



**Lyme Conservation Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, December 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.  
ZOOM Meeting**

**Present:** Blake Allison (Chair and Secretary *pro tem*), Tom Colgan, Rebecca Hanissian (Alternate) Russell Hirschler (Alternate), Meg Sheehan and Matt Stevens

**PUBLIC:** Present via ZOOM phone connection - Don Graham, Carol Barr and John Biglow

Chair Allison called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. He appointed Russell and Rebecca to serve as full voting members for the meeting.

Before commencing the business portion of the meeting, Blake presented the document “**A Checklist to Ensure Meetings Are Compliant with The Right-to-Know Law During the State of Emergency.**” (copy attached). Blake explained that because the Lyme Center Academy Building is closed to the public, certain requirements for public meeting access must be met to be in compliance with Governor Sununu’s Executive Order allowing for town boards and committees to meet online.

**1. Review and Approve Minutes from 2020-11-02 Meeting**

- On a motion by Tom, seconded by Meg, the November meeting minutes were approved unanimously with Tom, Russell, Meg and Matt voting in the affirmative.

**2. Land Protection and Easements**

- **Status of Town-owned Easements** – Blake said he had been approached by Planning Board member Tim Cook who expressed concern about the Town’s financial exposure should it have to defend a conservation easement where it is the primary holder. The Commission has previously discussed whether the Town should get out of the easement business. Blake said he spoke with former Commission chair Lee Larson, who also ran the Town’s easement monitoring program for many years, about the matter. Lee opined that few easement holders would want to incur the cost of rewriting their easements and that the matter should be left alone. Blake said, that without objection, he wanted to table the matter. Commission members agreed.
- **Protecting Town-owned Properties with Easements** – Blake noted that The Chaffee and Town Forest currently do not have conservation easements (CE) encumbering the property. There was a discussion as to whether the CC should take the initiative to advocate for a CE to be placed on each property. If so, the type of restrictions/protections on each property would have to be deliberated. Questions around enforcement of CE conditions in the Trout Pond Forest were raised as were enforcement concerns regarding the management plans on The Chaffee and Town Forest. Commission members agreed to a walking tour of the Town Forest property scheduled for January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 beginning 10 am starting at the Orfordville Road trailhead.



### 3. Trails and Land Management

- **Upper Valley Trails Alliance's HS Trails Corps Project(s) for Summer 2021 – Trout Pond** – Russell gave an overview of the UVTA summer work crew projects planned for the Trout Pond Forest. He said the proposal was based on a survey he and Matt took earlier in the fall. Blake noted it has been quite some time since trail maintenance has been done on this property. Board members were very happy to support this work. A motion was made by Tom, seconded by Rebecca, to concur with the project's scope, and financially support this 2021 endeavor. It was unanimously supported by the members on a roll call vote.
- **LBWG 2021 Grant Proposal** – Meg followed up on the submission of the LBWG's annual report to the Lyme Foundation which has supplied financial support to the ongoing Japanese knotweed eradication project in the Big Rock. Blake made the motion, seconded by Tom, to continue CC financial support for this project. This will amount to about \$920 for the 2021 season, according to Meg. It continues the Commission's previous commitment to match the Lyme Foundation's grant at the rate of 1:2. Motion carried by unanimous vote. CC members expressed their appreciation to Meg and her co-leader Rob Wipfler for their leadership of and dedication to the eradication project.

### 4. Project and Application Review

- **14 Baker Hill Road Septic Replacement** -- Tom made the motion, seconded by Meg to have the CC submit a letter of support for a septic system upgrade at 14 Baker Hill Road. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

### 5. Outreach and Education

- **Lyme School in Big Rock During 2021** -- Lyme School teacher Trisha Gauterau, who runs this outdoor classroom program, asked if she could move its site closer to the school to facilitate keeping COVID related protocols. Tom made the motion, Matt seconded, to support/allow moving the classroom to the new location. Only discussion was to note the site they wish to move to has poison ivy. So, beware! Motion carried by unanimous, roll call vote.

### 6. Other Business

- **Old River Road By-passed Segment Disposition** – “Old” River Road resident Donald Graham, attending via a Zoom phone line, shared thoughts that the CC could be involved in helping with deliberations over what to do with the now bypassed Old River Road segment. Blake stated that CC is on record as being open to help once the Select Board comes up with a proposal regarding the roadway's status. Commission members agreed the CC would then evaluate the parameters and responsibilities of a suggested role. It was clearly stated that the CC cannot be the easement holder.

### 7. Publicity

- Blake will supply an article for the December/January Lyme Community and Church News.



## 8. Adjournment

- Tom moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Matt. The motioned carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 8:19 pm.

The meeting minutes were recorded by Tom Colgan, Secretary *pro tem*.

Additional edits were made by Blake Allison, Chair

*V. Blake Allison, Chair and Secretary pro tem*

V. Blake Allison, Chair and Secretary *pro tem*

If matters of business warrant it, the next meeting of the Lyme Conservation Commission will take place via remote teleconference on Monday, January 4, 2021 beginning at 7:00 p.m.