



**Town of Stowe
Conservation Commission
Monday September 28, 2026
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Conservation Commission was held on Monday September 28, 2026. The meeting was held in person at the Stowe Town Office. Commission members in attendance included: Catherine Gott, Brett Loomis, Terrie Wehse, and Christine Donovan. Kay Barrett joined the meeting remotely; however, technical difficulties prevented her from hearing the meeting audio. Staff Sarah McShane, student representative Sophia Brasse, and community members Paul Moody, Sarah Manes, Josi Kytile, and Bob Davison were also present.

Call to Order

Chair Gott called the meeting to order at approximately 5:30 PM.

Public Comments & Adjustments to the Agenda

B. Davison offered public comment, noting that although he is a member of the Planning Commission, he was speaking as an individual. He stated that Stowe's needs have changed since the original conservation easement was established and emphasized the need to explore affordable housing opportunities through a public-private partnership involving the homestead site at Mayo Farm. He suggested that the Town consider a range of potential approaches, including a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, Planned Residential Development (PRD), mixed-use development, and other alternatives. He also recommended that the Town obtain a legal opinion regarding whether the underlying deed covenants could be extinguished through an agreement between the Town and the Stowe Land Trust. B. Davison also provided historical context regarding the property, including the history of the Weeks Hill Realty Trust. P. Moody commented that, in his view, a majority of the community supports leaving the property unchanged. B. Davison referenced a question from the Stowe 2050 survey concerning Mayo Farm. P. Moody also referenced the Housing Needs Assessment, specifically the information presented on page 31. Members briefly asked follow-up questions.

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

Review Meeting Minutes 9/14/2026

On a motion by T. Wehse and seconded by C. Donovan, the meeting minutes from September 14, 2026 were approved as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayo Farm Conservation Easement – Discussion

C. Gott provided a brief introduction, after which Commission members and guests introduced themselves and described the various roles they hold within the community. C. Gott then provided an overview of the Commission's discussion at its previous meeting. S. McShane then provided an overview of the meeting materials and presented a proposed process and schedule for the Commission's upcoming meetings. She explained that, if the Commission agreed with the proposed process and schedule, she could plan ahead and invite interested individuals and organizations to attend the appropriate meetings to provide information, answer questions, and offer clarification on the topics under consideration. Commission members offered comments on the proposed schedule and meeting dates, noting that T. Wehse would be unable to attend the November meetings. Following discussion, the Commission agreed to the following schedule:

		Discussion Topic
Monday October 12 th	Indigenous People's Day	Cancel & Reschedule Meeting
TBD Tuesday October 13 th or Thursday October 15 th	Special Meeting	Merits & Challenges of Amending the Easement to Develop Fields D&E for Athletic Fields

Monday October 26 th	Regular CC Meeting	Current Use of Fields A, B, C by Special Events and Brainstorm Strategies for Selecting Events that are More Suitable for Shared Use with Recreation. Reprioritizing Fields A, B, C for Recreation First and Events Second
Monday November 9 th	Regular CC Meeting	Final Meeting - What to Recommend to the Selectboard?
Monday November 23 rd	Regular CC Meeting	Reserve Date -If Needed

S.McShane suggested that each meeting follow a consistent format:

1. Overview by the Chair & Staff
2. Comments from interested persons and/or groups
3. Questions and clarification from the Conservation Commission
4. Commission deliberation
5. Commission decision - what, if anything, to recommend to the Selectboard
6. Preview next meeting topic

The Commission agreed to the schedule and meeting framework and then began discussion. C. Gott reminded the Commission that, at its previous meeting, the Commission agreed to focus its discussion on amending the easement. Staff McShane shared presentation slides highlighting the materials available to inform the Commission's deliberations, including the Housing Task Force memorandum, Stowe 2050 Town Plan action tasks, Housing Needs Assessment, Stowe Land Trust letter and recent email regarding housing in the Homestead Zone, and the Town Manager's memorandum to the Housing Task Force. She also shared information regarding potential housing density and provided a brief summary of the public comments, including an AI-assisted analysis of the comments received.

C. Gott provided an overview of the Commission's discussion at its previous meeting, after which the Commission began its deliberations. C. Gott asked whether there had been any recent zoning or planning projects relevant to the discussion.

J. Kytte, a member of the Housing Task Force who was speaking as an individual, expressed support for the Commission's decision to focus on amending the easement rather than terminating it or leaving it unchanged. She identified several variables that would need to be considered in determining where housing could potentially be accommodated on the property. She explained that she believes housing should remain part of the conversation, although she is not yet certain that the Homestead site is the most appropriate location. She suggested that the property be evaluated comprehensively before reaching a conclusion and cautioned against closing the door on housing before the available options have been fully considered. She noted that the community does not yet know specifically what type of housing, or where on the property, might be appropriate, but expressed support for continuing the conversation with the goal of potentially developing an approach that the community could support.

J. Kytte also provided an overview of other properties and areas in Town that are being evaluated for potential housing opportunities, including the Transfer Station, which is a brownfield site. She noted that there are very few municipally owned properties available for housing. B. Davison discussed Memorial Park and the wetlands that were created when Depot Street was constructed. J. Kytte noted that she appreciates that the existing easement calls for a community conversation regarding potential changes to the property. She also noted that if the existing easement were terminated, any new conservation easement would need to be permanent. B. Davison provided additional historical background regarding the property.

C. Donovan suggested that the Commission revisit an August email from Tom Rogers of the Stowe Land Trust regarding opportunities to allow or facilitate workforce or community housing. She suggested that the Commission develop a concept for the Selectboard's consideration rather than attempting to develop specific amended easement language or define the scope of a particular project at this stage. She explained that she

remains somewhat unclear about the relationship between the deed and the conservation easement, including whether the deed could be modified retroactively.

Members continued discussing potential housing opportunities on Mayo Farm. Staff McShane explained that, under the current arrangement, the Stowe Land Trust holds the conservation easement on the property. She suggested that, if the Town would like an official interpretation of the easement, the Commission could compile its questions and recommend that the Selectboard consider forwarding them to Town legal counsel and the Stowe Land Trust for review and clarification.

C.Donovan made a motion that as an output of this process the Conservation Commission should communicate to the Selectboard that they consider working with Stowe Land Trust and seek third-party legal review to evaluate whether housing is allowed under the existing conservation easement and/or the deed, and to develop proposed new language that would enable workforce, community, and/or affordable housing to be considered as a possible use should the Town wish to pursue such an option for the Mayo Farm.

T.Wehse seconded the motion. Members offered various comments and questions.

B.Loomis asked a question about the underlying deed restrictions and if they can be revised should the Town wish. Members offered additional comments and questions.

Following discussion, the motion passed 4-0.

B.Loomis then made a motion that the Town seek legal counsel whether the covenants in the original deed can be abrogated by an agreement with the Town of Stowe and Stowe Land Trust. T.Wehse seconded the motion. Members offered various comments and questions.

C. Donovan clarified that the request would be for informational purposes only, should the Town wish to pursue it, and was not intended to suggest that this is a desired course of action at this time.

P. Moody offered comments and questioned whether the Town would ultimately want to pursue such a change. Members discussed the potential timing and process. J. Kytte emphasized the value of understanding the underlying requirements and noted that she believed obtaining that information would be money worth spending.

Following discussion, the motion passed 4-0.

Members then discussed the upcoming meeting. S.McShane will figure out whether the memorial room is available on Tuesday October 13th or Thursday the 15th and follow up with the Commission.

For the next meeting, S. McShane will invite the Parks & Recreation Director to participate. C. Gott suggested also inviting the school's Athletic Director. Members identified the following materials and information to gather for presentation and discussion:

- The 2017 Recreation Commission Field Swap Report.
- Additional information regarding how the number of fields and parking spaces identified in the report was determined, including whether the figures were based on a formal needs assessment or the amount of development that could reasonably be accommodated on the site.
- A better understanding of the Town's current and anticipated needs for the number of athletic fields and associated parking.
- Information regarding whether athletic activities can take place on fields that have been treated with sludge.

Members also discussed the potential relationship between Fields A, B, and C, including how events may conflict with other recreational uses and how these fields are currently managed. The Commission agreed to focus its next meeting on Fields D and E and defer discussion of Fields A, B, and C to a later meeting.

Correspondence, General Reports & Updates

On Wednesday October 14, 2026 the Selectboard will be discussing Memorial Park. Since the Town's wetland consultant will be attending that meeting, the Selectboard is also reserving time to discuss the recent Mayo Farm wetland delineations. Members were invited to join the conversation if available.

Meeting Schedule

- Monday October 12, 2026- Regular CC Meeting- Cancelled – Indigenous Peoples Day Holiday
- Special Rescheduled Meeting TBD- Tuesday October 13th or Thursday October 15th
- Monday October 26, 2026- Regular CC Meeting at 5:30 PM

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah McShane