

Mount Holly Conservation Commission
Meeting of May 5, 2026
Draft Minutes

Opening

The May 2026 meeting of the Mount Holly Conservation Commission was held on Tuesday, May 5, 2026 in the Town Office. Chair Phil Crane called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

Members attending in person were Phil Crane, Peter Smith, Birgir Nilsen, Phil Leonard, Alex Yuster, Jeanmarie Fitzgerald, Dave Martin, and John Ackerman.

Agenda and Minutes

Agenda was adopted, and draft minutes from March 2026 were approved as written.

Discussion of Agenda items

The Selectboard has asked the Planning and Conservation Commissions for input regarding Act 181 and its potential negative impact on towns like Mount Holly. The Act, which modifies Act 250, is criticized as administrative overreach, particularly in its Tier 3 (currently in suspension and perhaps likely to be modified or repealed). We discussed the Act, and negative aspects of its authorizing the State to declare a piece of property to be “such and such” without landowner or community input. Phil Crane suggested that we submit a general letter to the Selectboard showing support of the goals of conservation while expressing reservations about implementation. Dave Martin agreed to prepare and circulate a draft in the next day or two so that a letter may be ready before the next Selectboard meeting.

Regarding Star Lake, Dave reported two attempts, no successes, connecting with Terry Williams. Perhaps an ANR official should be contacted next. Jeanmarie is willing to try this. Jeanmarie said she will pick up plants this weekend and prepare them for August planting. This assumes tree removal will happen before then; Phil L. will check on that. Phil shared a handout proposing a fundraising strategy centered on reviving “Friends of Star Lake” as a committee of the Mount Holly Community Association. There was agreement that this idea should be pursued.

There was no Recreation Committee report, but Dave indicated he would be checking on the state of the Syria Farm trails in the near future.

Phil Crane said that tree treatments will start soon as part of our ash borer initiative.

Regarding invasive species, Alex led discussion of cooperation with the Shrewsbury Conservation Commission, and in particular of working to control wild chervil and to map Japanese barberry along the border between the two towns. More information will be provided soon about this activity.

Phil Crane spoke about ChitChat submissions, one missed, another to be planned for.

Action Items

- Dave to draft and circulate a statement about Act 181.
- Phil L. to check status of Star Lake tree removal.
- Members to prepare contributions for the next ChitChat issue. COORDINATION NEEDED.
- Phil L. to continue work on fundraising liaison with the Community Association.
- Jeanmarie to pursue contact with ANR (or others?) about Star Lake wetland status.
- Alex to inform members about activities around roadside invasives.

Next Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 2.

Adjournment occurred at 7:12 pm. Minutes prepared and submitted by Phil Leonard, Clerk