



**Lyme Conservation Commission (CC)  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, December 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.  
Lyme Center Academy Building**

The meeting was conducted in person at the Academy Building and via Zoom in accordance with New Hampshire's "right to know" statutes.

CC Attendance in Person: Blake Allison (Chair), Sue McKenzie (Vice Chair), Ann Flood (Secretary), Lin Brown, Matt Stevens, Sara Zahendra (alternate, appointed voting), David Lysy (alternate, appointed voting). CC Attendance via Zoom: Meg Sheehan

Members of the public: none

The Chair (Blake) called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. He appointed Sara and David to full voting status for the meeting.

**1. Review and Approve Minutes from 2022-11-07 Meeting**

On a motion from Lin, seconded by Matt, the minutes of the Nov. 7 meeting were passed unanimously on a roll call vote. (Members who were not present at the meeting abstained.)

**2. Land Protection and Easements**

- **2022 Easement Monitoring Update**

Blake will send a map to Jaxon, as requested earlier.

Blake reported that the easements had been assigned to volunteers to monitor by the end of the year, noting that Matt had volunteered to review 5 properties. When Ann asked if her help was needed, Blake requested that she review Jenny Cooke's conservation property, even though it had been seen during the summer site field visit by the Conservation Land Stewardship (CLS) Program, which had been held in June 2022 to inform members and any interested public about monitoring of our Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP).

Matt suggested that it was time to upgrade the electronic record-keeping associated with this monitoring process for properties under the purview of the CC. Currently all files are physical (located in the Town Clerk's office) and there is no standardized form to inform monitors what to look for, nor easy way to review past concerns or even know whether changes had been made in the interim.

The CC discussed what the CLS visitors had used, i.e., GAIA GPS software on the internet. They had used it to create maps with boundaries of the easement properties in Lyme. With this information downloaded on their cell phone, it offered the capacity to know in real time where the property's easement boundary was relative to the monitor's physical location and to add photos to the record.



Matt noted that he had obtained copies of the property boundary maps of his assignments. Ann noted that the CLS visitors had noted that the property maps did not necessarily coincide with the true easement property boundaries and that property owners often forgot or did not know where the easements began and ended within their property. This reiterated the importance of monitors' being able to know if and when they were in the easement property boundaries in real time as they were walking the property, such as with using a GPS-based tool. Matt noted that he had used and liked a web-based software designed to designate and locate stonewalls throughout the state, i.e., NH Stonewall mapper. He indicated it was easy to use and could serve the purposes of the CC's monitoring. He volunteered to help.

### 3. Trails and Land Management

- **Updating Forest Management Plans** – Blake said that there was no update on the management plans; while the groups had indicated an interest and willingness to participate, they had not submitted any plans.

The CC then discussed the value of having a template with spaces to discuss specific information the CC needs to have, e.g., recreational use, natural resources, vegetation problems, as monitors go through each of our lands. Matt volunteered to draft a template that could be used for any relevant properties including the Town forests but also others such as Hughes Brook.

- **Boundary and Trail Marking in Town Forest.** -- Trout Pond trail had been 'blazed' last year but the other trails had not been re-blazed since ~ 10 years ago. This activity had been on hold during hunting season. While some types of hunting continue, the primary concern for safety had been deer rifle hunting, which ends this week. Matt had time to lead this activity in December and Lin and Sara volunteered to help.
- **2023 Trails Project with UVTA** -- Russell requested (by email) that the CC provide him with any projects for getting a grant because the deadline is fast approaching.

The CC then discussed the status of repairing or dismantling the Boy Scout camp in Trout Pond Forest. There is no end point to moving forward toward a decision yet, but there is concern that the property is in dangerously poor repair. There was a question as to whether the Town is liable if there was an injury; this was not resolved. Technically there should be a permit request filed with the Town to use it. None has been filed in recent history, but it is not clear whether people know a permit is required and/or whether the site exists to use. It can be seen from some trails but is not widely known. At the recent Health Fair, volunteers gave out brochures about the trails, if not the camp, to inform people and the text is on the Town website. The text needs to be revised, last done by Elizabeth Kilmarx.

One suggestion was to remove it altogether. While there was some sympathy for this solution, there was no way of knowing whether some people were using it or wished to. Another suggestion would be to dismantle some parts of the rotten structure, leaving a part (like a tent platform or fireplace) that could be safely used (and not rebuild a cabin).

When discussing both possible users as well as volunteers to repair the site, the CC asked if there are any adults in Lyme associated with a local Boy Scout troop; no one knew of any.



Lin raised the issue of privy facilities for it. While there is a pit toilet that should be discontinued/removed, Matt noted that pit toilets are no longer being used for remote trail camps; instead, the current standard is to build moldering privies to compost human waste.



Photo from the web of a moldering privy from the outside to show the project's potential size and complexity. This was taken on the Appalachian Trail.

Blake volunteered to ask at the school whether there any adult or group associated with Lyme (like the high school trails group) that could help with repairs or building a pit.

- **Reservoir Pond and Dam update** -- The State mandated that the dam be repaired or breached. The dam is in Dorchester. The pond is half in Lyme and half in Dorchester.

Blake sent a letter to Select Bd in late November to get their sense of interest in financial support for repairing the dam, but it won't get answered until their Dec 15 meeting; there is no evidence that the Town needs discussion about it.

NH Bureau of Dams project offers some support for removing dams and restoring rivers.

#### **4. Outreach and Education**

- **No Items Submitted**

#### **5. Other Business**

- **None**

#### **6. Publicity**

- Blake mentioned that he has supplied an article to the Lyme Community & Church News for the past several issues, but it has not been published for some time. He will continue to send notices (like safety on iced ponds etc.,) to the Lyme listserv, but this newsletter has at least been temporarily suspended.

#### **7. Adjournment**

- Blake called for a motion to adjourn. On a motion by Sue, seconded by Lin, the meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

FIRST DRAFT



Respectfully submitted,

Ann Barry Flood

Secretary

The next meeting of the Lyme Conservation Commission will take place, both in person and via a Zoom teleconference link, at the Lyme Center Academy Building on Monday, Jan.9, 2023, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The Conservation Commission (CC) will not meet on the "first Monday of the month meeting" time because New Year's Day Holiday occurs on Sunday and is too close to it.