

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10TH, 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
Laura Monte
Peter Prohaska

Staff/Guests: John Gawlak, Director of Parks and Recreation; Mark Kasinskas, Lingering Hemlock Project; and Kim, a visitor who attended to learn more about Commission meetings and local government.

Absent:

N/A

Karen Schnitzer called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Laura Monte called the roll, and a quorum was present with all members present.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Karen decided to skip due to time restraints

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

i. Approval of minutes from May 13th, 2026, Meeting

Sean Henri moved to approve the May 13, 2026 meeting minutes. David Schrumm seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by those present.

VI. GUEST

i. Mark Kasinskas and the Lingering Hemlock Project:

Mark Kasinskas presented information on the Lingering Hemlock Project, which identifies and monitors hemlock trees that appear to show resistance to hemlock woolly adelgid. The goal is to support long-term resistance breeding and protect Connecticut forests. Potential Cheshire locations discussed included the DeDominicis property and Roaring Brook. The Commission discussed landowner permission, possible involvement by high school environmental studies students, and coordination with Town staff. Sean Henri moved to approve collaboration with the project. Tim Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

i. Apparel – Randal Raynes reviewed shirt orders, confirmed sizes with members, and provided samples for review. The Commission discussed material options.

ii. Trail Stewards Group Updates – Laura Monte reported that another trail meeting was scheduled for Sunday. She had not heard back from Dan Bombaro. She asked whether a dumpster could be made available, and John Gawlak stated that he would follow up with Andrew.

iii. QRWA and MRWA Updates – Sean Henri reported that he met with representatives and expects to regroup at the end of the summer. Laura Monte noted that Chris Sullivan of the Southwest Conservation District reported elevated bacteria levels at Lot 12 during recent water testing. Additional upstream testing will be conducted to help identify the source. Chris Sullivan will provide a written summary to Laura.

iv. Open Space Management Updates – Karen Schnitzer reported that equipment may be available to help locate boundary markers and monuments, including a metal detector and technical assistance. She is awaiting further follow-up.

a. Roaring Brook – Boundary identification remains a priority.

b. Yankee Highlands – Environmental review staff have visited the site and provided positive feedback on trail work. Karen Schnitzer will seek Bird Atlas data regarding bird activity in the area. A site walk was scheduled for June 18 at 2:00 p.m. Laura Monte raised concerns regarding dogs on the property. John Gawlak stated that he would discuss signage with Francisco.

c. Boulder Knoll – Sean Henri reported that trail maintenance has been delayed due to broken equipment and overgrowth. An Eagle Scout has received permission to install trail signage this summer. Sean also discussed the need for volunteer assistance while he is unavailable. John Gawlak noted that any additional Scout project should be presented to the Commission.

d. Fenn Road -

e. DeDominicis – Tim Sullivan reported that the property contains mature forest with limited undergrowth and possible American holly. He noted that invasive species may need to be addressed by hand near the entrance and that additional review is needed.

f. Cheshire Park

g. Bartlem Park – A meeting was scheduled for June 23. The Commission discussed the possible use of steaming to manage mugwort.

v. Papandrea Property Purchase Progress – Karen Schnitzer reported that there were no new updates.

vi. Environment Commission Projects and Priorities Spreadsheet – Sean Henri reported that the Fenn Road bridge remains a high priority. John Gawlak asked about the approximate span of the water crossing, which was estimated at 30 feet. Boundary mapping with Engineering for Roaring Brook was also identified as a high priority.

vii. HOA Update – n/a

viii. Other Old Business: n/a

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

i. Budget update/proposed purchases

a. 22” Cordless Battery Wheeled String Trimmer-not being purchased ATM.

ii. Education on Invasive Plants

iii. Speaker Series – Karen Schnitzer discussed inviting a speaker to a future meeting.

iv. Staff Report/Council Liaison Report

v. Grant Funding Opportunities for Town-Owned Open Space – John Gawlak reported that he had little to add beyond the Yankee Highlands update.

vi. Fall Festival – Karen Schnitzer asked whether the Commission wished to host a table at the Fall Festival. Members agreed to participate.

vii. Map Vernal Pools – This item was not discussed.

viii. Other New Business – David Schrumm reported that a bear study involving hair samples may take place, possibly at Fresh Meadows.

IX. NEXT MEETING DATE

i. Next meeting: July 8th, 2026

X. ADJOURNMENT -

Karen motioned to adjourn the meeting; Sean Henri seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Attest:



Krystle Testa, Minutes Clerk