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MINUTES
July 10, 2025

MEMBER ROLL CALL:

Ralph Lutjen, Chairman – Present	Ted Slader (Alternate) – Present
Mike Brooks, Vice Chair – Present	Marcia McKenna - Present
Mike Mosher – Present	Josh Shackford - Present
Rick Judkins - Selectmen’s Rep. - Excused	Liza Rogerson (Alternate) – Present
Marc Ohlson – Excused	

OTHERS PRESENT: Kasia Scontsas - Madison TV, Katharine Young, Land Use Boards Administrator, Tim Nolin, Forest Land Improvement

MEETING POSTED: The meeting was posted in the Madison Town Hall Upper & Lower levels, Madison & Silver Lake Post Offices on July 2, 2025.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Lutjen called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

ELEVATION OF ALTERNATES: Chairman Lutjen stated there was no need for elevation of alternates as a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairman Lutjen asked for any comments or issues with the minutes from June 5, 2025.

Motion by Shackford, seconded by Mosher to approve the June 5, 2025 minutes as written. The motion was voted on and passed **unanimously**.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Chairman Lutjen closed the public comment since there were not public present.

OLD BUSINESS:

Tim Nolin – Forest Land Improvement: Nolin presented an update on the proposed forest management project. He explained that there is an area high up on the ridge where the worst of the damage is occurring, though it's not 100% mortality. He recommended a patch cut/clear cut in this focused area

since the remaining oaks would likely die if left standing after surrounding trees are removed. He noted that the beach, maple, and aspen in the area are poor quality.

Nolin explained that the rest of the property would require thinning or removal of very small groups of trees, which aligns with the original management plan's focus on identifying poor quality trees or undesirable species. The management approach now includes addressing dead and dying oaks as well.

Regarding access, Nolin confirmed that Dig Safe had been contacted about the culvert. He described how the project would develop management access with a short section of road, a good landing, and an improved skid road. This approach would avoid using the loamy road that runs through the pine barrens.

Nolin estimated at least \$20,000 in income to the town after expenses, plus the value of the improved access. He recommended using the same cut-to-length operator used on the Everett Parker property, which would protect the soil by packing brush into skid roads and returning nutrients to the soil. This approach would allow for more precise cutting without dragging whole trees through the woods.

For timing, Nolin suggested starting in September and finishing in October, typically one of the driest times of the year.

In response to a question about trail impacts, Nolin indicated they would cross the hiking trail in only one spot and would maintain approximately a 75-foot uncut buffer along the trail for aesthetics, except where dead trees might need removal.

When asked about bidding the project out, Nolin explained that unlike gravel work with clear specifications, forestry work has significant variability in quality. He emphasized that getting the best quality work was more important than maximizing every dollar, and that he would still negotiate above-average stumpage prices.

Nolin also noted that the management plan is from 2016 and typically has a 10-year lifespan. He suggested that in the next few years, all the management plans should be updated, especially since work has been completed on several properties that makes the current plans outdated.

Nolin mentioned that four trees on the Nature Conservancy side of Lead mine Road would need to be removed to make the corner negotiable by tractor-trailer trucks. He confirmed the trees are within the town's right-of-way (within 19 feet of the centerline, while the town's ownership extends 24.75 feet from centerline).

Regarding road closures, Nolin indicated that any closures would be very brief, only while cutting trees near the road, removing stumps at the corner, or during initial excavation. Otherwise, there would just be warning signs about log trucks using the roadway.

Nolin committed to mowing the hiking trails, woods roads, and field prior to Old Home Week, which starts on Saturday, August 2nd.

Motion by Mosher, seconded by Shackford to authorize Nolin to move forward with the management plan dated July 10, 2025 for the potential salvage/harvest on Goodwin-Burke Town Forest. The motion was voted on and passed **unanimously**.

Chain of Ponds Update: Chairman Lutjen reported that the Conservation Commission had met with their attorney and is in the process of negotiating terms for the Chain of Ponds acquisition. Comments are being made to the draft agreement and discussions are underway.

Conservation Easement Deed Revisions: No further discussion was recorded for this agenda item.

Property Review Commitments: TBD.

New Business: Aysia Wellinghurst, Madison Master Plan Steering Committee

Aysia Wellinghurst, representing the Madison Master Plan Steering Committee explained that Madison is updating its master plan and that she was tasked with reaching out to conservation groups for their input.

Aysia distributed visioning prompts for the Commission to consider, including brainstorming activities and questions about short-term and long-term projects and goals. She noted that these responses would need to be submitted by October.

The Commission discussed their own conservation master plan update, with Chairman Lutjen explaining that it is substantially complete but had been shelved temporarily because they didn't want to issue a plan that omitted the significant Chain of Ponds project. He indicated that once Chain of Ponds is finalized, they would update and issue their plan, as it would represent significant changes to their future planning.

Wellinghurst mentioned that North Country Council might get involved with the town's master plan and had suggested adding a natural resources section to the conservation portion of the plan. She also confirmed that the Conservation Commission would be doing a wildlife presentation for Old Home Week at the firehouse.

Selectman's Report: Judkins, the Selectman's Representative, was not present at the meeting. No report was given.

Planning Board Report: Ohlson, the Planning Board Chairman, was not present at the meeting.

Administrative Correspondence: Chairman Lutjen went over the account balances as noted below:

Account Balances as of June 1, 2025

Conservation Land Use Change Tax: **\$225,781.07 + \$5.94 Interest = \$225,787.01**

Forest Maintenance Account: **\$61,935.95 + \$1.63 cents Interest = \$61,937.58**

Conservation Gift Account: **\$261.76 + \$.01 cents Interest = \$261.77**

Capital Reserve Account: **Balance as of May 3, 2025 was \$67,544.75 and June 4, 2025 is \$67,689.24**

McKenna provided the wording for the donation jar and suggested adding "Please support with your contribution, the conservation and environmental educational opportunities for Madison Youth." The Commission agreed to this wording.

Young stated shed would attend the presentation and that she would set up a table for the wildlife presentation at Old Home Week and would provide wildlife vinyl stickers as a gift to those making donations.

Motion by Lutjen, seconded by Mosher to adjourn the meeting. The motion was voted on and passed **unanimously** and the meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Submitted by,

Katharine Young
Land Use Boards Administrator