

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2026, 7:00 P.M., COUNCIL ROOM 207, 84 SOUTH MAIN ST., CHESHIRE,
CT 06410**

Present:

Karen Schnitzer
David Schrumm
Randal Raynes
Laura Monte
Peter Prohaska
Tim Sullivan

Staff/Guests: John Gawlak, Director of Parks and Recreation

Absent: Sean Henri

Karen Schnitzer called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Noelle Shepard called the roll, and a quorum was present.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

i. Approval of Minutes from 3/4/26 Meeting

David Schrumm motioned to approve the minutes from the March 4, 2026 Environment Commission meeting, and Laura Monte seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion passed unanimously by those present, 4-0.

**VI. QUINNIPIAC RIVER AND MILL RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION UPDATES (FROM
TC 3/10/26)**

**i. Guests: Joanna Giddings regarding native plant projects at Bartlem Park and Ron Walters,
President of the Mill River Watershed Association**

Karen Schnitzer introduced Joanna Giddings and Ron Walters.

Randy Raines and Tim Sullivan arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Joanne Giddings, Cheshire resident, expressed concern over the lack of plans to do ecosystem supportive landscaping at Bartlem Park. She brought up two areas that would be opportunities: the retention basin and underneath the trees in the area to the right restrooms down to Route 10. She discussed turning it into a healthy understory with shrubs and native grasses.

Ron Walters, Mill River Watershed Association, explained that the Association has been involved with projects in Town including some with the Pollinator Pathway and working with the Town on the storm drain medallion project. He discussed the retention basin at Bartlem Park and partnering together to put in native plants there to

make it into a kind of rain garden. He explained that he has identified a couple of grant funding sources that he feels that the Town would be highly successful in getting. Karen Schnitzer requested that they get plans and make recommendations to the Environment Commission.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

i. POCD

Karen Schnitzer updated that the Planning and Zoning Commission approved the POCD last month, and they included some changes and additions based on Environment Commission feedback.

II. Educational Opportunities & Events (Sustainability Summit)

Karen Schnitzer updated that the Sustainability Summit, sponsored by Cheshire Creation Care, will take place on April 22nd at St. Peter's Church from 7-9 p.m.

ii. EC Budget - Updates and discussion/review with Mr. Gawlak

John Gawlak updated that the Town Council is still actively in the process of budget deliberations.

iii. Trail Stewards Group – Report

Laura Monte updated that the Trail Stewards will be organizing tomorrow morning at Roaring Brook. She mentioned that she is in communication with the YMCA and Cheshire High School to potentially have students involved. She further mentioned that they are still in need of a place to put the invasives for them to desiccate.

iv. Open Space Management Updates and News

a. Walk with David Irvin, State Forester - March 16 at Boulder Knoll

b. Walk with David Irvin, State Forester - March 19 at Roaring Brook

The report from Boulder Knoll is expected in the next week or so. The final two properties that need to be done are Casertano uplands and the ten-mile lowlands.

v. Yankee Highlands/NEMBA Update Re: MOU, LUA, and NRI Update

John Gawlak updated that the agreement with CT NEMBA was executed and that the first kick off meeting for the project should be around the first week of May. He will have them provide him with periodic updates that he can provide the Parks and Recreation Commission and Environment Commission.

vi. Bee Lease Recommendation For Town Council - Discussion and Vote

MOTION by David Schrumm to recommend to the Town Council approval of the lease extension with CT Beekeepers Association, Inc. with a request to install additional safety signage and fencing. Peter Prohaska seconded the motion.

All in favor, the motion passed unanimously by those present, 6-0.

vii. EC Project and Priorities Spreadsheet List/Updates

No discussion.

viii. HOA Update

No update.

ix. Other Old Business

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

i. Upcoming Walks with David Irvin

ii. Staff Report/Council Liaison Report

John Gawlak provided updates about the success of recent events including the Fishing Derby and Muck Run.

iii. Logo and Clothing (Bring Each)

Karen Schnitzer showed the proposed Commission logo. Discussion was had on collecting the Commission member's shirt sizes.

iv. Bluebird Houses

Not discussed.

v. Map Vernal Pools

Tim Sullivan volunteered for the mapping of the vernal pools project.

Karen Schnitzer introduced Mark Kazinskas, CT Forester, and mentioned that he will be in attendance at the next meeting to discuss the Lingering Hemlock Project,

vi. Other New Business

IX. NEXT MEETING DATE

i. Next meeting: May 13, 2026

X. ADJOURNMENT

Randy Raines motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Karen Schnitzer seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion passed unanimously by those present, 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Attest:

Noelle Shepard, Management Specialist