

**Lyme Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2014**



PRESENT: Members – Blake Allison, Russ Hirschler, Matt Stevens, Tom Colgan, Joanna Jaspersohn, Heather Toulmin, James Graham (Alternate) and John Peterson (Alternate)

Blake called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. Review and Approve Minutes from 2/03/2014

- On a motion by **Russ**, seconded by **Tom**, the 2/03/2014 minutes as amended were approved unanimously.

2. Land Protection and Easements

- **Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) Warrant Article** – **Blake** opened the floor to further discussion about Article 16 on the upcoming Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Most of the discussion pertained to clarifying information about the Conservation Fund and an assessment of the whether the Article would pass or fail.

3. Trails and Land Management

- **Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) Trail Maintenance Program** – **Russ** reiterated last month's offer to have a UVTA high school "trail corps" team available to work in the Lyme area during July. He said the main cost to the Commission would be \$250 to reimburse the UVTA for staffing costs. After some discussion **Tom** moved, and **Joanna** seconded, that the Commission commit to hosting a team for two daylong sessions on July dates to be determined. In the meantime, under Matt's guidance, the Commission would create a list of four potential projects. The motion passed unanimously with **Russ** (UVTA Executive Dir.) abstaining.
- **Chaffee/Town Beach Connecting Trail** – **Heather** said she had spoken to Rec Committee Chair Dina Cutting about the proposed trail extension the Commission discussed at its February meeting. She said Dina was receptive to the idea and had invited her to appear at the Rec Committee's March 24 meeting.

4. Project and Application Review

Town "Trail-a-thon" Day – **Matt** proposed that the Commission sponsor an event that would draw wider attention to the town's hiking trail system. He suggested such a program might involve a daylong, open to the public hiking of the town's trail system. Additional ideas offered included a "passport" dimension where participants could get verification they hiked all the trails and receive some kind of prize for doing so. It was suggested completion of that could take place over several weeks. The concept was endorsed unanimously, and **Matt** said he would develop a specific time frame and structure.

Project and Application Review, cont.

- **Lyme School Playground Renovation – Heather** noted that if the school renovation is approved and goes forward, some of the work might cause intrusion into an adjacent wetland that has been put forward for development as an educational resource. **Blake** said he last week raised permitting concerns regarding that work with School Board Chair Mark Schiffman who said he would discuss it with the project's engineers.

5. Other Business

- **UFLT Annual Conservation Commission Meeting Report – Matt** said the February 4 event was well attended and that the featured speaker was a UVM female grad student who is working on a project to explore the monetary value riparian wetlands can provide in an "Irene" style storm event. For example, said Matt, her study projected that wetlands in Middlebury deterred \$3.5 million in potential structural and infrastructure damage.
- **Firewood Assistance Program – Blake** said that Russ had given him a contact in a Norwich program and that he would follow up.
- **Annual Snow Shoe Walk – Blake** reported that four people (Matt, Lee, Bob Stein and himself) attended the event spending three hours exploring the Lower Grant Brook Trail system and some of the adjoining Lyme Hill Preserve.
- **Exploring New Media Options – Heather** made note of the Bradford CC's use of modern social media such as Facebook for extending its communication reach within that town and suggested the Lyme CC consider similar possibilities that go beyond using the town web site. After some discussion drawing on the varied experience of Commissioners in their professional lives, it was agreed the idea should be pursued.
- **Commission Terms – Blake** noted that Annual Town Meeting marks the expiration of terms of some Commissioners and asked that all members let him know by April's meeting their intended status for the coming year.

7. Publicity

- **Lyme Community and Church News – Blake** said he would submit notes focusing on information about NH Dept. of Environmental Services permitting issues pertaining to activity in wetland and river buffers and setbacks.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

The next scheduled Conservation Commission meeting is on Monday, April 7 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lyme Center Academy building.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "V. Blake Allison, Secretary". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Blake Allison, Secretary *emeritus*