

**Lyme Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 1, 2013**



PRESENT: Members – Blake Allison, Tom Colgan, Russell Hirschler, Joanne Laro (alternate), Lee Larson, Matt Stevens, Heather Toulmin and Richard Vidal

Chair Blake Allison called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Before proceeding to regular business, Blake took a minute to thank **Matt** for his nearly six years of service as Commission Chair. It was noted that the contentious issue of the Post Pond beavers and water levels marked much of Matt's tenure. Members cited Matt's conscientiousness and integrity as hallmarks of his leadership not only on the beaver issue but also throughout the span of his service.

1. Review and Approve Minutes from 3/04/13

- On a motion by **Lee**, seconded by Russ, the 3/04/13 minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

2. Land Protection and Easements

- **Long-Term Action Plan** – **Russ** noted that the question of whether the Commission had a long-term action plan for use of the Conservation Fund had been raised in March at Annual Town meeting during discussion of Warrant Article 17. There was general agreement one should be created to make clear to all interested parties the Commission's conservation priorities. **Blake** said **Matt** had suggested the Commission might use the Hanover Conservation Commission's "Management of the Conservation Fund" document as a template keeping in mind it could be modified to reflect Lyme's priorities. It was also noted that the Town's Natural Resource Inventory would be a very useful tool for giving physical reality to any plan's stated aims. Blake suggested each Commissioner create a list of three conservation priorities that should guide the Commission's long-term strategy for use of the Conservation Fund. It was agreed to discuss these goals at the next meeting.
- **DES Wetland Restoration Grants** – **Blake** asked whether, in light of the recently announced NH Dept. of Environmental Services grant program, Commissioners could think of projects for which state financial support might be worth seeking. Projects floated included a culvert upgrade at the Market Street end of the Big Rock preserve, Clay Brook where riprap had been put in to stabilize its bank near Rt. 10, the wetland at the Upper Valley Land Trust's newly established Lyme Hill preserve and Lower Grant Brook where cattle crossing had badly damaged the brook's banks. After some discussion there was consensus the Grant Brook project had the most urgency.

3. Trails and Land Management

- **Invasive Species Action Plan** – **Blake** said **Heather's** remarks at the Commission's March meeting about the increasing negative impact of land-based invasive plant species on the Town's nature preserves was a timely reminder of the need to address the problem. He proposed formulating a plan for combating invasive in the preserves. Several points were made. An inventory should be conducted for each preserve regarding invasive species problems therein. A prioritized response should be developed. Find a funding source for the work. In the last instance, **Blake** said that his research showed the Conservation Fund could be used. There was discussion of picking a first site

and whether public involvement should be pursued. **Tom** suggested that the first effort be **Trails and Land Management, cont.**

limited to Commission members. Big Rock was selected as the site. Saturday, May 18 was set as the tentative date for the work. In terms of seeking input on developing an effective strategy and good tools for executing it, **Matt** suggested contacting the Grafton County Forester Dave Falkenham at UNH Extension in N. Haverhill. **Heather** volunteered to do that.

- **Town Forest Management Plan Revision Update – Blake** said he had tried to contact the plan's reviser forester Jeff Smith to find out how that work was proceeding but had done so too late to get a response. He noted that the relevant paperwork had been finished with the Town and that Jeff said the work on which the study would be based was almost finished.
- **Big Rock Trail Damage –** Following up on last month's report of damage to the preserve's trail, **Matt** said he knew who was responsible, and that he would talk to that individual. It was agreed to schedule the repair work for "Trails Day" on Saturday, June 1st.

4. Project and Application Review

- **No items submitted.**

5. Outreach and Education

- **Strategies for Raising the Conservation Commission's Profile – Blake** noted that in a discussion with **Matt** both had expressed concern about the apparent lack of public awareness about the full range of activities in which Commission engages. He asked Commissioners to consider ways that circumstance could be changed. It was noted the Commission sponsors events like "Green Up Day," Trails Day" and the "Snow Shoe Hike." **Heather** asked whether ongoing events could be sponsored in addition to the "one shot" programs being done now. Might not these programs be led by a Commissioner with a particular interest such as bird watching?

6. Other Business

- **Commission Membership Terms and Nominations --** In a shuffling of seats, the following names were to be submitted to the Select Board for approval. **Tom** applying for a second three-year term. **Joanne** given full member status. Lee assuming Joanna's vacated alternate role.
- **Upper Valley Land Trust Annual Conservation Commission Meeting – Blake** reminded Commissioners that event would take place Tuesday, April 2nd in White River Jct.
- **Garlic Mustard Control Campaign – Blake** said he had been made aware that several neighboring towns have banded together to aggressively respond to garlic mustard's spread in the region. He said he had not had time to research the program but would report back when more information was learned.

7. Publicity

- **Lyme Community and Church News – Matt** said he would submit notes focusing on invasive plant species with a reminder about “Green Up Day” on Saturday, May 4th too.

On a motion by **Russ**, seconded by **Matt**, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

The next scheduled Conservation Commission meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 6th at the Lyme Academy Building.

Respectfully submitted,

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Blake Allison, Secretary