



**Lyme Conservation Commission (CC)
Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 6, 2023, 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), Lin Brown, Matt Stevens, Tom Colgan, Sara Zahendra (appointed full member), Jill Kearney (alternate), David Lysy (alternate)

Members joining by zoom: Ann Flood (Secretary),
Public joining by Zoom: Barbara Woodard, Jaxon Morgan

The Chair (Blake) called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Jill volunteered to be back up secretary to Ann in case of failure of Zoom or other problems.

1. Review and Approve Minutes from 2023-02-06 Meeting

On a motion from Matt, seconded by Sue, the minutes of the Feb. 6 meeting were passed unanimously on a roll call vote. (Members who were not present at the meeting abstained.)

2. Land Protection and Easements

- **No Items Were Submitted**

3. Trails and Land Management

- **Milfoil Control – 2023 Program update** -- Sue said that there was nothing new to report but noted that the first outing was planned for July 1. She said she would announce that in June to the public.

Blake reiterated that the Town would not need CC funds for an herbicide treatment in 2023, because sufficient funds already were on hand as a result of not being spent in 2022.

- **2023 Trails Project with Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA)** – Blake indicated he would like to move forward on the UVTA's proposal for constructing an accessible trail at the Chaffee Wildlife Sanctuary. The hardpack surfaced trail would run from the parking area to the footbridge and then on to the wildlife viewing blind. Blake said the UVTA will apply for a grant from the Lyme Foundation, and that he would like the Commission to appropriate matching funds as it has in past years. Ann mentioned that the approved project should include Russell's revised plan as indicated in a recent email from him, which was to make the trail as pleasantly curved as much as possible to make it a pleasant walk. It was noted that such a layout needed to be mindful of not having a grade that would be difficult for people with wheelchairs to navigate. Tom moved and Sue seconded a Commission appropriation based on Russell's



2023 Trails Project with UVTA, Cont.

proposed amount for the CC's contribution. There was discussion that it would be appropriate to follow our usual practice of approving a slightly higher amount than the proposal so that small exigencies could be covered without needing to seek prior approval from the CC. Matt suggested that they should also consider additional needs for appropriate parking that had not been in the original proposal. After some discussion, there was consensus that we approve \$10,000 for the trail and parking modifications as needed. Tom concurred with this amendment to his motion and Sue concurred as well with her seconding of it. A vote was taken by rollcall and passed unanimously. Blake announced that the project would probably begin and likely be completed in July 2023.

- **Forest Management Plans Update** -- Blake recently sent a third proposal to the CC, offering an ecological (natural) assessment. (This also contains an executive summary for a recently completed project in Hanover.) He would like to share that assessment plus the two proposals submitted by Redstart Consulting and Butternut Hollow Forestry on the website for the public. Tom cautioned against including any dollar amount submitted with the proposals, since that is considered private/proprietary, and said it should be redacted prior to placing it on the webpage. This should apply to all three, Tom said, and it should be noted by the CC members that the proposals themselves are not entirely equivalent in the scope of the work and products they propose to perform.

Blake summarized the three options that could be considered for managing the Town forests ranging from selective timber harvest, allowing no cutting and considering selective 'no cutting' zones such as at the Town Forest's West end and/or around vernal pools. There was no vote taken at this time.

Blake said that regardless of what management option was chosen, he felt it very important that an Ecological Assessment be done. He noted that it has been at least 15 years since the Town conducted a Natural Resources Inventory and that it did not focus specifically on the Town Forest or Trout Pond Forest. He noted that Dr. Rick Van de Poll had submitted an EA proposal to the Lyme CC, he did one for Hanover when it updated its Town Forest management plan, and that we should consider reviewing it and moving ahead. During the ensuing discussion it was put forward that getting another proposal would be prudent. Matt said he knew of a couple of people who might be interested in submitting one and said he would explore that option. Further discussion regarding implementing an EA was tabled.

Barbara was invited to propose a question. She asked about the three alternatives and wondered, if the idea is to preserve, it is not clear how detailed the plan for management must be. One reason for needing detail is that it is not clear when you reach the point to stop managing (whatever that means) in order to protect a fragile area.

Matt concurred and added more discussion. Tom said if this is to go forward in March/April, then action is needed asap. Matt said he was not in favor of hastening to go ahead. Tom said we could at least hire someone to mark the Trout Pond Forest boundaries since we have determined that the Metes and Bounds is not up to date, and we need new information. Tom said he will seek out some surveyors who might be interested.



4. Project and Application Review

- **645 Dorchester Rd. Application to Put on an Addition** -- The proposed addition is in violation of several setback codes, but so is the existing structure. We are being asked by the ZBA to review it regarding conservation related issues. Matt remarked that the documentation is not clear regarding what is being proposed as the new addition versus what is already there. Ann and others concurred. Tom said that a previous visit made that clear, but Blake noted that the majority of members were new and had never seen the site. We concluded that a site visit was needed. Jill asked about informing the owners and Sue asked about calling this an official meeting. Blake said that both of those steps would be necessary because of NH's "Right To Know" law.
- **New Well at One Hamilton Lane** -- All work installing the well would take place within the property's setbacks. There was some discussion about whether there was information about the current well's condition (no), and if we had enough information to judge the work (yes). The project was recommended for approval and passed unanimously by roll call.

5. Outreach and Education

- **Schedule "Standing Trees" Presentation** -- Blake asked Jaxon about whether he knew about Meg's intentions regarding bringing in a representative from Standing Trees. He did not know. Sarah said she was not convinced that would be a good idea because this group was clearly an advocacy group rather than an unbiased source of information. She said, although personally sympathetic to their goals, it was pretty easy to read the relevant materials on their website. She wondered if there should at least be someone to present the other side. Jill mentioned wanting information about items like selective logging, wildlife habitat, aesthetics.
- Matt remarked that it wasn't really a matter of two sides since there is really a full gamut of perspectives and positions on forest management. It is also not equivalent to bring in a forestry expert and an advocate for one position to inform the CC. Ann concurred and there was additional discussion, e.g., that Standing Tree's advocacy was primarily about public (federal?) land rather than privately owned and there are other considerations about a wilderness area including recreation. David suggested there can be a benefit to asking questions in person rather than just reading a website. Sarah agreed but thought it would be more beneficial to ask questions of people without an advocacy position trying to persuade us rather than inform us. Blake then called to table this discussion until April and said he would contact Jeff.
- **Lyme School "Earth Week"** -- Blake said he followed up on a request from a Lyme School teacher about the Commission participating in the school's upcoming Earth Week program, but nobody responded. David said he would investigate whether the school was still interested.



6. Other Business

- **Salamander Brigade Update** -- Sarah reported that key areas would be posted and volunteers were being sought, but they would need to undergo training prior to helping. The Harris Center for Conservation Education is conducting a training session on March 14. Sara said she would post an email on the Lyme listserv about the ‘Big Night’ and noted that Catherine would still like help in collecting data. Blake raised the issue about liability if someone is injured and said he was investigating the matter with Town officials.
- **“Pure Solutions” and Collateral Impact?** -- Blake indicated that he had received concerns about the safety of the “Pure Solutions” treatments and the potential to have collateral damage on other insects. Sarah mentioned a study but said there still is not too much information about the program’s impact and efficacy. The treatment is comprised of essential oils, which appears effective against ticks. Still, if it were to do harm to ticks, might it do harm to other insects as well? If so, its safety would be a legitimate concern. Blake noted too that there is a dearth of information on this matter. Tom said it is not our job to warn against scams if that is all it is. Blake tabled the discussion and said he would try to gather more information.
- **Snowshoe outing on Sunday, February 26** -- Eight people participated including Commission members and spouses/partners. They reported having great fun, and photos were shared with the CC.

7. Publicity

- Blake mentioned last December that the Lyme Community & Church News has not been published for some time. He will continue to send notices to the Lyme listserv, but it seems that this newsletter has at least temporarily been suspended.

8. Adjournment

- Blake called for a motion to adjourn. On a motion by Sue, seconded by Jill, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "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, April 3, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.