

# FAIRLEE CONSERVATION COMMISSION BYLAWS

**DRAFT**  
**22 DECEMBER 2025**

## **ARTICLE I: AUTHORIZATION AND PURPOSE**

These Bylaws are adopted pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Chapter 118, §§ 4501-4506, which authorizes the establishment of municipal Conservation Commissions in Vermont.

The purposes of the Fairlee Conservation Commission (“the Commission”) are to do the following:

- a) Develop and maintain an inventory and conduct studies of the Town’s natural, scenic, and social (any resources that have historic, educational, scientific, architectural, or archeological values in which the public has an interest) resources and to assist in planning for their conservation for the benefit of the townspeople.
- b) Recommendation to the Selectboard acquisition of property to protect and conserve the Town’s natural and social resources, and with the consent of the Selectboard to accept gifts of land for conservation purposes.
- c) Conduct a broad education program on issues that have an impact on local natural and social resources and increase public awareness of conservation goals and benefits
- d) Protect local natural and social resources, including water, watersheds, wetlands, sensitive areas, and species.
- e) To work in concert with and make recommendations, cooperate, and work in concert with local municipal officials, commissions, groups, and organizations having similar concerns and with appropriate agencies of the regional, state, and federal governments, while not infringing on duties designated to the above commissions, groups, boards, etc, (i.e. the Town Forest Board, the Planning Commission, the Development Review Board, the Select Board).

## **ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP**

- a) The Commission shall consist of three to nine members, appointed by the Selectboard. All members must be residents of Fairlee.
- b) Appointments shall be for a four-year term, except for those first appointed, whose terms shall be varied in length so that in the future the number whose terms expire in each successive year shall be minimized. Appointments filling vacancies shall be for the remainder of the term of the appointment.
- c) The Selectboard may remove any member if just cause is stated to the member in writing and after a public meeting on the matter, if that member requests one. Just cause shall include, but not be limited to, a failure to attend at least 50% of the Commission meetings during the preceding twelve-month period.

# FAIRLEE CONSERVATION COMMISSION BYLAWS

**DRAFT**  
**22 DECEMBER 2025**

- d) Upon vacancies, the Commission will provide recommendations to the Selectboard, who will fill the vacancies within one month thereafter.
- e) All members shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for approved expenses.

## **ARTICLE III: OFFICERS**

The Commission shall elect the following officers annually at the first meeting of the group after Town Meeting:

- a) A Chair, who shall preside at all meetings of the Commission at which (s)he is present and shall direct the work of the Commission. (S)he shall submit a brief annual report to be included in the annual Town Report of the activities of the past year, and plans for the coming year. The Chair shall ensure continuing liaison between the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and other local and neighboring town groups.
- b) A Vice-Chair, who shall assume all duties and powers of the Chair in the Chair's absence or when the Chair so requests.

NOTE: The Commission may opt to have Co-Chairs assume the duties of the Chair and Vice-Chair.

- c) A Clerk, who shall keep minutes of all meetings and proceedings of the Commission, and record any action taken by the Commission. The Clerk shall post public notices of Commission meetings and give notice to individual members when necessary.
- d) A Treasurer, who shall prepare and present a financial report at each meeting of the Commission and shall submit an annual financial statement to be included in the Town Report. Payment authorization for all expenditures over \$100 shall be voted on by the Commission. The Commission Treasurer will work with the Town Treasurer to make sure authorized payments are made.
- e) The Commission may elect other officers that it deems appropriate.
- f) All officers shall be elected for a one-year term and may be reelected for successive terms in the same office.

## **ARTICLE IV: PROCEDURES**

The Conservation Commission functions as an advisory body to the various municipal bodies, reporting ultimately to the legislative body. The Conservation Commission Chair shall develop an agenda for each meeting. Clear lines of communication are important to the proper function of

# FAIRLEE CONSERVATION COMMISSION BYLAWS

**DRAFT**  
**22 DECEMBER 2025**

the Commission, its committees, and other municipal bodies. In general, projects and decision-making are to proceed along the following guidelines:

- a) The Conservation Commission will develop its work program and assign specific tasks to its committees. The committees may present suggestions for projects.
- b) The committees will develop recommendations for Conservation Commission approval and/or amendment.
- c) The Conservation Commission will present approved recommendations and/or plans to the legislative body.
- d) Final decisions and actions are the responsibility of the legislative body.
- e) The Commission and all its committees shall operate in accordance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law.

## **ARTICLE V: MEETINGS**

- a) The Commission meetings shall be open to the public and be held at a regular time and place. The time and place of each meeting shall be posted at the Town Hall not less than seven days in advance. All records and minutes of any Commission meeting or action shall be filed with the Town Clerk and be available to the public.
- b) The Commission and all of its committees shall operate in accordance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law.
- c) A quorum shall consist of the presence of a majority of the members. No action shall be taken without the affirmative vote of a majority of those voting. Any member unable to attend shall notify the Commission in advance of the meeting date.
- d) In order to secure and preserve the highest level of public trust in the deliberations and decision of the Commission, it is incumbent upon each member not only to scrupulously avoid any act that constitutes a conflict of interest established in law, but also to avoid any act that gives the appearance of an undue special privilege or a conflict of interest. A member shall withdraw from all participation in any matter including all formal and informal discussion and voting, in which the member may have a conflict of interest or upon the assertion that there is a reasonable public perception that a conflict or a special privilege may exist.

## **ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES**

- a) The Commission may function with both standing and ad hoc committees. Standing committees shall be established by a majority vote of the Commission; ad hoc committees

# FAIRLEE CONSERVATION COMMISSION BYLAWS

**DRAFT**  
**22 DECEMBER 2025**

may be established by decision of the Commission Chair. The Commission Chair shall appoint Chairs for all committees.

- b) All committees shall function in an advisory capacity to the Commission. No action shall be taken by any committee without the prior consent of the commission.
- c) Committee membership shall be open to the public and follow Vermont Open Meeting Law. The time and place of each meeting shall be posted no less than seven days prior to the meeting. Minutes of committee meetings will be submitted to the Commission as soon as possible and incorporated with the records of the Commission.

## **ARTICLE VII: FINANCIAL MATTERS**

The Commission may receive grants, money, or private gifts, to be carried in a conservation fund authorized under 24 VSA Chapter 118 §4505(5) to be expended only for the purposes of this chapter. The Conservation fund shall be under the trust and management of the Treasurer of the Town. This fund shall accrue from year to year for the use of the Commission solely for the purposes set out in ARTICLE II. Any funds from private, state, or federal sources that impose any obligation on the Town shall be accepted only by consent of the Selectboard.

The Commission may request appropriations from the Town for its operating, inventory, land management, education and information expenses. Funds appropriated for these purposes shall be included in the Town Budget.

## **ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS**

These Rules may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Commission by a two-thirds vote of the Commission. Written notice of intent to amend must be publicly posted, sent to each member of the Commission and the Chair of the Selectboard at least seven days prior to the meeting at which the proposed action is to be taken.

## **ARTICLE IX: DISSOLUTION**

The duration of the Fairlee Conservation Commission is intended to be perpetual. In the event that dissolution is necessary, all existing public trust funds of the Commission remaining after payment of appropriate expenses shall be distributed to tax-exempt organizations emphasizing the same purpose as the Commission. Any remaining funds originating from Municipal appropriations will revert back to the Municipality's general fund.

**FAIRLEE CONSERVATION COMMISSION BYLAWS**

**DRAFT  
22 DECEMBER 2025**

[Signature page]

DRAFT