



**Lyme Conservation Commission
Minutes
Monday, February 4, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.**

Present: Blake Allison (Chair/Secretary *pro tem*), Tom Colgan, Sue MacKenzie (Select Board Rep) Meg Sheehan, Ian Smith (Alternate) and Matt Stevens

Public: Jackson Morgan and David Lysy

Chair Allison called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and appointed Ian as a full voting member for the meeting. Tom offered to take the minutes.

1. Review and Approve Minutes from 2019-01-07

- On a motion by Matt, seconded by Tom, the minutes of the January meeting were approved unanimously. Ian abstained, because he did not attend the January meeting.

2. Land Protection and Easements

- **Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) Easements in Lyme** – CRC Executive Director Andy Fisk appeared before the Commission to discuss the future of the CRC's easement holdings in the Town of Lyme. There are nine, seven of which list Lyme as the contingent interest easement holder.

The CRC wants to exit the easement holding business and is seeking to transfer its easement titles to qualified land conservation entities such as the UVLT or SPNHF. In the event of such a transfer, Lyme would have to approve any amended easement document. It has been proposed by the CRC that Lyme vote to relinquish its contingent interest standing on the seven easements. Andy pointed out that by ending its contingent interest relationship to the easements, the Town of Lyme would avoid potential liability and monitoring concerns that might arise should a primary easement holder cease to exercise its stewardship over a conserved parcel making the contingent partner (Town of Lyme) responsible for managing the easement.

On a motion by Matt, seconded by Ian, the Conservation Commission unanimously voted to endorse Andy's proposal and recommend that the Select Board arrange, through a vote at the upcoming Annual Town Meeting, to end the Town's contingent interest status regarding said seven easements.

3. Trails and Land Management

- **Lyme Biodiversity Group Committee Update** – Meg reported that the group has submitted a proposal to the Lyme Foundation to obtain some funding for its planned implementation of a program to control non-native invasive species. The Conservation Commission in January voted to join the effort through a matching funds program.



Trails and Land Management, cont.

- **Summer Project for UVTA High School Trails Corps?** – Blake said Russell, wearing his Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) hat, had contact him regarding whether the Conservation Commission had any summer 2109 projects for the UVTA's High School Trails Corps. Several projects were considered. In the end, commission members voted unanimously to propose a refurbishing of the Lower Grant Brook Trail from the Lyme School down to its intersection with the snow mobile bridge access to Lyme Hill. Blake said he would forward the recommendation to Russ.

4. Project and Application Review

- **No Items Submitted**

5. Outreach and Education

- **Snowshoe Walk on Saturday, February 9** – Final arrangements for the upcoming walk were discussed. Participants are to meet at 1:00 pm at the "Park 'n Ride next door to Ledyard Bank to carpool to the site which will be selected based on access and conditions. Tom and Matt will lead the outing and choose the site. If conditions are unsatisfactory due to the snow's condition or extreme cold, the walk will be rescheduled or cancelled at the Commission's discretion.

6. Other Business

- **Recognition of Lee's Service to the Commission** – In the wake of Lee Larson's January resignation from the Conservation Commission, Blake asked what might be an appropriate action to acknowledge and honor his Lee's years of service on the Commission. Several possibilities were discussed including planting a tree or naming a trail in his honor.
- **Conservation Fund Drawdown Policy** – Citing several appropriations from the Conservation that the Commission intends to make in 2019, Blake said his research confirmed that previously established guidelines for non-land purchase use of the fund (see 2014-05-05 minutes) would be in conflict with those intentions. He recommended that the guidelines be amended to accommodate the planned appropriations. Matt moved, with a second from Meg, that the present guidelines be amended to remove the 5% of fund balance withdrawal cap and to eliminate the requirement for a public hearing before non-real property use withdrawals because it is not required by NH's Conservation Fund RSAs. The floor minimum balance of \$150,000 would remain in place. The motion passed unanimously.

The amended guideline reads as follows: The Conservation Commission may appropriate Conservation Fund money for non-real property purchase, conservation-related projects as long as the Fund's balance does not go below a minimum of \$150,000. Funds would be dispensed at Commission's discretion.



Other Business, cont.

- **Personnel** – Blake reported that Ian has applied to become a full voting member of the Commission. Members present unanimously endorsed his candidacy. He also noted that David has agreed to apply for Commission membership as an alternate.

7. Publicity

- **Lyme Community and Church News Item – Blake** said he would provide an article.

8. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Tom with editorial input from Blake.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "V. Blake Allison, Secretary". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Blake Allison, Secretary *pro tem*

The next regular meeting of the Lyme Conservation Commission will be held on Monday, March 4, 2019 at 7 p.m. in the Lyme Academy building.