



TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT

Farmington Canal Commission Minutes

Regular Meeting

7:00 PM, September 1, 2026

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Hamden Government
Center
2750 Dixwell Avenue
Hamden, CT 06518
Tel: (203) 287-7070
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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Commissioner D. Schaefer at **7:10 PM**.

2. ATTENDANCE

The Clerk called the roll, and the following members were present:

Present:

Commissioner David Schaefer, Chairman
Commissioner Nick Hansen
Commissioner Peter Cyr
Commissioner Kathy Larson
Commissioner Jeffrey Campbell
Commissioner Gerry Tobin

Also in attendance were Eugene Lipschutz, Town Planner; Briana J. Belton-Robinson, Boards and Commissions Clerk; and 2 members of the public, Norm B. and Mike Melanson, who attended virtually.

3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Chairman D. Schaefer requested a motion to adopt the minutes from Wednesday, July 15th, 2026, with amendments.

Please see the corrections approved for amendment:

Chairman D. Schaefer noted one correction: under the section titled "Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes," the minutes should identify the previous meeting as June 2, 2026.

Commissioner P. Cyr made the motion to amend the previous agenda, and Commissioner J. Campbell seconded it.

Vote by Roll Call:

Yes

Commissioner David Schaefer, Chairman
Commissioner Nick Hansen
Commissioner Peter Cyr

Commissioner Kathy Larson
Commissioner Jeffrey Campbell
Commissioner Gerry Tobin

No

Absent

The motion passed.

- **Roll Call Vote Summary:** Yes 6, No 0, Abstentions 0, Absent 0

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman D. Schaefer opened the floor for public comment.

Norm B. stated that he had no public comment.

Mike Melanson stated that he had no public comment.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

There will be a brief summary of the correspondence submitted between the last correspondence update and this one. This includes but is not limited to any correspondence with council members that members wish to submit for the record. It can also include written communication to the council from the administration, community members, etc.

Chairman D. Schaefer reported receiving correspondence from someone affiliated with the University of Connecticut about a high school student interested in installing environmental libraries along the Farmington Canal Trail. The proposed libraries would allow trail users to take, exchange, and contribute environmentally focused publications.

Commissioner P. Cyr volunteered to follow up regarding the proposal and asked about funding and the Town approval process.

Eugene Lipschutz, Town Planner, stated that the proposal involved installing an improvement on the trail and recommended coordinating with the Public Works Department. He explained that the project could require a referral to the Planning and Zoning Commission as a municipal improvement before ultimately receiving Legislative Council approval. Commissioner P. Cyr agreed to connect the project representatives with E. Lipschutz and Public Works Director Joe Colello.

Commissioner N. Hansen expressed support for the concept but raised concerns regarding long-term maintenance and ensuring that the environmental library would not become an unmanaged repository for unwanted materials. He also recommended developing a clearer, publicly accessible process for individuals seeking to install benches, signs, libraries, or other trail improvements.

Chairman D. Schaefer noted that a written procedure already exists for memorial benches,

including Commission review of locations. E. Lipschutz explained that municipal improvements generally follow a process involving Town departments, Planning and Zoning review, and Legislative Council approval. He offered to outline the process for the Commission.

Commissioner G. Tobin also raised concerns regarding responsibility for future maintenance of the proposed environmental libraries. Chairman D. Schaefer agreed that the Commission would need to address maintenance before approving any proposal.

Commissioner J. Campbell supported making installation procedures more visible and accessible on the Commission's webpage.

Mike Melanson stated that he recently assisted an individual seeking information about donating a memorial bench and that the individual had difficulty determining whom to contact. E. Lipschutz clarified that bench requests should go to the Planning and Zoning Department and said the webpage could make contact information clearer.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

(if recommended by the town attorney)

No Executive Session was held.

7. REPORTS

1. Report of the Chairman

E. Lipschutz reported that Commissioner J. Campbell had forwarded information regarding erosion along the trail. The concern was forwarded to Engineering and Public Works for review and follow-up.

Commissioner N. Hansen reported receiving an analysis from Mike Melanson regarding the painted mileage markers along the trail. The analysis identified approximately 46 existing markers in varying conditions and approximately 49 missing markers. Commissioner N. Hansen agreed to forward the information to E. Lipschutz and Public Works Director J. Colello.

Chairman D. Schaefer explained that Public Works originally painted the mileage markers, and Commission volunteers subsequently maintained them using materials supplied by Public Works. He noted that Public Works still has the stencils.

Commissioner K. Larson said she and another former Commission member repainted the markers several years ago. She explained that repainting had been delayed because of plans for a larger trail-wide mileage marking system extending from south to north.

Commissioner P. Cyr reported that he contacted State Representative Sweet regarding proposed trail signage and questions concerning trail naming and branding. He stated that the applicable bond request or package had not yet been located. Norm B. agreed to provide Commissioner P. Cyr with information regarding the funding source or bond package.

Commissioner J. Campbell noted that the trail already includes branding associated with the East Coast Greenway and other statewide trail systems. He said this precedent would help maintain Hamden's identity while also recognizing the trail as part of a larger regional system.

Chairman D. Schaefer supported consistent mileage references along the trail beginning at the New Haven border while maintaining the Farmington Canal Trail's existing name and identity.

Chairman D. Schaefer asked E. Lipschutz for information on maintenance work completed by Public Works during the summer and whether capital funds were used. E. Lipschutz stated that he did not have an update but would follow up with Public Works for the next meeting.

Commissioner P. Cyr recommended that the Commission develop an updated, consolidated list of trail maintenance and capital needs before the upcoming budget season. He said such a document would give the new administration a clear understanding of the Commission's priorities and show the impact of deferred maintenance.

Chairman D. Schaefer supported the recommendation and referenced a previous trail-wide assessment conducted with the Mayor, Public Works, Planning, Engineering, and Commission members. He noted that the prior assessment identified numerous projects, including bridge repairs, stone dust replacement, fencing, root damage, and other maintenance needs. Some projects had been completed, but many remained outstanding.

E. Lipschutz agreed to look for previous assessments and grant materials and said he would also contact the Town's Grants Director about an earlier Recreational Trails Grant application.

Chairman D. Schaefer and Commissioner J. Campbell discussed deteriorating wooden infrastructure and signage along portions of the trail. Commissioner J. Campbell specifically identified deteriorating bridge planks, a patched bridge area with an additional opening, deteriorating fencing and railings, and a damaged sign near River Road.

Commissioner K. Larson identified Tom Brown of the Parks Department as the individual familiar with trail maintenance and the potential repainting of mileage markers.

Chairman D. Schaefer suggested that one or more Commission members conduct a trail walk with T. Brown to inventory maintenance needs. Commissioner J. Campbell volunteered to participate.

Chairman D. Schaefer stated that he would confirm the appropriate Town contact and explore arranging the trail inventory. E. Lipschutz recommended including Public Works Director J. Colello in communications.

8. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner J. Campbell asked about access to the Commission's general email account.

B. Belton-Robinson stated that she and Chairman D. Schaefer currently have access to the Commission email account. Chairman D. Schaefer explained that because messages cannot automatically be forwarded outside the Town's email system, he would periodically check the account. B. Belton-Robinson stated that she could also forward messages to Chairman D. Schaefer as they are received.

B. Belton-Robinson identified an August 17, 2026 email from Jennifer Tucker regarding a request to memorialize a friend's son along the trail. Mike Melanson clarified that the correspondence concerned the memorial bench request discussed earlier in the meeting, specifically a bench with a memorial plaque.

E. Lipschutz requested that the correspondence be forwarded to him so that Planning and Zoning staff could provide the applicant with information regarding the established process.

Commissioner J. Campbell asked whether another Commissioner could also be provided access to the Commission's general email account. B. Belton-Robinson stated that she would inquire with Town Clerk Karimah Mickens regarding whether additional Commissioners could receive access and, if permitted, the process for doing so.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner J. Campbell informed the Commission of an upcoming linear trail conference scheduled at Southern Connecticut State University on October 2, 2026. He stated that he would be unable to attend and asked whether another Commissioner planned to participate.

Commissioner P. Cyr indicated that he had the conference on his calendar. Commissioner J. Campbell agreed to provide additional information regarding the event.

B. Belton-Robinson confirmed that the Commission's next meetings were scheduled for Tuesday, October 6, 2026, at 7:00 PM and Tuesday, November 10, 2026, at 7:00 PM.

Chairman D. Schaefer said he could not attend the October 6 meeting and asked whether another Commissioner would be willing to convene it in his absence.

Commissioner N. Hansen volunteered to convene the October 6, 2026 meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner P. Cyr made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner K. Larson seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at **7:58 PM**.

<https://hamden.zoom.us/rec/share/fnkLoPtCrQGSL1ltt9tWgZN71bSACiSN1UP0cmCHPTHwDQcBjp4ec7ZIYNUDGvWp.j79eyhNKfuWjhtUq?startTime=1788303124000>