

Andover Conservation Commission
June 10, 2026
Final Minutes

Attendance: Miranda Dawalga, Nancy Teach, Lee Wells, Sooze Hodgson, Jesse Schust, Nancy Robart, Tina Cotton, Laurel Shinerock, Jenny Bodwell

Also attending: Kurt Yuengling, (NHDES- NH Department of Environmental Services) Air Resources Division Community Engagement, Don Moyer, President of FNRT (the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail)

Meeting called to order at 7:01

Motion made to approve the May amended minutes by Nancy R, seconded by Nancy T: all in favor

Kurt Yuengling presented information on the Climate Pollution Reduction grant that NHDES has received. Last plan was in 2009. Unlike many states there is no legal authority in NH, from the legislature or Governor, to come up with a plan. NH DES received a grant from the EPA in August 2023. The first task was to hire people to come up with a plan. Environmental agency groups are very interested in the work. The focus is on reducing greenhouse gasses. There is a 4-year time line. The team was up and running by November, 2023, first report was due in April, 2024. The EPA wanted to identify “shovel ready” projects, so they could then apply for implemental grants. Now working on the comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP). They need to wrap the plan up by November, 2026 for the next report. Contacted UNH to see how much interest and understanding there is in the state. Last January Kurt’s group had many meetings: looking at transportation, buildings, agriculture, waste, etc. They have been sorting input, and need to work with EPA to make sure aspects that DES might want to put into their plan have to be compatible with EPA’s and other state agencies’ actions. Hoping to have a public comment on the whole plan by September ’26.

Have had input from 65% of municipalities in the state. Survey results: just under 50% thought climate change should be a high priority with over 85% believing that climate change is real.

Required components in document are:

1. GHG (green House gas) inventory
2. GHG emissions projections
3. GHG emission reduction targets
4. Quantified GHG reduction measures
5. State-wide benefit analysis
6. LIDAC (low income/disadvantaged communities) benefits analysis
7. Authority to implement
8. Intersection of funding sources
9. Workforce planning analysis

Funding comes from Inflation Reduction Act, which has since gone away or is tied up in courts. 40% of improvements had to be in disadvantaged neighborhoods. They have to work with the state and legislature. As the political situation is constantly changing, they need to be flexible and have had to pivot.

Before they can come up with a CCAP (Comprehensive Climate Action Plan) need to know where we are before goals can be put in place. For example: people will say they want to capture methane gas from landfills, but the state is already doing that. Can't help a town write a Climate Action Plan until you know where various towns are. Decentralization is a real problem/challenge in NH.

The first task is to build a data base of what towns are doing, as there is currently no central hub in NH for collecting information. If town X has identified a problem, secured funding to help deal with that problem, it will be easy for DES to tell a similar sized town Y with the same concerns to get in touch with town X to learn from them or develop a coordinated approach. DES will try to coordinate cooperative work. Kurt reaches out to municipalities to find out what they are doing – may be calling it by different names – energy plan, climate action plan, etc. – doing a lot of analytical work – there is no central hub in NH for collecting info. Their goal is to first get CCAP done then build a central data base.

There are towns that are doing their own research and financing of projects that save the town money and reduce climate change. Good things have already happened or are in progress. For example: Andover's investment in weatherizing Town Hall and installing solar on Town Hall.

Don Moyer, President of FNRT (Friends of the Northern Rail Trail): what is happening with FNRT? What can we, the ACC, help with? Don describes himself as head of maintenance work on the trail. FNRT really started in Andover with the efforts of Alex Bernhard and Myra Mayman. The State of NH owns 345 miles of trail, and at 59 miles NRT (the Northern Rail Trail) is the longest section, the DOT (Department of Transportation) is the owner. The closing of a section of the trail is between DOT and a particular land owner. The NH Bureau of Trails is responsible for maintenance, we are in (Trail) Region 3. We have 50,000 visitors a year according to the trail counters. This number includes bikers, walkers, X-country skiers, and snowshoers, but not snowmobilers. The trail was built for steam engines, and built with 1% grade. There are 35 active maintenance volunteers who do many hours of work: mostly tree work, some minimal trash pick-up. Janet Stevens, the Executive Councilor in Region 3 is a strong advocate. She has taken the trail ownership issue to the June 3rd Governor's Council meeting. It is a slow-moving situation, all are making sure things are done right.

If have information we can go to FNRT website to report it. The information can be anything from tree down on the trail to other kinds of trail damage. We can call Don directly if it is a more urgent situation.

The Bureau of Trails went to Don, saying that the parking area near Highland Lake was a real eye-sore and encouraged a solution. It is being fixed up very nicely. The FNRT can be flexible – boulders are there to discourage trucks, etc., from parking there. If needed the FNRT can move boulders for special events (for example: the fishing derby, or the snowmobile event, they can be flexible.) There will be a kiosk with trail information and benches.

ACC bench for the McDonough Easement. There are 2 contractors in town, Jon Champagne and John Thompson, who both have the certificates/licenses that FNRT needs for work on the trail, and can do the work. Both enjoy working on the trail. Action item: The ACC, Nancy Robart, will ask for bids from John Thompson and Jon Champagne for moving and situating the ACC bench on the Northern Rail Trail near the McDonough Property.

Route 11 bridge - NRT is eligible for Historical Trail Protection/historic sites. FNRT are worried that the construction work would be very disruptive. Trail will be open after work hours and on the weekend. NRT will get notification a week before if sections of the trail need to be shut down completely. 33 Granite blocks will be removed. When Don asked about them, he was told the contractor would get them. Don protested and was asked to come up with a good plan for using them. He came up with a plan to put them at the 12 RR stations and the Daniel Webster stop along the rail trail. They will be used as seating locations and interpretive panels will be placed there. The plan was approved. DOT will give FNRT a \$30,000 grant to implement the plan.

If we have ideas of how we can work together with FNRT, we should get in touch with Don.

Communication:

- The resident concerned about the sand quality at Chaffee Beach has backed away from the beach sand replenishment project. That is on hold for now.
- Request for contribution to ASLPT, (Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust), motion to contribute \$150 made by Miranda, seconded by Jenny: all in favor.

Suggestion from Nance R: should we propose a warrant article that any money left over in our annual budget should be turned over into the conservation fund?

ACC BHBT balance and Budget: same.

Beaver Deceivers (BDs), required maintenance: Jesse did speak with Skip Lisle, he is interested in coming this summer, but he was uncertain about dates or cost. Will cost between \$500 - \$1000 This will cover inspection/maintenance on all of our BDs, but not repair costs. Nancy R made a motion to allocate up to \$1500 for inspection and maintenance, seconded by Jenny. All in favor.

5/19 ZBA application approval for a driveway on route 11 across from McDonough Easement. Jesse and Nancy T spoke with the Land Use Coordinators to make sure all the concerned parties are properly notified in the future of issues that directly concern us that come before the ZBA.

We may appeal the decision because we, as abutters, were not properly notified before the meeting. ASLPT, as holder of the easement, was also not notified. We are concerned that if there is heavy rainfall or spring melt off the driveway could direct run-off into the wetlands.

Open full member position: Jerry wishes to step down from full member to Alternate. This would result in the following. Alternates (Jerry, Tina, Sooze, Nancy R, Pecco) (full: Laurel, Jenny, Lee, Nancy T, Jesse, Miranda). Is anyone interested in stepping up? Sooze mentioned that there is a new couple at Ragged Mountain who might be interested, she will look into it. If someone seems like a good candidate, we will recommend them to the Select Board. Several of us need to update our Oath of Office with Lisa Meier.

Bradley Lake property – Jesse checked the map, the septic system appears to be entirely on the Sirard property.

Jesse would like to let the Select Board know that we support their plan to make deed changes that resolve the issue of encroachment and look forward to working together to accomplish this. Jesse contacted the new surveying company, and asked if they could set pins in place with the plastic covers and let us know what the cost for that would be. They have not gotten back to him yet. We will meet with the Select Board to check on the progress of the plan.

McDonough Trail: We should set up a work and maintenance schedule? Jesse has been there recently. Knotweed obstructs the sign. Is there a way we can make the sign clear and where the start of the trail is?

Fenton Property discussion: there is already a conservation easement on the land, but they would like to have a Town Forest. Nancy T has talked with Andy Deegan about it, he doesn't have much experience with town forests, but would be happy to help. Would it make more sense to have it for "open use" and not be a Town Forest because of the legal restrictions placed on town forests. It can be called the "Fenton Forest". We would be let the public know that they can use the land.

Miranda made a motion to close meeting at 8:44, seconded by Laurel: all in favor.