



**Lyme Conservation Commission (CC)  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, May 1, 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), Ann Flood (Secretary), Matt Stevens, Sara Zahendra (appointed full member), Jill Kearney (appointed full member), David Lysy (appointed full member)

Members joining by zoom: Lin Brown

Public joining in person or via Zoom: none

The Chair (Blake) called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m., after solving technical difficulties with sound on Zoom.

**1. Review and Approve Minutes from 2023-04-03 Meeting**

- Jill noted that there was a typo on Sue's last name that needed correcting after the first revision from Blake. On a motion from Jill, seconded by Matt, the minutes of the 2023-04-03 meeting as amended 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**

- **2023 Trails Project with UVTA (Upper Valley Trails Alliance)**

Blake indicated Russell had reported to him that the UVTA proposal had been approved by the Lyme Foundation for matching funds, and the work is scheduled for July

- **Forest Management Plans Update—Ecological Assessment Proposal**

Matt reported that he had talked to Jeff Littleton about surveying the Town Forest with regard to vulnerable plants, reptiles, etc. and creating a management plan. He is well known to Matt and does good work. He sent correspondence to Blake previously. Matt said he didn't want to slow the process down by starting over, but also indicated that it is difficult to compare the various proposals because they are not intending to offer the same services. Blake noted that our request was fairly open and so responses range from an ecological assessment to a more traditional forest management approach in philosophy and the prices range widely due to differences in approach such as performing an on-the-ground survey vs using remote ways to assess and philosophical differences in how best to maintain/protect the Town forests. There is a need to get a survey to inform decision-making, including the status of vernal ponds, etc. but



### **Forest Management Plans Update—Ecological Assessment Proposal, cont.**

there may be some proposals that would provide information that we would not be prepared to act on in any case.

Discussion then focused on issues for which we need information such as how to handle damage to the forest from the [Emerald Ash Borer](#), with experts to the CC generally advising against using pesticides but rather deciding whether to salvage the trees while there was still some use for the wood vs letting it go. The history of the Town's forests in regard to considering the potential value of harvesting has included deciding that the lack of suitable roads rendered salvaging the timber moot in any case because it would cost more to build new roads than the sale of the timber would bring in. This situation (the likely need to build costly and potentially destructive roads in order to harvest timber) still exists for much of the Town's official forest areas, especially Trout Pond. Blake then said he would like to table the discussion for this month and send out materials again to the Commission members to review in advance of the June meeting, where we should try to come to a decision, for everybody's sake.

- **Town Forest “Metes and Bounds” Survey Update**

There has not been much progress on improving the physical boundaries. We just need to get out and do it. Matt said he needed several people to help and perhaps several days to complete it and will try to set up some outing days.

- **Trail Condition Survey**

Jill reported some big trees down on trails in the Town Forest near Mud Turtle Pond Road. It is hard to find your way along the trail now, in part because at least one tree that had a marker is now down. David volunteered to take his chain saw and try to fix the damage or survey what is needed if he is not able. Given Jill's description of the status of the downed trees, he thought he would probably be able to fix it. Big Rock area still has garbage bags; will check with Meg to see if the pallet is still need there for the invasive removal project and otherwise remove it. Otherwise the Town trails are pretty free of debris. Blake mentioned that, in view of Trails Day coming up, it would be good to make sure they are in good shape and meanwhile to remind people to stay off them until the mud dries up.

- **Install Trail Signage**

Blake mentioned that the signs for the trails are ready and just need to be posted. He said that Matt and Russell recommended using 4x4 posts for the new signs. When asked what the signs said, Blake said he would send that information out by email (see photo below)





#### **4. Project and Application Review**

- **645 Dorchester application to add a new structure to house (update)**

Blake reported that, following the site visit and particularly at Meg's urging, he sent a letter to David Robbie for the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) expressing concern about the potential for runoff, given all of the other building issues. Blake noted that Bill Malcolm is now the head of the ZBA.

#### **5. Outreach and Education**

- **"Green Up Day" 2023-05-06**

Blake mentioned that Community Care is partnering on this effort and will be offering a breakfast before the event. The bags for collecting trash have been distributed and, given the initial website signup for the day (and some people have already begun collecting), a good turnout is expected.

- **"Trails Day" 2023-06-03**

See above for plans for the trails to be ready for this.

#### **6. Other Business**

- **Committee Handbook Revision Review**

Ann said she had reviewed the [proposed](#) revisions to the Handbook and did not see any that were very substantive and/or that would be of concern to the CC. However, there were a couple of items in the Handbook that are perhaps worth reviewing to be sure we are following the Right To Know Law. One is that, in the spirit of making sure the public would be informed about policy making, there are strong prohibitions against copying all on responses to emails that were about policy. The CC members typically do CC all but these are about intentions to attend meetings or acknowledgement of receipt of information. These are not in violation of the Right To Know Law but the CC should be mindful not to conduct policy exchanges by email. If there is a response to a policy issue, it should only be sent to Blake as the Chair or to just the originator of the email. The other item is that a quorum of members physically attending the meeting is still required and, if a member is attending via Zoom, they should plan to attend the whole meeting (especially in order to be counted as present).

- **Solar meeting hosted by the Zoning Committee**

Jill attended in person and Ann via Zoom. It was informative and well conducted. It was chaired by John Stadler and the representative of the solar business was helpful and reassuring. The discussion was particularly about rules to prevent abuses from very large scale solar 'farms' being created in the region but there are safeguards to keep them under control and to allow responsible use of land for such purposes. Blake will ask John if minutes were available.



- **Salamander Brigade Summary**

Sara reported it went very well. She personally attended three nights and there was a lot of data reported from volunteers regarding time, weather, counts of live/dead salamanders etc.

- **Utility Club Pollinator Garden**

Lin, [who is a member of The Utility Club of Lyme \(UC\)](#), [reported](#) that Alicia Houk has agreed to be the landscape designer for a UC project that will feature a pollinator garden along side the [handicap accessible](#) path that the UVTA [is planning for The Chaffee](#). One side [will feature](#) pollinator plants and the other side [will feature](#) more general wildflowers to help accentuate the differences. The UC (which Lin noted as being enthusiastic about this project) will begin adding cardboard and mulch [in May](#) and then do some plantings in the fall [after the new trail is completed](#). Finally, perennials will be [added next spring](#). Matt asked if there was a plant list that could be reviewed. Lin said the plans were not currently that detailed but she would obtain a list for the CC to review when it was available. She mentioned possibly adding a birch tree and Blake mentioned that there are some restrictions and additional issues about planting a tree, including that that portion of the Chaffee was intended to remain a field and so the profile of the plantings need to be consistent with the intent. Lin said that would be duly noted by the UC. She also mentioned that suitable furniture would be needed.

## 7. Publicity

- Blake mentioned in 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 been temporarily suspended.

## 8. Adjournment

- Blake called for a motion to adjourn. On a motion by Jill, seconded by David, the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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, June 5, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.