

**Lyme Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 2, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
UberConference Call**

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

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 2020-10-05

- On a motion by Tom, seconded by Meg, the October meeting minutes were approved unanimously with Tom, Meg and Matt voting in the affirmative. Russell abstained having not attended the 2020-10-05 meeting.

2. Land Protection and Easements

- **No Items Submitted**

3. Trails and Land Management

- **UVTA’s High School Trails Corps Project(s) for Summer 2021** – Blake noted that Russell (UVTA’s Exec. Dir) had informed him that the Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) is beginning to block out a work schedule for its HS Trails Corps 2021 season. Blake remarked about instrumental the Corps has been over the last several years in executing essential projects in most of the Town’s nature preserves. He noted the only preserve not having benefited from the Corps work was Trout Pond Forest. Blake then opened the floor to discussion about what projects might be planned there for 2021

At that point Russ was asked to provide some background that might help focus the discussion. He said that a member of the UVTA’s board had spent some time hiking at Trout Pond and subsequently sent Russ a memo detailing his time out there and outlining some suggestions for potentially improving the hiking experience. Blake had previously shared that memo and remarks from Lee Larson about it.

Trails and Land Management, cont.

There was general agreement among Commission members that signage and trail blaze markings could be improved. It also was noted that trail refurbishment was needed at several locations. However, members of the Commission expressed concern about whether the present trail network should be expanded and what range of activities, if any, should be encouraged beyond hiking. There was general agreement that Trout Pond was unique as a secluded, woodland waterbody and that actions that compromised that unique character should be avoided.

This set off a discussion about managing the Town's nature preserves vis a vis activity that might occur in them and how they might be managed. This touched on issues that were raised at the 2020-10-05 meeting regarding a review of the Town Forest management plan. It was agreed a subcommittee should be formed to address stewardship issues in the Town preserve. Matt volunteered to work on it.

It was noted that the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) holds easements on three of the properties; Big Rock Preserve, Lower Grant Brook Trail and Trout Pond Forest. Blake said he would contact UVLT to find out whether those easements imposed usage restrictions on the properties they covered.

Regarding the HS Trails Corps, Commission members unanimously agreed that the group should be contracted for the 2021 season. Russ and Matt said they would survey conditions at Trout Pond. Russ said that, based on that assessment, he would draft a project proposal with a cost estimate that would be brought back to the Commission for review and approval along with a discussion of finding.

4. Project and Application Review

- **No Items Submitted**

5. Outreach and Education

- **No Items Submitted**

6. Other Business

- **Proposed 2021 Town Budget Request** – Commission members reviewed and unanimously approved a budget request for submission to the town's Budget Committee. Russ proposed accepting the budget as drafted. Tom seconded. Matt, Tom, Meg and Russ voted in the affirmative. Blake noted that the amount requested, \$2100, has not changed since 2015.

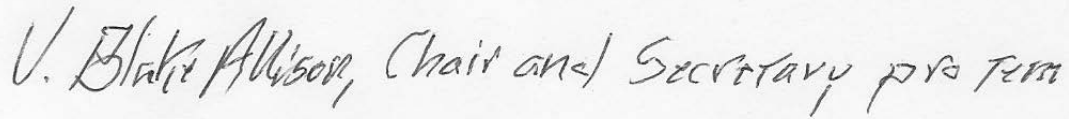
7. Publicity

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

8. Adjournment

On a motion by Matt, seconded by Tom, the meeting was adjourned ending the teleconference call at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "V. Blake Allison, Chair and Secretary pro tem". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid.

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, December 7, 2020 beginning at 7:00 p.m.