Town of Granby
Conservation Commission
Regular Meeting
April 14, 2026 at 7 pm
Via Zoom

1. **Roll Call**

Present: Kara Marshall, David Desiderato, Will Madsen, Zach Donais
Absent: Kent McCord
No members of the public attended

2. Review of the March 25, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Zach Donais and Will Madsen were absent from the March 25 meeting, so review and approval were postponed until the next meeting.

3. Continued Farm Lease Conversation

The commissioners present began by reflecting on the discussion at the last meeting. Kara Marshall and David Desiderato felt that disagreement was about the level of urgency accorded to the soil health on the properties. Zach Donais noted that the low organic matter revealed by the soil test was not the result of one growing season, and while it indicated that action is required, the damage could be undone in one growing season. The group the discussed the recommendations for soil testing made by Jim Szipszky via email.

- "Conduct soil testing annually for two years then revert to testing every other year. Accept soil tests performed by lessees as part of this process to avoid duplication of effort / expenditure. Existing testing at 16 Barndoor Hills, Loomis Street and Holcomb Farm appears sufficient.
- "Coordinate taking samples with our lessees to ensure that they are done consistently each year prior to the application of soil supplements.
- "Have at least one soil sample per every 10 acres planted. I.e. 10-12 samples from 107 East Street, 3 samples from 16 Barndoor Hills and 1 sample from Loomis Street.
- "Work with accredited laboratories to measure key soil components / nutrients as well as organic matter. Potentially use UConn, [UConn] Agricultural Extension or 3rd party labs such as Spectrum Analytic used by our lessee.
- "Review test results / trends internally - Town Manager, Conservation Commission and Agricultural Commission and with lessees. Engage the UCONN Agricultural Extension Soil Educator and review available soil testing pamphlets from the Agricultural Extension office that help guide interpretation of results. Understand action plans, such what soil supplements will be applied. Understand any other conservation steps taken by [lessees].
- "Seek funding opportunities for this testing…
- "Confirm if current [lessees] are already using grant funding for soil testing and soil health initiatives. We understand that our lessee of the East Street,

> Barndoor Hills Road and Loomis Street properties was the recipient of a large recent grant for soil health initiatives."

All commissioners present were in agreement that this list of recommendations was an excellent starting point.

Action Item: Kara Marshall will work with this list to make specific recommendations to the town, and will seek feedback from Mike Walsh about what can be implemented.

4. Energy Conservation & Renewables on Town Property

Kara Marshall reported that she had been in contact with Dana Mowry, the Energy Efficiency Consultant from Eversource working with the town. Ms. Mowry reported that the Technical Assessment report had been completed by the engineering firm contracted to do the work, and that she would follow up with Mike Walsh on the results of the study.

5. Broadleaf Solar

The Commissioners discussed the minutes of the May 14, 2024 which identified the questions the Commission at that time passed on to the First Selectman for Broadleaf solar. They agreed they should recommend that all plantings on the property comply with current Planning and Zoning regulations regarding native plants approved on March 25, 2025:

> "Site plans are encouraged to contain native species whenever possible. If a nonnative species is proposed and there is a native species similar in appearance and function, preference shall be given to native species. j. Cleared areas not being regularly mowed should be seeded with a mix of native grasses and pollinator friendly species whenever possible." https://www.granby-ct.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_03252025-2149

Action Item: Kara Marshall to pass this recommendation on to the First Selectman

6. Composting

Will Madsen reported on attending the Connecticut Compost Alliance meeting held at Wesleyan University on March 19th. He said that it was a very well attended and stimulating event. He thought the most relevant presentations to Granby's situation were those by Jennifer Heaton Jones of Housatonic Resource Recovery (HRRA) and David Aldridge of Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resources Recovery Authority (SCRRA). Both are agencies dedicated to processing municipal compost for several towns across their respective regions. Unfortunately, neither will serve Granby, but both offered interesting models. HRRA has set up micro-composting sites in many areas. SCRRA is working to build a large processing facility outside of New London.
The City of New Haven also offered a good example since they have set up 4 bins across the city which are showing good uptake by citizens.

Will Madsen said that it is clear that composting would offer many benefits to Granby. In Connecticut 20% of refuse has been found to be made up of compostable food scraps and 10% of compostable paper products. Reducing the percentage of these organic matters going into landfills can reduce tipping fees (often reaching $150 per ton) by up to 1/5th.

The Commissioners discussed what opportunities Granby may take advantage of. Since previous household pick up efforts by Blue Earth did not enlist the minimum number of households, the commissioners considered exploring setting up central composting collection areas at central locations such as the Transfer Station, the high school or post offices. It might also be beneficial to eventually consider collaborating with other area towns such as East Granby or Simsbury.

Action Item: Will Madsen to set up follow up discussions with HRRA and SCRRA to get more information.

7. Bear Mitigation Education

Central composting may also offer a way for town residents concerned about bears raiding garbage to reduce the risk of conflicts. The Commissioners felt that education about how to manage trash and other bear attractants would be more beneficial than pursuing Bear Proof garbage cans.

8. Plan of Conservation & Development

Jim Szipszky has served as the Conservation Commission's representative to the POCD commission. It is unclear whether his resignation applied to both commissions.

Action Item: Kara Marshall to determine if a representative to the POCD is needed from among the commissioners.

9. Meeting Topics for May 12, 2026

Commissioners recommended keeping the same topics, and adding a topic to discuss recruiting for the two open seats on the committee

10. Final Comments from Commissioners

The commissioners reflected on the open seats on the committee. David Desiderato suggested recruiting for specific skills or interests.

11. Adjourn

The Commission adjourned at 8:22 pm

Minutes Prepared by Kara Marshall

Kara L Marshall

April 20, 2026