

**Public Meeting**  
**Freedom Conservation Commission and Forest Advisory Committee**  
**Tuesday February 17, 2026 - 6:30 pm at the Freedom Town Hall**  
**Minutes**

1 Quorum Check, Roll Call FAC/FCC

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm by Jeff Nicoll. Present are:

FAC – Paul Elie, Ron Newbury, Yvonne Hoyt

FCC – R.A. Oram, Megan Broderick, Nancy Cristoferi, Susan Marks, Jeff Nicoll,  
Susan Hoople-Alternate

Oram is the FCC Rep. to the FAC.

Gary Williams – Selectboard Rep. and James Guido, Planning Board Rep. are absent.

Also present: Barry Keith, Town Forester (6:35 pm)

2 Approval of January 2026 FAC/FCC Meeting Minutes –Oram asked for clarification- re: line 118 – re: Selectboard Rep – there has never been a Selectboard Rep to the FCC. Oram made a motion to approve, Megan seconded.

APPROVED FAC – 4-0-0

APPROVED FCC – 6-0-0

**FAC**

3 Tree Cutting TPT Access #1 Trail – Paul will coordinate with Dave George to tackle this project once the warmer weather arrives.

Barry was invited tonight to give us an update the status of the next proposed cut, and a general overview of the forest. Barry spoke about the timber harvest plans for the year, and the schedule. 2021 was the last time the property was harvested. A series of harvests have been done. The area west of the Air Strip marries up to the 2021 cut and goes toward the Lake Road. That area is mostly hardwood, containing saw logs and pulp wood. There will be some patch clear cuts, positioned where there is a lot of storm or moth damage. Then we will try to re-establish an aspen

component. Access would be at Gate 1. The trail to the left takes you to the airstrip. There will be two log landings. The easement allows 10% of the property in open format. The area will naturally regenerate. The second area is the log landing that was used in 2021. That area marries up with the trail network that goes to the first landing. There is an area of gravel that will be cleared around it. We will then be able to have on-site material for road improvements. That area will be a summertime/fall project. Dry conditions are favorable for this work. No cutting has been done in the spring. That area is approximately 135 acres. The other area is up by Trout Pond, approximately 40 acres. This area has had a lot of moth damage. The log landing is one of the permanent grassland areas, north of the boat launch area. It will have an additional 100' setback from the pond. Third area – abuts 2021 cut. There is a ravine and a small stream in the woods that will be the break for the cutting. The ravine will be left alone, 70-80 acres going up to the road for Trout Pond. Some of the area is wetland and will not be touched.

Barry would like to give the harvesters a year to do the work. Checking site conditions during the spring inspection will determine how the timing will go. He envisions starting in the summer, one or more contractors. He would like some members of the FAC and FCC to go out on a tour with him. A one page summary could be added to the website and the kiosk, to give the best possible PR on this.

Paul asked for a ballpark figure regarding revenue that might be generated. Area 1 west of the airstrip – money will be in the oak. Very little veneer, but there is some saw log red oak that will generate some income.(\$35,000 +/-) The harvester is responsible for the timber tax on municipal land. It is typically 10%. In the past when Barry has filed the intent to cut, the assessor came up with a ballpark on what the tax would be, then the contractor submits that amount. Once the report of cut is done, the final tax bill is assigned. The contractor receives the difference if there is an overpayment.

Area 2 by the pond – (\$10-\$15,000 range).

Cut 3 layout has not been done yet.

Historically the timber tax revenues have gone back to the Forest Maintenance Fund.

Paul expressed a concern about heavy equipment on the newly repaired Trout Pond Trail. Barry - It is critical to do this during dry time. Signage

would be up by the gates that this is an active logging operation – pass at your own risk or the trail is closed. Oram asked if Barry was aware of the warrant article submitted for a Capital Reserve account. Barry has mixed feelings about this. It became difficult for the water precinct to get the money released from their capital reserve fund. He is not sure how this would apply to this situation. We know the road is always going to need work. You want to be open with the public with how you are using the money, but you will have to go in front of the voters every year. Barry spoke about the past harvests, and how they were managed and what was trying to be achieved. The Stacy Mountain side of the property is loaded with oak. Growth rates have increased. Quality of wood is better. This is working in our favor moving forward. Oram asked a question about the Town Forest having been meant to be self-sustaining. Barry denies that the forest was ever intended to be self-sustaining. Barry indicates that the plus side of having those funds would be that you can't crystal ball what will happen from the weather. Oram asked how much money has been received in the logging process since inception – Barry estimates a couple hundred thousand dollars. That money went to the Forest Maintenance fund. That fund is very low at this point. Barry's estimate of income would be \$125-\$150,000 in the next five years. Jeff explained that this is why the Commission is moving forward with the Capital Reserve process. Note: reach out to Fish and Game re: stocking the fish. Paul has done that, but the problem now is the hatcheries. Jeff asked Barry for an opinion re: the fire susceptibility in the forest. Is the forest high risk? Barry stated that the area that would be most at risk would be the pine barrens. This would be approx. 300-400 acres.

Megan asked about timing of an RFP to the prospective companies. Barry would like to do that this spring. She asked if there is any replanting that happens? No, part of it is based on what is already growing in these areas, soils, etc. White Pine reproduction is favored. Forest diseases are becoming more prevalent. Paul asked about pitch pine. The cones need fire to release the seeds.

Barry and Ron will get out before the leaves come out to work on the boundary by Dr. Fords. There was a boundary that could not be located. Paul is working on a graph of the cuts, revenues, etc. He asked Barry for any records that he might have.

4 Town Forest Warrant Article Status – covered in Barry’s discussion.

5 Forest Land Use App - GMCG – Feb.20, 2026 (Snow date Feb. 27, 2026) group snowshoe – they are going out there tomorrow to check it out. Ron suggested that they might want to snowshoe up to Mary’s Mountain rather than Trout Pond. Parking was also a concern. Yvonne will work on that. Paul made a motion to approve the GMCG land use application. Yvonne seconded. Discussion ensued about the process of having notifications submitted. Consensus is that we will be using the form. APPROVED

6 FAC Invoices – none

7 Public Comment - Susan asked about the warrant status. Is there a plan of attack for Town Meeting – people to speak? Oram will be there. The FCC can also speak to this.

Paul spoke about a new police chief in Town, and that Ms. White is coming back as the Town Administrator, with a three-year contract.

8 Adjourn FAC - Yvonne made a motion to adjourn FAC meeting at 7:39 pm, Ron seconded. The FAC portion of the meeting was adjourned.

Paul commented about Tuckerman’s Pub, to listen to the people from Northern Forests. One of the people is interested in joining the FAC.

## **FCC**

9 GMCG FCC Rep – Oram spoke to this topic. There is a person on their list with Freedom above their name, but that person is not someone who is appointed by the Town. What are the roles and missions of that person? He wonders what the process about this is. Do we need to have a person who is representative of this Board? He will raise this with Nancy at their next meeting, as a procedural issue.

10 Aquatics Update – Nancy updated the Board. Ossipee has agreed to donate \$2500 for the Lake Host Program. She emailed Effingham FCC Chair to try to get feedback from them, but she has not heard back yet. Oram would like to be kept posted when they hear from NH Lakes. We have requested

\$3500, which is in as a Warrant Article. The Conference is June 5 at the Grappone Center. Lake Host is in good shape. Do we offer a position to someone from Ossipee? We should check with them to see if they have any recommendations for hosts.

Megan reported that we have completed the application process with the State. We have started to engage with the two vendors to send out letters to abutters if they in fact do herbicide treatment. She has asked that the Ossipee River be included as well.

#### 11 Applications for Review

Camp Cody – Jeff presented a draft letter for discussion. No proposed increase in impervious area. No alteration to woodland areas proposed. Work will occur in previously disturbed area in a parking lot. Normal erosion and sediment control measures are recommended. Spilling over the current envelope is a possible concern. Sue has a concern about an increase in the number of tanks. She is wondering about the erosion, and if that caused this application to be made. They did not supply a sheet that shows the design. Jeff noted that it appears that the activity will be taking place in the parking lot. Oram spoke about the distances. It appears that they are moving the grease traps and septics closer to the water. They are within 150' of the lake, but outside of the 75' from the lake. Sue notes that these plans are not signed and dated. They don't show the updated septics. They say they are replacing in kind.

Make sure that if there is an accident, it doesn't end up in the lake. If the grease trap back up, where does it go? Jeff will add this concern to the memo. No dimensions were supplied – we have questions about flow, capacity, etc. Sue wonders why there is no representative here to explain this application. Jeff will make sure that when the agenda is posted, it lists the applications we will be discussing. Oram mentions a concern about this being in the riparian. Megan feels that it is appropriate that the memo mentions the septics being sized appropriately. Sue asks if we should do a site visit. The memo will be sent to the State and the Zoning Officer. Nancy made a motion that Jeff will draft a letter with the points discussed and send to the State and the Zoning Officer. Megan seconded. APPROVED – none opposed

NH DES Dredge and Fill - 249 West Bay Rd. – no plans were available. The date for response has passed already. We did not have the opportunity to preview this, so there was no way for us to respond to this.

Wilson – 85 Packard Drive – We looked at this last fall. We asked for permeable pavers, and infiltration around the front patio and the steps. In the plans, they show an infiltration trench next to the foundation of the house. There is another in front of the patio. Jeff notes that it is not clear which trench they are talking about, and that the grout joint are permeable, not the blue stone itself. Permeable pavers could have been used. They have an infiltration trench spec'ed at the front of the pavers. It is not clear if it is circling the whole thing. The grout will not remain permeable if it fills with sand, etc. and the water will be running right down to the Lake. Oram feels that at a minimum there should be water bars. Jeff reviewed notes he made as a draft response. The Commission is agreeable to the concerns listed. Oram would like the term “water bars” added to point 3 of the memo. Megan asked about whether we should comment again about the less than 75’ setback. It is a problem to let them go down to 69 feet. **Maintain the 75’ setback.** This is on the ZBA agenda for the 24<sup>th</sup> of February meeting. Jeff will send this out to the ZBA, and will copy the Zoning Officer. Megan made a motion to approve this memo with the comments we have made, Oram seconded. APPROVED

#### 12 FCC Invoices

NH Assn. Of Conservation Commissions – Invoice 3336 - \$250.00 – 2026 Annual Membership Dues. Megan spoke about our decision last year to pay it for one more year and revisit. Oram spoke about the conference he attended. Megan spoke about what she found on their website. The majority of the Board does not feel that it is worth the money at this time. Nancy feels that we should continue membership. Oram made a motion to vote whether to spend the \$250. Jeff seconded.

1-5-0 Oram, Marks, Hoople, Broderick, Nicoll against. Invoice was not approved.

#### 13 Other business to come before the Commission

Jeff updated – Camp Cody – they withdrew their application. They sent three pieces of communication, which were distributed to this Commission

in the web folder. Sue is still concerned about the foundation drain and whether we approved it. She wants to know what failed. Their application has been withdrawn.

End of year packet submitted to Selectmen and warrant articles. Annual report entries are also in the Sharepoint folder.

Lake Host Contribution letters that went to Effingham and Ossipee are also in the folder.

Oram noted that there is no mention of Scrub Oak Scramblers in the Annual Report. Jeff will see if he can still access it to make that change. Oram suggests that if they can't, he would like it to be in the public comment. Megan noted that they are listed in the FAC Annual Report in wildlife openings.

Stacy called Jeff with the following updates – Capital reserve that we requested was not supported by the BOS. Warrants in general – have been sent to legal, they stripped out the part where FCC supports and our vote was shown.

Clarification on the disposition of funds from the Capital Reserve – they removed FCC and just listed the Selectmen.

Ellen White is coming back as Administrator as of April 1 as long as the budget gets adopted. Stacy will be her assistant as she was previously. Ellen will have a 3-year contract.

Susan spoke about Wabanaki's agreement with the Town. They agreed to pay the fines and address all the zoning violations. She is pleased that the Town has gone through with this.

14 Public Comment -

15 Adjourn FCC – Megan made a motion to adjourn at 9:07 pm, Nancy seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Melissa Donaldson  
Recording Secretary

Note: Deadline for agenda items for this meeting closed at 12pm on  
02/10/2026