

Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes
Cape Elizabeth Town Hall
7:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 12, 2025

Present: Corinne Ketcham, Michelle Boyer, Chair, Emily Helliesen Day, Matthew Grymak, Mitch Wacksman.

Staff: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

1. Call to Order. Chair Ketcham called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Public Comment. No one wished to comment.
3. Minutes. Ms. Day made a motion to approve the June 10, 2025 meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Wacksman, and the motion passed 5-0.
4. New England Cottontail at Winnick Woods.

The Town has received a request from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MIFW) to release New England cottontail at Winnick Woods. The area of Winnick Woods west of the main trail is managed in conjunction with the adjacent USFWS land as shrubland habitat, which will support New England cottontail, although none have been found there based on sampling.

Mr. Wacksman made a motion to allow the release, seconded by Ms. Day, and the motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Boyer noted that MIFW should be notified about the invasive plant removal projects proposed for Winnick Woods, although they are not located in the shrubland habitat area.

5. Greenbelt Implementation/Maintenance

Cross Hill Trail Loop. The committee discussed the completion of the project and if the committee should do a site visit. Chair Ketcham noted that we have received some critical comments from the public. Ms. Day said she has been on the trail and it looks great. The bridges are in and she considers the contracted work complete. The trail has compacted nicely.

The committee agreed that a committee site visit was not needed and recommended to staff that final payments be released to the contractor. It was noted that we can wait for the trail edges to grow in.

Winnick Woods Invasives removal project. The committee discussed using an RFP process to select a contractor to perform the work, the scope of which has been marked

by the Tree Warden with committee members. Staff will provide a draft RFP for committee review at the next meeting.

Gull Crest Outer Loop Trail. The Town retained Statewide Surveys to establish the town property line adjacent to a section of the Outer Loop Trail proposed to be relocated. Surveyor Dale Brewer has completed field work and flagged the area. The committee will review the survey at the September meeting.

Permitting. The committee reviewed the list of projects proposed for permitting the remaining trail improvements from the FB Environmental Assessment. The committee agreed to add an extension of the Spurwink Bridge and Boardwalk at the request of a resident. Other trail additions and changes were accepted.

Sawyer Road overlook. Ms. O'Meara provided an update on the Spurwink Marsh Restoration: Sawyer St/Rd removal project.

Davis Forest trail connection. Ardath Dixon, CELT Stewardship Manager, requested permission for CELT to build a short connector trail on the north side of Davis Woods to connect to Winnick Woods trails. The trail is located on a ridge and will not impact wetlands.

Mr. Wacksman made a motion to grant permission for the trail connection, seconded by Chair Ketcham, and the motion passed 5-0.

Wildlife release. Ms. Dixon explained that a wildlife rescue organization has requested permission to release animals on CELT land, and the Town Farm may also be a good candidate. The committee acknowledged some abutters might have concerns with groundhogs and impact on gardens. The committee asked for a written request that specified the amount of release.

6. Planning Board Review. There were no items on the Planning Board agenda for August 19, 2025 that required committee review.
7. Gazette. The committee supported a summary of the activity at the Great Pond boat racks. Committee members were encouraged to send pictures. Chair Ketcham said that the Dyer Woods project is scheduled for September 6th and 7th.
8. Next meeting. The next meeting will be held September 9th. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.