

Lyme Common Planning Committee's Report to Select Board
September 29, 2020

The Lyme Common Planning Committee, comprising; Co-Chairs - Michelle Whitcomb & Laurie Wadsworth, Members - Lisa Hayes, Russell Barnes, Earl Strout, Barbara Balch & Katie Rusch, Planning Board Representatives - Vicki Smith & Tim Cook and Select Board Representative - Judy Brotman, was tasked with exploring all aspects of the Common going into the future with the intent to enhance its role in supporting community vitality while maintaining our rural beauty.

The mission was to be completed in 3 phases:

1. The first phase is to identify and describe usage and activities that the Common should support.
2. The second phase will then include a buildout proposal to include consideration of items required to achieve phase 1 results, such as placement of; permanent fixtures, types of trees and other vegetation, fencing, parking, lighting, walkways, utility requirements, etc.
3. The third phase will be to obtain both construction and reoccurring maintenance costs to perform the buildout and submit a formal proposal to the Select Board within 12 months.

The Committee developed a list of potential and current uses, as well as a list of topics for exploration including; parking, safety, landscape/usage and structures. ([see attached](#)) We then split into groups to explore these areas of passion and reported our findings back to the Committee. At our last meeting, we compiled a list of recommendations and various opinions and agreed to present them to the Select Board in this proposal. It is important to note that this Committee was not unanimous on all recommendations mentioned in this proposal; however, everyone's ideas are included below. Community feedback was continuously sought out and feedback received was greatly valued and considered.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were not able to complete all phases of the mission. Our final meeting was held on February 11, 2020. The Lyme Common Planning Committee respectfully requests that the following recommendations be reviewed and further considered by the Select Board.

Overflow Parking:

The Committee considered the following list for possible use of private property:

- # 18 On The Common (formerly known as Lyme Computer).
- # 16 On The Common (Northern Woodlands).
- # 6 On The Common (the rear parking lot use by the Condominiums).
- Lyme Historians parking lot.
- American Legion parking lot.
- Lyme Congregational Church (parking along the horse sheds).
- Former Green Mountain Studio/Britton Lane (shuttle service may be needed).

The Committee also considered alternative parking solutions including parking along and on the Common.

- Back side of the Common - parallel parking.
- Back side of the Common - pull in parking, perpendicular to the common.
- East side of the Common – creating a parking lot on the common.

Be it known, some members of the committee oppose any parking on or along the Common.

Safety:

The unanimous top priority of the Committee was safety. We researched and discussed several different safety concerns, some of which will require landscaping and structures to be built and/or installed. Those are included in the sections below.

We ask that the Select Board consider approaching the State for installation of a crosswalk for pedestrian safety. We also request consideration be given to re-directing Route 10 & East Thetford Road traffic to make On The Common a one-way road.

Landscape/Usage:

With safety and current/potential Common use in mind, we ask the Board for consideration of installation of professionally designed landscape including but not limited to:

- The ends of the Common to be kept free of trees/plantings to provide better visibility and safety to traffic and pedestrians.
- The creation of a canopy of trees within the mid-common area. Please refer to the attached survey of the Common's existing trees – conducted and submitted by Bob Thebodo.
- Retaining an open “activity area” for the ice rink, yard games, soccer etc.
- Installation of multiple additional power outlets. Kindly consider all areas of the common when doing this.
- Installation of maintained walkways:
 - Across common to Lyme Country Store (Back of Common to Route 10 side).
And/or
 - Across common to Stella's/Post Office (Back of Common to Route 10 side).
 - One (not two) maintained walkways – consider midway Back of Common to Dowd's Inn area.
- Placement of approximately six additional moveable benches.
- Installation of free wireless internet service to be made available for use by those enjoying the Common.

Structures:

To enhance the aesthetics of the Common as well as to increase safety, we dividedly ask that the Board consider installation of the following structures:

- Fencing along the edge of the Common, on the Route 10 side, with openings to walk through in a manner in which it considers traffic and safety concerns. (No fencing on Back of Common side.)
- Consider curbing along Route 10, as alternative to fencing.
- Construction of a maintained Bandstand/Gazebo.
- Installation a permanent event sign/public notice board. (Keeping the option available for use of current “handmade” event banners, such as school plays etc.)

The Committee also requests that the Board kindly consider limiting the number of signs on the common to as few as possible to reduce visual noise.

Much consideration was given to the cannon. The Committee had many opinions as to its placement and the need to accurately document its history. These opinions ranged from keeping the cannon placed where it currently is on the school side of the big common to relocating it to the Little Common – both with and without new historical signage.

A considerable amount of time was given to the topic of burying the power lines. The Committee recommends that the Board consider this option, and that it be funded by private funding not taxpayer dollars. With the burial of the power lines some propose trees be planted on the Route 10 side with the intention to create a canopy over the road.

The Little Common was not overlooked in our discussions. Among the items listed above, we considered creating a professionally landscaped and maintained memorial/quiet space that would include benches.

The members of the Lyme Common Planning Committee would like to sincerely thank the Select Board for this opportunity to contribute to the Town. We welcome any questions you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michelle Whitcomb & Laurie Wadsworth, Co-Chairs
Lyme Common Planning Committee