

Atkinson Conservation Commission Minutes
Wednesday, July 22, 7:00 PM
Atkinson Town Hall

Approved on August 26, 2026

Members Present Bill Steele, Chair John Fournier, Vice Chair Charlie Pitts Jeff Nenart Monique Chrétien Erika Halaby, Alternate Robin Doyle, Alternate Members Absent: Suzie Newman, Secretary George Murray Sandy Cannon, Alternate	Others Present Selectman Paul Wainwright
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1. Call to Order, and Attendance

Chair Steele called the Wednesday, July 22, 2026 meeting of the Atkinson Conservation Commission to order at 7:02 PM. He said Alternates Doyle and Halaby will be voting members.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes

June 24, 2026

Member Nenart made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Vice Chair Fournier. Vote: 7/0/0.

3. Financial Reports

Chair Steele said a quite a bit of money has been allocated for legal services, maps, and invasive species mitigation. Selectman Wainwright said there is about \$10,000 left unspent, but there will be bills for mowing for \$1,200, the invasive mitigation will be about \$1,500, as well as \$600 for the recording clerk, \$500 for the NHACC dues plus about \$500 for tuition for the conference, and about \$1,000 for the printing of maps leaving about \$5,300 in the budget but there are other legal expenses to consider.

Member Pitts asked about money for bridges. Chair Steele said that will come at the end of the year if there is money left over. He also said he often donates materials.

4. Budget 2027

Chair Steele said he has been given the worksheet to develop next year's budget. He said there are line items for recording clerk, other professional services, printing, dues and subscriptions, office supplies and postage, groundskeeping, equipment, mileage, special programs and signs. Member Chrétien suggested placing the trees in the budget moving forward, no turtle signs are needed at this time. Selectman Wainwright suggested budgeting money to replace the indoor map displays as the maps are out of date. Chair Steele said he will not be asking for any more money due to Town fiscal issues. Member Pitts mentioned trees that have fallen on other properties and whether there is included money for those fixes. Selectman Wainwright said it is traditionally taken from the groundskeeping line item. Chair Steele said sometimes a professional is needed and that can cost several thousands of dollars. Selectman Wainwright said the Department of Public Works has a line item for tree care and was going to take a look at.

5. Encroachment updates

Chair Steele said the MacPherson issue will be discussed in nonpublic. Member Pitts said he went with the Department of Public Works Director to show where the pole locations go on Boulder Cove. He said there have been additional encroachments and nothing has been cleaned up. He said the woodpile is on the line. The track is still there. He said they have stopped mowing the lawn in the area where they were told to and he moved the soccer goal. Member Nenart asked if the track looks like it is still being used. Member Pitts said it appears to be the same as last year. Chair Steele asked if this is a Code Enforcement issue. Selectman Wainwright said he is unsure. Member Nenart said it is obvious the property owner does not want to remove the materials and suggested the Commission go and drag in branches, organics, and other natural debris and let it return to nature. He said this would make the track unusable. Chair Steele said he is uncomfortable with doing that. Member Pitts said he prefers to see the track removed. Regardless of what is decided, Member Pitts suggested communication with the abutters, Chair Steele and Member Nenart agreed. Member Nenart said he believes it is a losing battle to fight the property owner to remove it. Chair Steele said the Commission could discuss possible dates at the August meeting for needed actions including possibly the Commission doing the work. Member Pitts asked who should do the communication. Chair Steele said he will be sending a letter to the property owner to notify of the plan and see if they have objections to the Commission doing the work.

Chair Steele said he went to Lakeside and spoke with the property owner. He provided before and after photos. He said there is still a bathroom and iron rods that the property owner will take care of. He said there are some large boulders

that were pushed over further than they should be. He said she is willing to pull them closer to her property, on the property line. He said the property owner is taking this seriously and he believes once the boulders are pulled back closer to the property line it will be OK.

6. Gold Award Project — updates

Member Nenart said the project is moving along and Catie was able to get approval for UNH Cooperative assistance. Chair Steele said there is no letter that it has been officially approved but the communication has been positive. Member Nenart said Secretary Newman is helping Catie.

7. Map status/replenishment — printing options

Alternate Halaby said there are many maps that need to be printed. She said work is being done to find a new printer. She said she sent a list of maps that are needed. Selectman Wainwright said the person who did the original maps is now at Haverhill Print Cafe and has all the files of the current maps. He said the price for 500 maps is under \$300 and it includes printing and folding. He said he would like permission to tell the printer to go ahead with the maps. Chair Steele asked about tax-exempt status to lower the cost. Selectman Wainwright said maps in stock are Sawyer, Sawmill, Stickney and Marshall. He said missing is Orr, Woodlock and Woodlawn (previously Sawmill South). He said they won't be printing the East Road since Atkinson only has a small part of it. He said Slade will need to be done. Chair Steele suggested printing off a two dozen Slade maps and laminating them and ask people to return it. Vice Chair Fournier said the gate still needs to be installed to keep people from going on HOA property. Ultimately, it was decided a printed map was not needed. Member Fournier said the Commission may want to consider markers for public safety purposes as well as map locations. Chair Steele said many trails have markers/signs that would assist 911 to know where they are going. Chair Steele asked Member Fournier to discuss how we can improve our trail safety with the new Fire Chief.

Member Chrétien questioned whether we would be using Haverhill Print Cafe for all our printing needs. For now they seem to have all of our existing files and are an option for our printing needs moving forward.

Vice Chair Fournier suggested connecting with Essex County Green Belt as they are using a new app called Essex County Green Belt Go and it is extremely accurate.

8. Wildlife-Friendly Culvert Update

Selectman Wainwright said they are in paperwork mode. Much of the paperwork for the abutters has been completed or is in the works. The consultant is working

on a long term management plan, a federal mitigation plan and wetland permit application. Selectman Wainwright stated the RFP will be submitted for December. Selectman Wainwright said there will be yearly inspection reports which will fall under the Commission.

9. Atkinson Day — Date change, our participation

Chair Steele said the date has changed to September 26, 2026. He said he will be absent that day. He said Secretary Newman has taken charge of that and will work with Member Chrétien on it. Member Nenart said plans include another scavenger hunt and mushroom presentation. Member Chrétien said participation in the walk has been shrinking and suggested taking a year off. She said she will still do the sun prints with the kids. Chair Steele asked Member Chrétien to present the plan at the August meeting. Member Pitts said the Scouts will be doing an orienteering class and will be available to the Commission for support.

10. Master Planning Discussion

Chair Steele said a few volunteered to appear at the Planning Board on August 19 to review how the plan affects the Commission. He provided copies of the Commission's action plans and status. He said there are five items and some of them are boiler plate items. He summarized the action items for the Commission. Most of them are activities the Commission is already doing. Discussion around approaching property owners about conserving their property and when it would be appropriate as owners feel very differently.

11. LWCF Reports

Selectman Wainwright said the majority of the issues are around missing signs. Vice Chair Fournier said he would work on it. He said there were other issues raised that are not applicable, including a driveway that was grandfathered and the issues with the brush dump near the playing fields.

12. Slade All-Persons Trail report

Vice Chair Fournier said a recent storm washed out a section of the trail. He said there was initial damage done by a motorized bike. He said he was able to repair. He said someone came down HOA road with a canoe on a cart and went canoeing in the pond which was reported. He said he saw no damage. He said he has a design idea for a kiosk from the Monadnock Conservancy. He suggested weatherproofing the kiosk. He said the benches, the HOA gate, and the donors

sign still needs to be done. Vice Chair Fournier discussed creating a trust fund for maintenance and needing to start working on preparing for the warrant article that will be needed to start the trust fund with the donation money.

13. Other Trail Issues

A large, downed tree was reported on Sawmill. Alternate Doyle mentioned the signs at the Kayak/Canoe launch are getting damaged from plows. Selectman Wainwright said he was walking the Plaistow town line and noticed the beech trees are dying from beech tree leaf disease.

14. Troop 9 news

Member Pitts said there are a couple of Scouts who are starting to think about Eagle Scouts projects that may be coming before the Commission with in the near future.

15. Other business

Chair Steele discussed monitoring reports and why they are done in the fall. He said he will wait until at least October. He usually Carolyn Orr and Williams #4 are done.

Selectman Wainwright said he has been slowly trying to figure out the borders of the Chadwick Town Forest as required monuments were never set.

16. Nonpublic session

Member Pitts made a motion to go into nonpublic session under RSA91-A:3, Section 2, Item L. Seconded by Member Chrétien. Vote: 7/0/0.

The Commission returned to public session at 9:02 p.m.

Alternate Doyle made a motion to seal the minutes of the nonpublic session until July 22, 2028. Seconded by Member Chrétien. Vote: 7/0/0.

17. Hold the date:

- Atkinson Day — New Date September 26, 2206
- NHACC Annual Conference on Saturday, November 7, 2026

18. Adjournment

Member Nenart made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Member Chrétien. 7/0/0.

Chair Steele adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Grosky, Recording Clerk

Attachments: