



**Lyme Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 4 at 7:00 p.m.
Lyme Town Offices**

1. Members Present:

(a) in person (min of four needed for quorum):

Blake Allison (Chair), Susan MacKenzie (Vice-Chair), Lin Brown, Tom Colgan, Matt Stevens; Jill Kearney Niles (Alternate) and Sara Zahendra (Alternate asked to participate as Voting Member).

(b) by Zoom connection:

Ann Flood (Secretary); Rebecca Hanissian (Alternate)

Public present:

- (a) **In person** (none)
- (b) **By Zoom:** Carol Barr and Don Graham

Chair Allison called the meeting into public session at 7:00 pm.

1. Review and Approve Minutes from Aug 9, 2021 and Sept 20, 2021 Meetings

On a motion by Tom, seconded by Jill, the minutes from both days were approved as submitted by a unanimous rollcall vote.

2. Land Protection and Easements

- Post Pond Monitoring Program Update (by Sue MacKenzie) Suggested a study to take two areas in Post Pond to compare the effectiveness of control by hand pulling milfoil vs herbicide; would like to get started over the winter. General agreement: Lyn proposed a motion to that effect' Tom seconded. Unanimous vote by roll call to approve.

3. Trails and Land Management

- **River Road "Class A" Trail Discussion**
(Discussed out of order; public was invited to comment on this topic)
•••Reports available:
 - 1. Sue MacKenzie sent out a proposal for the trail for the Sept meeting (which was not discussed then, due to the meeting being cancelled for technical problems).
 - 2. Ann Flood sent out a set of photos and text and informal summary of issues raised for the Oct. meeting. This document was intended to illustrate current signage problems at the bypass and some proposed wording for new trail signage to address these issues, plus a proposal to allow parking at the top of the bypass.



River Road “Class A Trail” Discussion, cont.

- Ann and Sue very briefly described the purpose of their complementary proposals. A long-standing member mentioned that the Commission had tried to avoid weighing in on the Bypass and thought we should still avoid it. The Chair reminded the members that the Select Board (SB) had, in the meantime, explicitly asked the Conservation Commission (CC) to look into it and present them with proposals; he noted too that the SB also expressed the opinion that the SB would not support winter plowing of the trail nor parking. Other members mentioned other new developments since the CC’s original stance including: 1. property lines have since been delineated; (2) the CC was asked to study how to establish the trail that the Town had since voted on. Other discussion: the SB seems to be in favor of establishing a gate at each end with authorized users being offered a key. Members mentioned that they understood that that many Town users have said they are not in favor of gates; instead, they favor trying clearer signage about who can use the trail and who can be authorized to drive on parts of it. Don (public attendee, and abutter who would be among those with keys to any gate) was not in favor of having a gate and feared that it would frequently be left unlocked anyway; he favored welcoming signage that was clear who can/cannot use it with motorized vehicles. A member questioned what would happen if there were an emergency and keys were not available to responder.
 - A member commented that we seem not to have enough time during meetings to discuss all the issues and suggested that we form a subcommittee of the CC to study it in more detail and report back to the full CC. Members said that a subcommittee of the CC would require getting the SB to agree, appoint members, etc. so that it makes sense for the SB to form a special, temporary subcommittee to look into it instead.
 - The consensus of the CC was that the issue is too complicated and involves several other stakeholders (e.g., the Recreation Committee, people authorized to propose official DOT signage in addition to Town signs, emergency responders, abutters to the trail, people authorized to speak to road maintenance or plowing to abutters’ property). Therefore, the recommendation from the CC to the SB is that the SB should form a special River Road Trail Committee (RRTC) with the charge to consult with (or be represented by) various stakeholders and form recommendations about the trail signage and maintenance to the SB. This motion to the SB should note that the CC has prepared two documents that it would make available to the RRTC for their consideration and that some members of the CC expressed a willingness to serve on the RRTC (Ann and Sue). Blake was asked to relay this request to the SB.
- **Forester Jeff Smith re Forest Management Plans** -- Copy of management plan is available if members need it. Jeff wrote it for Lyme in 2013. Ben Hudson wrote a plan for Trout Pond in 2012.
- **Town Trails Update** –

Blake sent out this report and photos re management of Town trails:

“This morning, I took hikes on the Town Forest’s Beaver Pond Trail and up Mud Turtle Pond Road as far as the Western Town Forest Trailhead.



"A concern on the Beaver Pond Trail, brought to my attention by Jill, is the perilous condition of the footbridge crossing over Whipple Brook. As the photo attests, it is pitched sharply to the left when viewed from the trailhead side of the brook. When the treads are damp, as they were this morning, crossing safely is nigh impossible. I did not attempt it. Otherwise, the trail is in good shape.

Mud Turtle Pond Road remains passable but only using a high clearance vehicle. I drove in as far as the log landing and could have gone at least as far as the Western Town Forest trailhead. It is likely one could drive beyond the Beaver Pond trailhead. But all the way to Orford? Meg has mentioned motorized vehicle activity in the Town Forest. Indeed, there is evidence of truck and ORV tread marks especially as one approaches the Western Town Forest trailhead. Bike tire imprints are visible too. Interestingly, there don't seem to be any tread imprints at the Whipple Hill Road end of Mud Turtle. The surface is gravellier there. Maybe the rain washed them away. Someone with sturdier legs than I may want to explore the trails farther in."

Blake also reported that earlier today, the Highway Dept. installed the new Trout Pond Trailhead sign on Hardscrabble Lane. The crew also replaced a collapsed culvert that passes under the lane's surface.

4. Project and Application Review

- **ZBA Site Visit at 711 River Road Sept 1, 2021** -- General sense of the site visit attendees to approve owners' plans for planting wildlife friendly, native plants and trees. They are well described and do not disturb any areas that are not already disturbed. Letter to that effect will be given to Zoning Board.
- **Site Visits and NH's "Right to Know Law"** – A side issue was raised by the number of members attending this site visit, which had not been intended to be a formal meeting of the Conservation Commission: If a quorum or more of members is in attendance at a meeting, it becomes a 'public meeting' under the Public's Right to Know rules of NH. Since more than a quorum of members were present, this was accidentally in violation of the Right to Know rules. In the future, one or two (i.e., less than a quorum) should make such a site visit and a general invitation to members should not be given.

There is a webinar on which members are invited to attend: "2021 Right-to-Know Law and Governmental Records & Public Meetings Virtual Workshop. 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Thursday, October 14, 2021". If members attend, there is a \$55 fee for registering that the Commission will reimburse. Ann volunteered to take the webinar and report to the group; Blake said he has taken it but may plan to take it again as a refresher course. Matt moved to have some members attend the webinar and report back. Lyn seconded it. It passed unanimously by roll call.

5. Outreach and Education

- **Scout Camp Restoration Proposal** – Logan Protzman (not present). Discussion: One issue yet to be determined is whether to have a camp at all. Need to have an official application and rules of use. Access not clear except to trail savvy people. Matt volunteered to assess next steps. Tom and Jill offered Matt their assistance.



6. Other Business

- **2022 Budget Request** -- Blake reminded members that the CC needed to make a formal request for its budget for next year. This budget has not changed since 2015 and each year it has a shortfall for dues. The actual dues it owes is \$350, although the amount requested had been \$342. Blake recommended increasing the entire budget by \$8, with the line item increase to be for dues. Tom moved to make this increase; Matt seconded it. It passed unanimously by roll call.

7. Publicity

- Blake will supply an article for next month's Lyme Community & Church News

8. Adjournment

- On a motion by Ann, seconded by Jill, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary

If matters of business warrant it, the next meeting of the Lyme Conservation Commission will take place in person at the Lyme Center Academy Building and via a ZOOM conference call on Monday, November 1, 2021, beginning at 7:00 p.m.