

**Lyme Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2013**



PRESENT: Members – Russell Hirschler, Lee Larson, Blake Allison, Richard Vidal and Heather Toulmin

Public - Wayne and Faith Pushee, Charles Hirshberg

Vice Chair Russ Hirschler, filling in for Chair Matt Stevens, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Review and Approve Minutes from 2/04/13

- On a motion by **Russ**, seconded by **Heather**, the 2/04/13 minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

2. Land Protection and Easements

- **Potential Land/Conservation Easement Purchase** – **Lee** reported he had a passing conversation with a resident regarding a parcel of land that may come on the market sometime this year. He said, the resident had asked him to keep the discussion confidential at this early stage.
- **Chaffee Parking Follow Up** – During the course of last month's meeting with the Independence Day Committee regarding possibly using some of the Chaffee Sanctuary for overflow parking on the night of the fireworks, it was asked whether the terms of the covenant establishing the sanctuary would allow even limited parking. Lee said the management plan bans all motorized vehicles everywhere in the sanctuary except on its drive and in the parking area.
- **Meeting With the Selectboard Regarding Eurasian Milfoil Control** – **Blake** said he, Matt and Lee met on Thursday, March 1st with the board to exchange views regarding Articles 16 and 17 that appear on the Warrant for the upcoming Annual Town Meeting. Most of the conversation focused on Article 17. If approved, money now collected through the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) that now goes into the Conservation Fund 100% could be diverted toward milfoil removal or other projects, not necessarily of a conservation nature, as voted by Annual Town Meeting. Please see the February 4th minutes for a more detailed discussion of this matter. Blake noted the Selectboard's said the article's intent was to use LUCT money first for milfoil control with unspent money being passed on to the Conservation Fund. Blake said the Conservation Commission delegation noted the language did not reflect that. Selectboard Chair Simon Carr said the article could be amended from the floor to align the language more fully with the board's intent.
- **Town Forest Logging?** – **Lee** said he had been approached by forester John O'Brien about the possibility of doing some logging in the Town Forest. Lee said that O'Brien was working on private land abutting the forest's northern edge and had asked whether we needed any work done in the wake of several major wind events that occurred during the last two years. Lee said he did a survey and found few issues with the exception of some blow downs along Mud Turtle Pond Rd.

3. Trails and Land Management

- **Big Rock Trail Damage – Heather** said a recent walk she took in the Big Rock Sanctuary showed noticeable trail damage. She said puncheons had been covered with soil, boardwalk planks had been removed and the trail was rutted in several areas. It was agreed the matter needed investigation and that repair work should be scheduled for Trails Day in the spring.

4. Project and Application Review

- **Pushee Septic Application – Faith and Wayne Pushee** appeared before the Commission with **Engineer Charles Hirshberg** to discuss their plans to substantially renovate an existing 17,000 sq. ft. lot and cabin they own on Post Pond's western shore with frontage on Post Pond Lane. The plan is to replace an existing dry well and outhouse with a septic system and well set back from the shore toward Post Pond Lane. The Pushees also want to expand the cabins footprint, now 800 sq. ft., to 950 sq. ft. The septic system had received state approval. After some discussion, **Lee** moved that the Commission send a favorable letter with no additional recommendations to the ZBA. **Russ** said he would do that.

5. Outreach and Education

- **Lyme School Project – Heather** said Lyme School First Grade teacher Jennifer Wilcox had expressed interest in a Valley Quest style project with her class in the Big Rock Sanctuary. Heather said the project would be similar to one Wilcox did on Lower Grant Brook Trail two years ago.
- **Conservation Fund Explanation –** In light of the forthcoming vote on the aforementioned Article 17, it was discussed whether some effort should be made to offer through the Commission's web site an explanation of what the Land Use Change Tax does and how the funds collected through it have been used to benefit land conservation in the town. **Lee** observed that rather than causing higher taxes, the use of the Conservation Fund for land purchase resulted in a lower tax impact on the town because open, conserved land does not require the cost intensive services, such as fire and school, which developed land does. He said he would put a statement together and circulate it to Commission members for comment before having it posted. It was recommended the document also include a list of purchases made through the fund.

6. Other Business

- **Commission Membership Terms and Nominations --** There was renewed discussion regarding Matt's February observation that **Tom** and **Lee's** terms expire in March and that they would have to apply for re-appointment if they wanted to continue on the Commission. **Lee** said he would like to stay on but as an alternate. It was thought **Tom** likely would stay on, but that needed to be confirmed. It was suggested **Joanna** might want to assume Lee's fulltime position. Blake thought it best to check with her since she had accepted an appointment to the newly formed Eurasian Milfoil Committee. **Russ** noted that **Matt** had last month said he wanted to step down as Commission Chair and *in absentia* had nominated **Blake** to succeed him. On a motion by Russ seconded by Heather, Blake was elected Chair unanimously. Blake thanked his colleagues. He said he would continue to act as secretary until the Commission's new membership was settled.

Other Business, cont.

- **Eurasian Milfoil Committee First Meeting – Blake** said he attended the inaugural meeting of the newly formed Eurasian Milfoil Committee that was held on Wednesday, February 27th. He said the meeting was mostly organizational in nature and that he spent time presenting the new members with a timeline on the Post Pond Eurasian milfoil infestation from outbreak to the present.

7. Publicity

- **Lyme Community and Church News – Blake** said he would submit notes offering cautionary guidelines for trail use during the upcoming mud season.

On a motion by **Heather**, seconded by **Lee**, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

The next scheduled Conservation Commission meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, April 1st at the Lyme Academy building.

Respectfully submitted,

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Blake Allison, Secretary