

**Lyme Conservation Commission  
Public Hearing  
February 9, 2015**



Members Present: Blake Allison (Chair), Tom Colgan, Lee Larson (Alternate), Sue MacKenzie (Select Board), James Monroe and Matt Stevens

Public Present: Crossroads Academy: Jean Behnke, Kim Quirk, Jolin Kish and Brian Muenzer. Pinnacle Co-housing Project: Bill Waste and Rich Brown. Bear Hill Conservancy: Elizabeth Kilmarx. UVLT: Peg Merrens. General Public: Julia Elder

**Public Hearing Regarding Conservation Fund Withdrawal**

**Blake** called the public hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. and reiterated that the hearing's purpose was to take comment on the Commission's proposed withdrawal of \$35,000 from the Conservation Fund to contribute toward the Upper Valley Land Trust's (UVLT) plan to purchase the so-called "Clay Brook/Bailey property at the junction of NH Rt. 10 and Whipple Hill Road (Tax Map 407, Lots 58., 50 & 52) and place a conservation easement on it. The approximately 50-acre property includes a hay field on Rt. 10's east side and almost 2000 feet of frontage along Clay Brook across the road. (See 2014-12-01 and 2015-01-05 CC Minutes).

Julia Elder raised concerns about whether the property needed protection since it is agricultural land and whether an easement would restrict it to corn or hay production only. Could it become a Christmas tree farm or just be let go to trees, she asked? Peg Merrens of the UVLT said there was no guarantee it wouldn't be developed if there was no conservation easement and an easement would not restrict what kind of agricultural use occurred there.

Concerns were raised about high purchase price and the large amount of money the Conservation Commission was being asked to contribute. Peg said the property's appraisals were consistent with recent similar transactions in the Upper Valley and noted the seller was offering the property at a discounted rate. She also said the Con Comm's proposed contribution was consistent with amounts donated by other Upper Valley communities for similar purchases. She also noted grant money had been secured from the NRCS and NH's Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund with an additional \$82,000 likely to be obtained from another source. The hope was to finish the financing using the Commission's gift and donations from local stakeholders.

Hearing no further comment, Blake closed the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "V. Blake Allison, Secretary". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Blake Allison, Secretary *pro tem*