

TOWN OF SOMERS
Conservation Commission
600 Main Street

REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2026
7:00 PM TOWN HALL
MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Joan Formeister called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The commissioners in attendance were Dan Fraro, Candace Aleks, Drew Kukucka, and Sydney Flowers. Joanna Shapiro, the Town of Somers Wetlands Agent, was also present.

II. OLD BUSINESS

SHOW CAUSE HEARING (continued) - ORDER TO CEASE AND CORRECT VIOLATION. 47 Old Hampden Road. Site Work causing Erosion and Sedimentation of Watercourse. Juliano Family One LLC.

Joanna Shapiro revisited the site on September 01, 2026, and significant stabilization efforts were confirmed. Photos were passed around to illustrate these improvements. An aerial view was also provided to help orient the Commission and discuss the site layout, including the driveway loop, the slope, and the detention basin.

The ditch along the driveway has been stabilized with a large amount of riprap. The right side of the driveway was enhanced with staked straw bales and check dams. Erosion controls along the access driveway loop were repaired and enhanced with silt fence, straw wattles, and stone check dams. Improvements were made to existing stone check areas. Riprap has been added to both ends of a culvert crossing the driveway.

An exposed slope with a large soil pile, deposited from ditch excavation, was identified as a future stabilization area due to its steepness and exposed soil. Brian Juliano clarified that the large soil pile was there prior to him owning the property and additional material was added recently from the excavated ditches and packing it down. Joanna Shapiro confirmed the water drains towards the riprap and then into a retention area that performed well during heavy rain. The detention basin held up well during recent rain events. Swales leading into the basin were being reinforced with stone. An engineer from Columbia, Connecticut, who did the original plot for the special use permit, is meeting with Brian Juliano on September 03 to develop a stormwater management plan for the property. This survey was noted as potentially clarifying property lines and town right-of-way, aiding in determining responsibilities. The possibility of developing houses on the property and the associated requirements for road paving was raised as a potential next phase for this property.

A separate but related issue concerning runoff erosion along Old Hampden Road was discussed. This runoff originates up grade of the site, contributes to road erosion, and eventually flows into Thrasher Brook. Concerns were raised about ongoing road erosion into Thrasher Brook, with a history of reactive repairs by the town. Potential solutions like paving, curbing, or paved outfalls were mentioned. The road has been repaired after recent rain events, but the issue is ongoing and reactive. A detention basin area on the town side of Old Hampden Road was discussed, which appears to have two culverts crossing the road, but only one discharge to Thrasher Brook has

been identified. The property owner has added riprap within this basin for filtration. There is uncertainty about the origin and maintenance of responsibility of this basin and its culverts, with a history dating back to road improvements approximately four years ago.

A discussion ensued regarding the two concrete culverts crossing Old Hampden Road. One has been sleeved with plastic, while the other is broken and clogged with debris. This clogged culvert is contributing to muddy water seeping out on the Trasher Brook side. Brian Juliano expressed a desire to have the broken culvert eliminated with permission from the town. The Commission cautioned against Brian Juliano undertaking work that is the town's responsibility, emphasizing that while improvements are appreciated, they could create complications. A conversation with Public Works was recommended.

The importance of clarifying responsibility for the retention basin was highlighted, as it appears to be partially on town land. The potential for it to become a wetland due to lack of maintenance was discussed. A proposal was made to have a joint site meeting with Public Works, Conservation Commission members, and the property owner to examine the site and clarify responsibilities. Key Public Works personnel like Bruce Urban and Todd Rolland were suggested as attendees, as well as Jennifer Roy, Kenny Anderson, and Jeff Bord.

Drew Kukucka made a motion to lift the "cease work" portion of the cease and correct order issued to 47 Old Hampden Road, allowing ongoing site work to continue under the special use permit, provided it does not contribute to the previously identified issues. The order remains active in pending submission of stormwater plans and wetland delineations.

Dan Fraro seconded. All were in favor, and the motion carried.

III. NEW BUSINESS

Violation: 400 Four Bridges Road. Clearing and site work within the Wetland and Upland Review Area. 400 FBR LLC.

Joanna Shapiro reported that residents observed equipment and clearing activity on the adjacent property to the Oakridge property (where a farm road improvement was permitted recently) and contacted her to investigate. Wetlands are present along the property line adjacent to the farm road, and potentially in the area between the farm road and the concrete pad.

Joanna contacted the property owner, Mark Milikowski, and he was immediately responsive and she met on-site with him and the zoning enforcement officer. Upon Joanna's request, the owner immediately installed initial erosion controls (silt fence and straw bales). Joanna reported to the Commission that vegetation was removed from an area between a sloped area near the building and a more level area adjacent to the farm road. This clearing was reportedly to retrieve fallen trees and to clear a pre-existing concrete pad for equipment storage.

Patrick Milikowski, the son of the property owner, clarified that trees had fallen from the hill onto the building and he had cut some down months prior that were leaning towards the building. He was recently in that area to retrieve the wood he had cut down and during this discovered a preexisting concrete pad that he was going clean up and possibly use for equipment. Patrick and Mark stated there was no intent to per se clear the area and that he was unaware of the wetland proximity. They expressed remorse and a desire to rectify the situation. The property owner stated no future development plans for the area will be happening. There is a small pile of vegetative debris that he would like to finish removing but other than that there will be no further work and they don't plan to utilize the concrete pad any longer.

The Commission was appreciative of their quick responsiveness and requested that they seed the cleared area with native seed this fall, let that take root and then remove the plastic silt fence once the vegetation is stabilized. The presence of Japanese Knotweed (an invasive species) in the area was noted, posing a challenge for future remediation. Joanna Shapiro requested they stay in contact with her and let her know their progression. In addition, she emphasized the importance of applying for permits for any future work within 100 feet of a wetland.

IV. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION - Items not on the agenda or coming before the commission N/A

V. STAFF REPORT

1. Information was shared about an upcoming Board of Selectmen special meeting on October 22 with Mike Zizka, a land use attorney, to clarify land use staff responsibilities and regulations.
2. 144 Mountain Road, a subdivision of one lot into two, was previously approved. The new owner of one lot is interested in additional clearing beyond what was permitted and has frontage on Mountain Road and Gillette Lane. Access to the brook via a narrow strip of land was discussed as a challenge. Also, the owner of 144 Mountain is interested in possibly shifting the house.
3. On 121 Scully Road a house is under construction with a valid wetland permit. Erosion control maintenance was noted as needing attention, particularly before septic system work begins.
4. On 120 Scully Road a consultant is developing a plan for this site, which has wetlands and a stream. High groundwater is a challenge.
5. At 969 Main Street clearing has begun for a previously approved project. Topsoil was temporarily piled outside the clearing limit but has been moved and secured with straw wattles, awaiting a building permit.
6. 496 Turnpike Road, a contractor reported failing twin 30-inch culverts under a long driveway that crosses Schanade Brook. They desire to replace them with a culvert sooner rather than later, hopefully a box culvert. Joanna had anticipated receiving the application before this meeting but did not. Therefore, the urgency and process for emergency work were discussed. Candace Aleks made, and Drew Kukucka seconded, a motion to accept the staff report. Motion carried.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE AND BILLS

1. Journal Inquirer August legal notice - \$39.35
Candace Aleks made, and Sydney Flowers seconded, a motion to pay the August Journal Inquirer bill. Motion carried.
2. 2026 CIPWG Invasive Plant Symposium happening soon and there is potential town budget support for attendance.
3. The Connecticut River Conservancy will host a Scantic River Water Quality Update virtually on September 21 at 4:30 pm.

4. The Scantic River Water Quality Monitoring for the summer monitoring program has ended.

VII. MINUTES APPROVAL: August 13, 2026, special meeting

Drew Kukucka made, and Dan Fraro seconded, a motion to approve the August 13, 2026, minutes as written. Motion carried.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Candace Aleks made, and Dan Fraro seconded; a motion adjourns the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Sydney Flowers

MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING