

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, MAY 13TH, 2026, 7:00 P.M., COUNCIL ROOM 207, 84 SOUTH MAIN ST., CHESHIRE,
CT 06410**

Present:

Karen Schnitzer
David Schrumm
Randal Raynes
Sean Henri
Tim Sullivan

Staff/Guests: None in attendance

Absent:

Laura Monte
Peter Prohaska

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

I. CALL TO ORDER II. ROLL CALL

Karen Schnitzer 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 April 8th, 2026, Meeting

David Schrumm moved to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2026 meeting. Randal Raynes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0, with Sean Henri abstaining because he was absent from that meeting.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

a. Trail Stewards Group Report – Karen Schnitzer shared Laura Monte’s update: the group has resumed trail work, now has up to 17 members, and Karen and Laura completed UConn invasive plant certification. The group is identifying invasive treatment sites and plans to prepare an invasive plant management plan for Cheshire open spaces.

b. Open Space Management Updates

i. Roaring Brook Update – The Commission paused pursuit of the Resilient Forestville Grant until boundary surveys are completed and Town versus State property is clearly identified.

ii. Yankee Highlands – Karen Schnitzer reported that the MOU has been signed, workdays have begun, and trail construction is underway in the approved area. She noted concerns about off-leash dogs, dog waste, and holes left by rock removal. **iii. Boulder Knoll Progress** – Sean Henri reported that Eagle Scout signage work and fundraising are ongoing, and another Scout may create a trail connection to the lower area. The Bee-Yard fence is installed, and the lease was likely approved. Fenn Road remains without a management plan, and Cook Hill still needs dead tree and invasive plant work. **iv. Bartlem**

Park – Karen Schnitzer reported that the Town Council discussed the next steps, the Mill River group is developing ideas, and coordination is underway to avoid conflicts with future plans.

c. QRWA & MRWA Updates from Sean Henri and Laura Monte –

Sean reported that he will meet with QRWA leadership on May 20, has been helping clear river blockages, and may take part in an upcoming paddle event.

d. Environment Commission Projects and Priorities Spreadsheet List/Updates –

The Commission reviewed project statuses and priorities. Boundary mapping remained a top priority; Fenn Road stayed listed as not started, Boulder Knoll tree removal was reassigned with moderate priority, and Roaring Brook boundary work remained the most urgent engineering issue.

The Commission supported requiring permanent property markers for future development and noted that the idea should be raised with Planning and Zoning. Randy Raynes also confirmed he has everyone's shirt sizes.

e. HOA updates – not discussed

f. Other Old Business

VII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Educational Opportunities –

Karen Schnitzer announced she is taking the DEEP Master Wildlife Conservation Course May-June on Tuesdays.

b. Budget –

The budget is due June 1. Discussion focused on funding for boundary work, surveys, equipment, education, maintenance, and Boulder Knoll mowing. David Schrumm suggested placing \$50,000 in the capital budget for boundary-related work, and the Commission discussed using an environmental planner to help review and prioritize open space management needs.

c. Staff Report/Council Liaison Report –

Regarding Yankee Highlands: purchase of materials for first bridge will be reimbursed through grants through Andrew Martelli's office; and is making progress. Golf course work will be completed soon. Capital Budget will be due soon (June 1st), so brainstorm proposals per John please. Discussion of Dave Irvin's Open Space Management plan revisions and whom the commission feels would be the best Project Manager to lead the EC to complete these tasks.

d. Other New Business – Karen Schnitzer reported that the adaptive ball field project is moving forward with testing and permitting. She also said the State environmental review team has visited the Yankee Highlands twice and may issue a report of concerns after another site visit on the 21st. The Connecticut Environmental Review Team is part of The Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1968. It operates in partnership with the USDA through NRCS

VIII. NEXT MEETING Next meeting date: June 10th, 2026

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Randal Raynes moved to adjourn the meeting, and Tim Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by those present, and the meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Attest: *Krystle Testa*

Krystle Testa, Minutes Clerk