



New Hampshire Council on Resources and Development

DRAFT MINUTES – August 6, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT

Heather Shank, Designee, Department of Business and Economic Affairs, Chair
Patrick Hackley, Designee, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
Eric Sargent, Designee, Department of Transportation
Jim Oehler, Designee, Fish and Game Department
Jack Ruderman, Designee, New Hampshire Housing
Kim Houghton, Designee, Department of Education
Allen Wyman, Designee, Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food
Mark Doyle, Designee, Department of Safety
Ted Diers, Designee, Department of Environmental Services

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Brendan McDowell, Staff to CORD, NH Office of Planning and Development
Chris Aslin, Attorney to CORD, Attorney General's Office, Department of Justice
Paula Bellemore, Executive Director, Land and Community Heritage Investment Program
Charlotte Harding, NH Conservation Land Stewardship Program
Sam Simpson, NH Conservation Land Stewardship Program
Kathy LaBonte, NH Fish and Game Department
Mike Dionne, NH Fish and Game Department
Griffin Mckeown, NH Fish and Game Department
Amy Newbury, NH Department of Safety
William Kelly Jr., LCIP/Landowner, Kelly Family Farm
Tammy Kelly, LCIP/Landowner, Kelly Family Farm
Kathryn Childers, Kelly Scoville Farm
Glenn Childers, Kelly Scoville Farm
Chris Ellms, Select Board Member, Sugar Hill
Karen Liot-Hill, Executive Councilor

I. INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was opened at 3:00 PM by Chair Shank. Introductions were made by members of CORD.

II. MINUTES

Approval of May 7, 2026 meeting minutes.

May 7, 2026 minutes were reviewed, and one change was made on the recommendation of Charlotte Harding by adding "Conservation Land Stewardship and" to line 64 on page 2 for clarification.

MOTION: On a motion by Mr. Oehler, seconded by Mr. Wyman, March 5, 2026, minutes were approved with 6:1:0 vote. With Mr. Doyle abstaining.

III. LAND AND COMMUNITY HERITAGE INVESTMENT PROGRAM (LCHIP)

A. LCHIP Funding Request

Paula Bellemore presented the NH Land & Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) request for approval from CORD to withdraw up to \$321,871 from the Community Conservation Endowment (CCE) fund for the purpose of awarding stewardship grants for the 2026 monitoring year and supporting LCHIP's stewardship program administration in fiscal year 2027.

The LCHIP Board of Directors has approved Stewardship Grant awards to 175 stewarding entities to support monitoring of LCHIP-funded properties in 2026, subject to **CORD** approval and steward's submission of qualifying reports. Ms. Bellemore explained they are requesting up to \$212,200 to award Stewardship Grants.

The LCHIP Board of Directors seeks \$109,671 to offset expenses incurred in enforcing grant obligations, overseeing annual monitoring, and carrying out intake and cyclical field visits to both historic and conservation properties under LCHIP's long-term stewardship.

MOTION: On a motion by Mr. Wyman, seconded by Mr. Doyle, to approve disbursement of up to \$321,871 LCHIP, comprising up to \$212,200 for the purpose of awarding 2026 Stewardship Grants and \$109,671 for the purpose of supporting administration expenses for LCHIP's stewardship program, were approved with 7:1:0 vote. With Mr. Diers abstaining.

IV. LAND AND COMMUNITY HERITAGE INVESTMENT PROGRAM (LCHIP)

A. Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Draw Request

Charlotte Harding, Conservation Land Stewardship Program Supervisor at the Conservation Land Stewardship Program (CLSP) at NH Fish & Game Department (NHFG), requested funds from the Monitoring Endowment (also referred to as the Land Conservation Endowment or LCE) to complete fiscal year reconciliation and closeout activities.

Ms. Harding gave a brief overview of CLSP's monitoring of 86 state-held conservation easements and oversight of 253 municipal properties. CLSP also monitors 26 non-LCIP state-held conservation easements for which stewardship contributions have been deposited.

On October 9, 2025, the Monitoring Endowment disbursement request for Fiscal Years 26 and 27 was presented to CORD. At that time, CORD approved a disbursement of up to \$303,582 from the endowment for FYs 26 and 27 to be allocated between CLSP and the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) based on the proportional contributions intended to fund each agency's monitoring program. Under this allocation, CLSP may withdraw up to \$279,761.

NHFG requests CORD approval for a disbursement of \$109,258.81 from the Monitoring Endowment to cover CLSP's FY26 program expenses. The approximately \$135,000 difference between the budgeted and actual FY26 request is primarily due to reduced staffing costs following the retirement of the former CLSP Director in December 2024 and a full-time position that remained vacant until May 2026.

MOTION: On a motion by Mr. Hackley, seconded by Mr. Sargent to approve the request to disburse \$109,258.81 from the Land Conservation Endowment were approved with 8:0:0 vote.

B. Fiscal Year 2027 Disbursement Request for Vehicle Funds

Ms. Harding spoke about how LCE was established to provide CLSP income for the monitoring and enforcement responsibilities of conservation easements. Previously vehicles for CLSP had been procured by the State Agency it was attached. CLSP has not requested funds for a vehicle in the past, but it is the most important piece of equipment for the monitoring program.

In addition to previously authorized fiscal year 2027 expenditures, CLSP requests a disbursement of approximately \$37,871 from the LCE in fiscal year 2027 to purchase a dedicated vehicle suitable for year-round monitoring operations.

Mr. Wyman asked if the intention was to procure another RAM 4x4, his concern was related to necessary high vehicle clearance to access sites. Ms. Harding confirmed they intended to purchase another RAM 1500 Tradesman 4x4. Chair Shank mentioned this is an approved use of the funds.

MOTION: On a motion by Mr. Wyman, seconded by Mr. Oehler to Authorize the disbursement of approximately \$37,871 from the Land Conservation Endowment for fiscal year 2027 for the procurement of a dedicated CLSP vehicle were approved with 7:0:0 vote, with Mr. Ruderman absent.

C. DNCR Request for FY 2026 Disbursement From LCE

Mr. Hackley, Director of the Division of Forest & Lands at the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR), presented to CORD on the DNCR disbursement request from LCE. Income from the LCE is used to support monitoring and stewardship activities performed by DNCR's Division of Forests & Lands for conservation property interests acquired through the Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP) and a limited number of state-held non-LCIP conservation easement projects where stewardship funds have been deposited into the endowment for that purpose.

Mr. Hackley requested CORD authorization to disburse \$23,821 from the Endowment for FY2026. This amount reflects a portion of the cost of DNCR employing a full-time forester monitoring several "working forest" properties under DNCR-held easements as noted in the an Endowment Breakdown spreadsheet attached to the request and presented to members of CORD.

MOTION: On a motion by Mr. Oehler, seconded by Mr. Doyle to approve the request to disburse \$23,821 from the Land Conservation Endowment were approved with 6:2:0 vote, with Mr. Ruderman and Mr. Hackley abstaining.

D. Peverly Hill Road Portsmouth Eminent Domain (Informational)

Attorney Aslin gave a brief overview of the request from the City of Portsmouth. The request is to build a mixed-use trail along the edge of two LCIP properties abutting Peverly Hill Road in Portsmouth, NH. One of the properties is held by the City of Portsmouth and the other is held by a private property owner. The easement interest is held in public trust because the property was

purchased using LCIP funds. Portsmouth is proposing to use eminent domain to take the portion of the easement property that is on the private property to put in the mixed-use path.

Attorney Aslin recommended CORD ask the City of Portsmouth to provide a legal interpretation of whether the proposed use is allowable under the easement. If they feel it is, and CORD agrees, it will not affect the easement interest under public trust and the City can proceed without further involvement by CORD. If it is not an allowed use, further action by CORD will be needed to proceed.

MOTION: *On a motion by Mr. Wyman, seconded by Mr. Ruderman to send a letter to the City of Portsmouth's legal counsel to provide CORD with a written analysis of whether the mixed use path is an allowed use in the easement as it is written in the deed were approved with 7:1:0 vote, with Mr. Sargent abstaining.*

V. SURPLUS LAND REVIEW

A. 2026-002 SLR Sugar Hill

Mike Dionne of NHFG presented a request to transfer 5.6 acres of state owned land compromising Coffin Pond to the Town of Sugar Hill.

In mid-March 2026 the New Hampshire Dam Bureau identified the Coffin Pond Dam as being "in active failure." On March 19, 2026 the Bureau initiated emergency removal of the Coffin Pond Dam to minimize the risk of a release of water and sediment into the Gale River. Shortly after removing the dam, the Town of Sugar Hill approached NHFG to express interest in acquiring the property.

NHFG determined it would not rebuild the dam and would move forward with the potential transfer of the property to the Town of Sugar Hill. The parcel is approximately 5.6 acres and includes the former Coffin Pond, the dam site, the town-maintained park and cartop boat launch, and the Coffin Pond inlet structure. The Town intends to rebuild the dam and continue to allow public access to the site.

Chair Shank shared the concern from the RMAC meeting, where it was discussed whether to support the transfer of the property to the Town. RMAC's concern revolved around if the Town was unable to acquire the funds for fixing the dam, they may sell the property to a private buyer, and the public would lose access to Coffin Pond.

Chair Shank asked Mr. Dionne if NHFG considered leasing the property to the Town of Sugar Hill instead of selling it. Mr. Dionne responded that NHFG does not want the administrative costs of maintaining the property and does not have the funds to rebuild the dam. The Town of Sugar Hill felt very strongly that Coffin Pond was an important asset to the community. Chris Ellms, Select Board Chair of Sugar Hill, reiterated the commitment and enthusiasm to repairing the dam and providing the resources of the pond to the surrounding community. The Town is already raising funds for the project.

Executive Councilor Karen Liot Hill spoke in support of the Town of Sugar Hill acquiring the property from NHFG. Councilor Liot Hill sees it as a "win win" situation because the State holds a lot of dams on its books that are expensive to maintain and this would provide the opportunity to have another dam that is no longer on the State's books and the Town is excited to have

ownership and maintenance of the dam as well as providing public access. Councilor Liot Hill went on to highlight how distressing the loss of Coffin Pond has been for not just Sugar Hill but also the surrounding towns of Bethlehem and Franconia.

MOTION: *On a motion by Mr. Wyman, seconded by Mr. Doyle to allow the transfer of property with an easement at the time of sale that allows full public access in perpetuity as well as the State having the right of first refusal if the property is put up for sale were approved with 6:2:0 vote, with Mr. Dier and Mr. Oehler abstaining.*

B. 2026-003 SLR Laconia

Amy Newbury, Director of Administration at the NH Department of Safety, presented the Lease of State-Owned Space Agreement, pursuant to RSA 4:40, between the Department of Safety and the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid Association (LRMFA).

Ms. Newbury detailed the proposed lease authorizing LRMFA to occupy approximately 4,866 square feet within the new State-owned 911 communications facility located at 311 Meredith Center Road, Unit 2, Laconia, for an initial term of fifteen (15) years beginning November 1, 2026. Ms. Newbury explained the lease is critical to public safety in the Lakes Region. LRMFA provides 24-hour fire and emergency medical dispatch services to thirty-five (35) communities throughout the Lakes Region, serving more than 120,000 residents, in addition to the significant seasonal population that visits the Lakes Region each year.

In 2024, when then Governor Christopher Sununu authorized the sale of the Lakes Region Facility and planning began for the new State-owned 911 communications facility, it was his expressed intent that LRMFA continue to have a permanent home within the new facility. Co-location enables real-time coordination between State 911 operations, fire and emergency medical dispatch and responding to public safety agencies.

MOTION: *On a motion by Mr. Wyman, seconded by Mr. Doyle to approve the request for the lease of state-owned space agreement were approved with 7:1:0 vote, with Mr. Doyle abstaining.*

VI. CONSERVATION LAND STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CLSP)

A. Kelly Farm Conservation Easement Violation Update

Ms. Harding gave an overview of the violation and its notices to the parties involved. A portion of the Kelly Farm conservation easement in Winchester, NH has been subdivided off and conveyed to another person, which is not allowed per the conservation easement. The easement, which includes six parcels owned by Kelly Scoville Farm, LLC, states the six parcels may be conveyed to another owner, but the parcels themselves cannot be subdivided.

Kathryn Childers, sister of LCIP landowner William Kelly Jr., gave CORD an overview of property history and details as the executor of their father's will. Ms. Childers detailed the split ownership of Kelly-Scoville Farm LLC around 2009 between her father William Kelly Sr. and Tom Kelly, her uncle.

Mr. Kelly Jr. explained that unaware of the easement restriction, they transferred three lots to Mr. Blanchard to remove what they believed was an interest he had in the Farm.

At the May CORD meeting Mr. Kelly and Mr. Blanchard were given a deadline of August 6th to resolve the easement violation or have a written agreement to resolve the easement violation. At the time of this CORD meeting (8/6/2026), a mutually agreed upon settlement had not been reached by Mr. Kelly Jr. and Mr. Blanchard to bring the property into compliance with the conservation easement. Since no resolution of the ownership was resolved, CORD voted to refer the violation to DOJ.

MOTION: On a motion by Mr. Wyman, seconded by Mr. Doyle to refer the violation to legal action by the DOJ, were approved with 8:0:0 vote.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Next meeting – October 1, 2026, at 3:00 PM

SLR application deadline is August 17th for the October meeting, and a department staff member must attend to present any requests their agency refers to CORD.

Chair Shank adjourned the meeting at 4:13 PM.

Meeting Minutes Prepared by Brendan McDowell