

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, March 3rd, 2026. 6:30 pm

Members present: Cathy Ryan, Cort Hansen, Sean Wadsworth, Mike Steward, & Jacob MacKenzie.
Public: Jake Davis, Davis (Natural Products) and Paul and Jason Richardson (Grandview Farm)

Cathy called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm. With the scheduled appointments of the farmers present, she welcomed Jake, Paul and Jason and went directly to a discussion with them regarding their experiences of the growing year of 2025.

Jake reviewed his past season and his equipment problems along with what he said was the wettest spring in 30 years. He described it as a survival season and a tough year for their farm. Jake indicated that as a result he will be scaling back a bit in 2026. Jason said that weather was a challenge as well, but the opposite spring problem of too much rain was equaled by August's hot and dry weather which created irrigation challenges. He said that due to the wet spring they couldn't plant winter crops until July due to wet soil and held back the extent of planting as a result. Sean asked about seed loss and Jason said that they can use some seeds for up to 4 years. The Richardsons said that they had quite a problem with coyotes eating their crop of watermelons and found it difficult to control them. Under approval and authorization of the NHFG department, some coyotes were removed but not before the farmers sustained some crop loss. Jake said that he had one of the worst years he's ever had with crop loss due to deer. Cort said he was surprised by the fact that coyotes and deer were in such proximity to each other, although apparently the deer problem preceded the coyote problem and they weren't sharing the same field during the same period.

Cathy asked how much acreage each farm was utilizing on their plots. Richardson's indicated that they had 8.5 acres and they were using about 7.5 acres. Davis indicated that they were using about 10 acres of their 12-acre plot. Following up on her prepared questions, Cathy asked about crop rotation practices. Jake said that he was planning on putting a pollinator crop into his #1 field. Jason said that like Jake, he is rotating his crops to avoid soil-borne diseases. Jake explained the different organic treatments he is using to control insect problems using the timing of insect life-cycles to combat bugs. Cathy asked about greenhouse and if the farmers were considering those. Paul said that it was more likely that they would use low or high row tunnels as opposed to a greenhouse. Jake said he could consider one perhaps to help with their school education effort, or to use it as a starter house. The advantages of tunnel were discussed.

Crop cover crops and fallow field practices were discussed. Winter rye, it was agreed was the preferred choice for cover crops to replenish the soil. Mulching practices were also discussed, with both using plastic mulch. It was agreed that the bio-degradable plastic mulch is not as durable as the standard plastic mulch.

Jake said thank you to the commission for the gravel fix on the access road last summer. Gravel was spread on the wet and low section of the road which had been making vehicle access a big problem in recent years, and particularly during the spring months of 2025.

Cathy said thank you to the farmers and said how fortunate the community is to have farmers actively using the fields of the town forest.

Under new business Cathy asked for questions or comments on the 2/3/26 meeting minutes. With no other comments or questions, she asked for a motion to accept the meeting minutes for the 2/3/26 meeting. Mike made the motion to accept the minutes and Sean seconded the motion. The vote taken to approve the minutes was 5-0 and the minutes were approved.

A discussion was made about the type of equipment that might be best used to clear the drainage ditches of the trees, type of equipment, or services. It was thought that the best sources for those questions might be Ever-source, NHEC, or Coleman Equipment.

A tentative volunteer workday was discussed with members sharing their available dates. Tentatively 4/18/26 or 5/16/26 were mentioned, depending on how much snow may linger into the spring months.

With no further business and with no other public comment and at Cathy's request, Mike made a motion to adjourn and with a second from Jake the motion was approved 5-0 and the meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 4/7/26 at 6:30pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.