working together well.

Some of the rationale is simply to have another party weigh in on this. Mr. Heistad added that this could negatively impact people wanting to donate to this fund.

B. Follow Up

Chair Riley is also waiting to hear back from City staff regarding the Conservation Commission Lost Fund.

C. Workshops and Educational Opportunities

Ms. Hirai commented on the excellent presentation about climate and food that Vice Chair Bruce James recently gave.

Mr. Ernst Oidtmann attended the Planning Commission meeting last Monday in person, mostly listen to the preliminary presentation by Mr. Jay Champion and Engineer, Dan Nash, about the Labombard property/Etna Road Development. His impression is that was a very complicated presentation regarding more housing, sports fields, industrial developments, etc. He spoke up as a member of the public and

suggested that all pertinent City Commissions or Boards take part in a site walk, to sort out what is actually there, what the slopes are like, what the drainage is, what the erosion might contact, erosion possibly from prior logging. Also to look at the new access road that was built, without clear approval, the soil concerns with excavation from the freeway. He also said that this project is close to Signal Hill. After voicing this request and these concerns, he ended by suggesting that this land be put into conservation and Mr. Campion said that he would contact the Upper Valley Land Trust about this.

Chair Riley also attended this same meeting via Zoom, as a resident and she addressed concerns. One of her main concerns that she voiced is that there are two roads that would cross wetlands (to the East of Etna Road), and the other being regarding the general impact and that the plan is to dedicate these roads to the City, but it is an expensive gift, since roads are very expensive to maintain, and the City has a limited budget for current roads. She likened this to being given a horse as a gift; the recipient would then be required to maintain the expensive upkeep of the “gift”). She added that this proposal was based on this area being changed from IND-L to GC-1, which for now is on hold by the City Council.

**8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: None**

**9. ADJOURNMENT:**

**The meeting ended at 9:03PM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Cinda Mersel  
Recording Secretary