



**Lyme Conservation Commission
Meeting Agenda
Monday, November 6, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Lyme Center Academy Building**

The meeting was conducted in person and via Zoom in accordance with New Hampshire's "right to know" statute.

CC attendance was in person unless otherwise noted: Blake Allison (Chair), Sue MacKenzie (Vice Chair), Ann Flood (Secretary), Meg Sheehan, Matt Stevens, Lin Brown (attended via Zoom); both alternates attending were appointed to vote: Jill Niles and Sara Zahendra.

Public: John Biglow (in person); none via Zoom

Chair Allison called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. Review and Approve 2023-010-02 Meeting Minutes

- On a motion from Jill, seconded by Sue, the minutes of the September meeting were passed unanimously on a roll call vote with members who did not attend abstaining.

2. Land Protection and Easements

- **2023 Easement Monitoring Program** – Blake noted that the members participating in the survey of Lyme's 28 conserved easement properties should have received the forms in the mail; all concurred they had. He noted that the deadline for returning them is Dec. 31 but recommended doing it before the snow falls. There was some discussion about: whether there are additional conserved properties in Lyme (yes, but they are monitored by other groups like land trusts); why are only some the responsibility of Lyme and therefore the CC (Lyme CC is responsible for the older easements that were all based on a State program to promote conservation easements and donate them to towns); and whether conserved easement properties differ from current use (yes; the CC does not monitor current use).

Blake said there a protocol for accredited land trusts to use to monitor easements under their jurisdiction and that we should perhaps follow something similar or at least do a more complete report than some in the past. He requested that people take photos of the property they monitor and include photos in the emailed version of their report. He noted that recent reports had not included photos and were not very detailed so that they were not useful as a baseline and/or to document current or past infractions. Photos of greatest importance would be of any infractions (but also positive changes like improvements). Matt suggested that it would be helpful to take baseline photos if there were none on record to-date or to take current photos from the same basic angle as prior photos. It is useful to include something that identifies where the photo was taken and that can be replicated in future years, like a fence or boundary mark. There was discussion about using drones for the photos. John Biglow indicated he had a drone and would be happy to help. Meg asked if he had a drone license (no); she noted that drones can be used to establish legal facts but such uses required that the operator be licensed; she recommended that maybe we should not use a drone for official CC business unless licensed and there was a special need.



2023 Easement Monitoring Program continued...

There was some discussion about how to get hold of past photos as well as maps showing the boundaries of the conserved boundaries since not all portions of a property are part of the conserved area. Blake noted that, in addition to the boundaries, there are sometimes exceptions and appropriate uses built into the original easement documents that surveyors should know and take into account. The easement documents and past reports of monitoring surveys are held in files that are designated for the CC and kept in the Town Offices. David Robbins can find the files for you and, in the past, he has provided ample space to look through them at the Town Office. Scanning by cellphone or otherwise photographing the documents is permissible. Meg suggested that it would be helpful to have these digitized so they were more accessible and suggested trying to identify an intern for becoming a land steward who could perform this task for the Town as a project. While there was general agreement, no path forward was articulated.

John suggested there is a registry of properties in Grafton County that may be digitized already and thus available for CC monitors to use. We also discussed what Sara had suggested in a previous email to Blake, i.e., that Lyme might consider creating a map/software like already used in Huntington, VT "for screening a property, location or neighborhood for development restrictions as laid out in the Huntington land use regulations." Here's a link to it:

<https://aevt.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=009d3febb13c4602a7f7a5503cf35d3e>. It is based on ARCGIS ([https://www.esri.com/en-](https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-online/buy)

[us/arcgis/products/arcgis-online/buy](https://www.esri.com/en-us/arcgis/products/arcgis-online/buy)). The software is a little pricey but has many nice features (see website). Ann suggested that we could also/instead use the Gaia software (<https://www.procedural-worlds.com/products/professional/gaia-pro/>) that the NH Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP) used when they trained us last year. The two LCIP staff had had the boundaries already designated and used this information uploaded into Gaia software on their cellphone to know where they were physically walking in the property relative to the conservation land boundaries. Blake said he would follow up and ask LCIP what they had already digitized regarding our conserved easements. (Ann subsequently re-sent CC monitors the four maps LCIP had created for the training session summer 2022 and distributed to the CC.)

3. Trails and Land Management

- **Post Pond Milfoil Control Report** – Sue gave an update on the Milfoil control progress for the year. Divers worked in October and there is obviously some remaining; however, the efforts are finished for the season.
- **“Friends of Post Pond” Update** – Sue and John (both members of the Friends of Post Pond [FPP]) reported. The FPP adopted a vision statement, “To preserve and protect Post Pond”, and a mission statement, “To safeguard a recreational environment and healthy ecosystem.” There is a concern that the Mascoma divers may not be as active in the Post Pond in the future because they were involved in other projects. The FPP will try to recruit new divers; they have to be trained specifically for milfoil collection and, while watchers and tenders do not pay to be trained, divers do (which the CC has supported in the past). Sue indicated she will try to get enough divers who will pay to be able to bring trainers to Lyme to do the training. They are pursuing getting the State to change its rules to not require scuba diving when removing milfoil in shallow waters. This would make it much easier to get interested helpers since it wouldn't require the gear, etc.



- **Chaffee Management Plan Update Review** – Blake opened by reminding CC members that he had shared a very nice note (and photos) from a grateful citizen whose wheelchair-bound mother and he had walked along the new accessible path and greatly enjoyed it; he wanted to express his gratitude for its existence. Sara also noted that her parents, both with limited walking capacity, had greatly enjoyed the new walk (and posed playfully using their canes to fence each other). Blake reviewed the 2010 Chaffee Draft Management Plan and confirmed there is a conservation easement with land trust oversight on this property. The CC and Utility Club plans will have to be consistent with the easement specifications, including plantings, allowing pets (only service dogs are allowed), etc. There is a need to inform the public about the service dog rule, etc. and Jim Mason has agreed to build a second kiosk for the Chaffee Wildlife Area; however, he needs volunteers to help put it up (Lin volunteered). John indicated that he had helped with putting up the first and it was *very* heavy and thus several strong volunteers are needed for that task.

4. Project and Application Review

- No Items Submitted

5. Outreach and Education

- No Items Submitted

6. Other Business

- **Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) and the High School Trails Corp Program**

There is a need to work with Russell regarding projects involving the UVTA for next year. The most important project is to replace the Trout Brook foot bridge which is in very bad shape.

Lin moved and Sue seconded that the CC request that Russell and the UVTA provide a proposal with estimated costs to replace the afore mentioned bridge. It passed unanimously on a rollcall.

Blake mentioned that, although there had not been a specific request to the CC, the UVTA was soliciting donations to the High School Trails Corp Program and wanted to know if the CC would like to consider a donation. After some discussion about the opportunity through the end of the month to have funds matched (up to \$5000) by a generous donor and the appropriate amount for the CC, especially because the CC also supports this program through paying for projects that are not placed for competitive bidding, Matt proposed donating \$750.

Sue made a formal motion (seconded by Sara) to use the Conservation Fund to donate \$750 to the UVTA campaign to support its high school Trails Corp Program. It passed unanimously on a rollcall vote.

Blake indicated he would contact Dina to use the Conservation Fund for this purpose.



- **Pollinator Day and the Utility Club Update**

Lin (also a member of the UC) reported on the recent effort to pull the weeds from the failed attempt to use cardboard to block their growth and replace it with chips, donated by Kirsten Glass and delivered by Ernst Kling.

- **Lyme-specific Interactive Mapping Resource Tool**

There was more discussion about whether Lyme should invest in a tool like Huntington land uses; (see also the discussion about using this ArcGIS-based tool for monitoring in the easement monitoring section above). Alternative resources such as the Natural Resources Inventory exist but this would be more accessible to us and others in Lyme. John suggested that the Lyme Cemetery Committee is also looking into having a plot map so maybe there is a greater need for such a map and additional uses. Blake said he was really interested in following up with Rick Van de Poll about the project to assess the resources in the Town forests and so would ask if/whether he would be able to provide such a resource or has other suggestions.

- **Boundary marking for Trout Pond**

Matt asked for help to mark the boundaries at Trout Pond property. Lin, Sara, and Ann were interested but may not be available. No dates were set.

7. **Publicity**

- No Items Submitted

8. **Adjournment**

- On a motion by Sue, seconded by Lin, Blake adjourned the meeting at 8:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Ann Barry Flood".

Secretary

If matters of business warrant it, the next meeting of the Lyme Conservation Commission will take place in person, and via a Zoom teleconference link at the Lyme Center Academy Building on Monday, December 4, 2023 beginning at 7:00 p.m.