

HAMPTON PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
HAMPTON TOWN HALL, 164 ROUTE 97

REGULAR MEETING

Monday, January 26, 2026 7:00 PM
Meeting held virtually via Zoom – see link at bottom

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chairman Kevin Grindle called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. Roll Call/Seating of Alternate Members

In attendance for the meeting and seated were Members Ev Hyde and Stan Crawford. Seated for Gary DeCesare was alternate Kathy Thompson. Also in attendance were representatives from the Conservation Commission, Town Planner John Guskowski, and Planning Consultant Manuel Medina.

3. Audience for Citizens: *Citizens may address the Commission on items not otherwise on the agenda*

There were no comments from the public. Chairman Grindle noted that approval of the minutes had not been included on the agenda, and the Commission would take up the December meeting minutes at the next meeting.

4. Old Business

- a. Commission Workshop – 2026 Plan of Conservation & Development, Community Resources and Connections Discussion

Chairman Grindle introduced the topic of the PoCD and the important input from the Conservation Commission, and invited Andrea Kay, Bruce Spaman, and Marc Cardwell from the Conservation and Recreation Commissions to provide input on the PoCD. John Guskowski introduced the Guiding Principles and sought some input from the members of the Commissions.

Marc Cardwell stated that he has been in town for ten years. He stated that the Town's natural resources integrity and its agricultural character were incredibly important. The Town needs to find ways to make it easy to farm and transition farms to the next generation. He also stated that trail connections, and connections from Town destinations to trail networks, should be a priority. In that way, recreation and economic development could be linked. Chairman Grindle stated that other communities are seeking ways to bring major trail lines (i.e. the Air Line Trail) into town centers – Hebron and Colchester have been working on this. He thought that Hampton could do a similar approach. Ev Hyde thought that Goodwin State Forest could also be integrated into a loop.

Chairman Grindle stated that maintenance and opportunities at Goodwin could be linked with other nearby town holdings to assist making connections into Hampton Center. He stated that for many years, wildlife corridors had been given higher priorities, but trail networks for human users should be more relevant going forward. The Commission discussed the addition of buffered shoulders along the shoulders on Route 6. Chairman Grindle stated that these are also for pedestrian safety and were a recent initiative of CT-DOT. He anticipated these would be added in Hampton when they are ready to resurface those roadways in the next few years.

Chairman Grindle stated that DOT doesn't generally initiate the addition of bicycle lanes on their roadways, but had been responsive in the past to municipal requests. He suggested that Route 6 in Hampton could be recommended for a warrant analysis for these lanes to be added. Marc Cardwell stated that slowing traffic along Route 6 would improve safety and would encourage people to spend more time in Hampton.

Chairman Grindle also suggested that Station Road, and the intersection of Route 6 and connection to Main Street, could be a key corridor. He also noted that if the Air Line Trail was going to be adding wayfinding signage at road intersections, and suggested more details could be added to provide some directions to in-town destinations.

For recreational resources, Stan Crawford suggested the Town could add amenities or opportunities such as cross-country skiing, disc golf, scavenger hunting, and geo-caching. Marc Cardwell stated that mountain biking trails could be added to the Little River Preserve and questioned whether grant opportunities could be pursued to add that amenity. Chairman Grindle suggested the Pomfret mountain biking group ("Pomfret Forest") could be approached for some input and resources. Stan Crawford stated that a New England Mountain Bike Association visited Goodwin State Forest a few years ago and provided some training on creating mountain bike resources.

Bruce Spaman stated that existing town roads that are not actively maintained could also be highly valuable recreation trail resources and significant connections to other towns. Chairman Grindle suggested that the Town needed to pursue more regional connections and do outreach to neighboring communities to leverage higher population areas. The Commission discussed the legal structure of abandoned vs. discontinued roads, and Chairman Grindle stated that he could review the properties that abutted Jericho Road and determine the legal basis for access of the abandoned road. He stated that the Selectmen could make a policy decision about allowing the roadways to be used for multi-use trails instead of active automobile roadways. Marc Cardwell stated that the use of these trails and roadways should be turned into an event that would highlight and bring attention to the Town's trail resources. Chairman Grindle agreed that increased attention and focus on the trails and Town-owned lands would further encourage better maintenance.

Stan Crawford stated that the State had not properly funded Goodwin State Forest, and as a result, the Friends of Goodwin has also languished somewhat. He stated that a good trail run requires a significant number of volunteers, and road crossing control can be costly. The Commission agreed that more attention should be brought to the resources, through all available avenues. Chairman Grindle stated that the state properties could be used as building blocks but not too much time needed to be spent in trying to change the maintenance of these, but instead focus on maintaining and improving town-controlled lands surrounding and connecting to these resources. Stan Crawford stated that both Senator Jeff Gordon and Representative Pat Boyd have been supportive of recreational trails in Hampton.

Chairman Grindle stated that a lot of the current PoCD focused on adding to open space holdings and maintaining current holdings. He stated that the list of priority properties for acquisition should be updated. Bruce Spaman stated that this was a primary function of the Conservation Commissions. He stated that the Conservation Commission needed to revisit its priority list, which has not been updated in a while. Making this a priority could be a major recommendation of the PoCD. Stan Crawford stated that he would forward some historic lists and inventories that he had saved. John Guskowski and Chairman Grindle stated that they could work with NECCOG on the updated GIS mapping.

Relative to recreation, Andrea Kaye stated that the Recreation Commission was seeking to work with several demographic groups, including schoolchildren and households with young families, middle-aged families, and seniors. Chairman Grindle stated that recreational resources were closely tied into housing opportunities, and the Town needed to focus on these wider varieties of needs and interests. Ev Hyde suggested that conservation development planning could be used to meet both housing and recreational needs. He stated that there was a mini-boom in housing development, but these houses were not broadly built as affordable housing.

Kathy Thompson asked about working with the Town's senior population and their needs for recreational opportunities. Bruce Spaman stated that the Town was working on this, but they needed additional resources and possibly subsidies from the State for programming purposes. Chairman Grindle stated that some of the Town's larger open space holdings could be programmed for broader opportunities for seniors, trails, and other resources. Bruce Spaman stated that the Town is mostly passively holding their properties and didn't have much in the way of planning or programming on them. He stated that there was funding from the State that could be used for stewardship planning, through the State division of forestry. He suggested that the Town should be pursuing more actively.

Chairman Grindle stated that he believed that a fuller inventory of resources and planning for opportunities would help the Town understand where its geographic and programming gaps are, and then to seek future funding for property acquisition or improvements. He suggested that the Board of Selectmen would have to be engaged in this discussion. He thanked the participants for this conversation.

John Guskowski presented a proposed schedule and outline for the Plan of Conservation & Development, with a general target of September for adoption. The Commission generally approved of the proposed outline and approach, and would expect the introductory chapter in February.

5. New Business

There was no new business.

6. Staff Report & Enforcement Issues

John Guskowski shared ZEO Jay Gigliotti and agreed with Chairman Grindle that there were no major concerning items on the report. Stan Crawford provided some additional detail on the forest regeneration project on Brook Road, as well as stating that there would be a program on forest regeneration on January 30 at Goodwin State Forest.

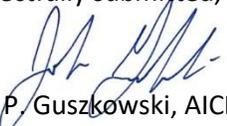
7. Correspondence

There was no additional correspondence.

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Kathy Thompson, seconded by Stan Crawford. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


John P. Guskowski, AICP, CZEO
Town Planner (Consulting)