

AS APPROVED 2026-06-08



**Lyme Conservation Commission (LCC)  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, May 4, 2026 @ 7:00 p.m.  
Lyme Center Academy Building and Zoom**

**Present:** Blake Allison (Chair), Ann Flood (Secretary), Lin Brown, Jill Niles (Alternate), Matt Stevens, Meg Sheehan, and John Biglow (Alternate)

Members via Zoom: Sue MacKenzie; Public in person or via Zoom: None.

Blake called the meeting into session at 7:02 pm. Jill was appointed as a full voting member.

### **1. Review and Approve Minutes from 2026-02-06 Meeting**

On a motion by Meg, seconded by Ann, the March minutes were approved by a unanimous rollcall vote.

On a motion by Matt, seconded by Meg, the revised April minutes were approved unanimously on a rollcall as amended. The amendment discussed at the meeting noted that the changes in appointment type for Matt and Jill are pending approval by the Select Board.

In both rollcalls, members abstained if they had not attended the meeting.

### **2. Land Protection and Easements**

- **Town Forest Conservation Easement—Next steps** -- There are no updates regarding the choice of which conservancy trust to use for the Town Forest. Meg had supplied information to Blake regarding contacting Jon Leibowitz, CEO and President of the Northeast Wilderness Trust (NEWT). They have since communicated by email, but no date has been set to meet. The other trust under consideration, Upper Valley Land Trust, is already the trust for several conserved town properties and so does not need to be vetted in the same way.

Meg noted that the NEWT has considerable experience in working with groups wanting to establish 'forever'-type wildlife conservancies to preserve the forest or land for natural uses rather than, for example, to harvest trees for their commercial value and seek to let the wilderness evolve largely without man-made interference. Moreover, Meg noted that NEWT has already exhibited, when working with Towns rather than private owners, that they recognize that there are many stakeholders in a Town and therefore are willing to consider a more diverse set of principles that include human values. Such diverse uses could include hiking, camping, hunting, conducting approved scientific research, safety for users, etc.

There was some discussion of the next steps, in addition to selecting the trust and a desire expressed to try to move these steps along as soon as feasible in order to establish a Conservancy, hopefully in the next fiscal year.

There was a discussion of which comes first—the Management Plan for the Forest (framed so as to be appropriate to update every 7 to 10 years) or the document to establish the Conservancy (created to be permanent, i.e., immutable). Matt also mentioned that there is a third type of plan that is intended to be short-term (< one year),



**Town Forest Conservation Easement continued...**

for example, a clear-out of debris following major wind damage or removal of invasive plants, that the LCC would be considering from time to time. All three must be consistent, with the Conservancy providing the overarching principles of the plan, the Management Plan being the multi-year (7 to 10 year) vision for the Town Forest, and specific projects being ad hoc and very short term. There was general agreement that the Management Plan (also needed for securing the conservancy) needed to be developed first but interactively with the Conservancy Plan. For example, it would be prudent to look at examples of other established conservancy plans (including for other Town-owned properties) and to consult with the staff at the Trust we select at various times during the development of the Management Pla

See below for more information about the Management Plan.

**3. Trails and Land Management**

- **New signage** -- Matt said there is no update on plans including Jim Mason. He remains enthusiastic and offered several (expensive) ideas. Matt was originally pleased by his suggestions but has grown skeptical due to their cost. Lin suggested an alternative source that is likely to be much cheaper: New Hampshire Correctional Industries (NHCI), i.e., inmate-made items or custom-made orders available to the public. From the website: <https://www.corrections.nh.gov/locations/correctional-retail-showroom> **“Sign and Engraving:** NHCI manufacture the highest quality highway, road, and street signs. We also produce customized temporary signs for road work. In addition, we make custom decals for vehicles, produce custom signs and commemorative automotive and motorcycle license plates.

In our engraving shop, we create name and desk plates, building and directory signage and custom-made plaques and awards. Our shop has a reputation for completing projects on-time and within budget for our clients.

Concord Shop – [603-271-1874](tel:603-271-1874)” (Hours on the website).

There was some discussion about styles of the signs needed (size of letters, two-sided, wooden, etc.) and how many signs would be needed for Chafee Wildlife Sanctuary, Big Rock and Trout Pond and Town Forests.

Matt said that he was sure that Jim would not be upset if we were to change to NHCI.

Lin said she would follow up to determine price and styles that they would be able to do.

- **Town Forest and Trout Pond Forest Management Plans Revision** -- Meg had offered to draft the Management Plan for the Town Forest but was not intending to draft the Conservancy Plan per se for it; presumably the Trust would do that. She shared some of the outline she has prepared for the Management Plan, but she does not have a draft available yet to share. She mentioned that she is using Rick Vanderpol’s document as a guide, including his recommendations about preserving some areas as more pristine wilderness, e.g., vernal ponds, and some needing some harvesting to return them to a more natural mixed forest.

There was some discussion about whether motorized vehicles would be prohibited (they are now but some people use them without consequences), hunting or overnight camping would be permitted.



### **Town Forest and Trout Pond Forest Management Plans Revision, cont.**

John raised the point that snowmobiles cannot be prohibited even on private land, let alone Town property. Lin added the ruling that John referred to was based on very different and special circumstances of a case in Vermont where there has been a long history of snowmobile use which the new owners tried to forbid use of their land for this purpose. The ruling had been in favor of long-established traditions and trails being allowed to be used.

That led to a discussion of snowmobile trails in Lyme, some of which involve the Town Forest. There was a call for having maps available to members that include this type of use and detail, including also the Class VI road and trails and key sites like the waterfall, the cellar holes, etc., Blake said he would try to share such materials with members.

There was some discussion of the need to also revisit the Management Plan for Trout Pond Forest. The old one is now inappropriate (mostly about forestry goals and neglecting Rick Vanderpol's suggestion of leaving the back side of Trout Pond undisturbed). Nevertheless, there was consensus to concentrate initially on the Town Forest because of the need to proceed expeditiously on its Conservancy.

- **Chaffee Path Maintenance** -- There was some discussion about how to proceed in order to make progress on its rehabilitation. Matt said it may be too late to fire-torch the path because it needs to be done prior to greening up. Lin asked about when Rich Brown's DEWALT (DW) brush hog monster mower would be needed; should it be coordinated with weed pulling by hand? Matt said anytime. Lin said she would try to get a dash team from the CommunityCare of Lyme (CCL) to volunteer. Jill suggested it should be planned and coordinated in detail. Matt said that we don't really know how many hours, volunteers or the best tools to use and so maybe this should be communicated to the volunteers who would be asked to bring appropriate equipment to the best of their understanding and then give us feedback about realistic methods and expectations on maintenance.
- **"Ledge Trail View" Clearing** -- No further communication from Eric Bragg since the plan was approved and all paperwork is in place. Jill tried to reach him but has not heard back. Lin suggested trying again noting in the header that the matter is urgent. She heard he may have an injured shoulder that would prevent him from being able to do the clearing. Jill will try again.
- **Milfoil Project Update** -- Sue said there was no update beyond the May 15 planned dive. She has been in contact with the NH Department of Environment Services about scheduling a Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH) boat to help with removal of milfoil. They are now on the list if they need to use a DASH boat this year. To date, no milfoil has been reported. It is apparently slow to grow due to the cold spring.

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

- **No Items Submitted**



## 5. Outreach and Education

- **Nature Areas Virtual Tours Presentation for LCC Website** -- Blake mentioned that he would like to feature more PowerPoints presentation on the LCC website like the Virtual Walk through the Town Forest that was prepared ahead of the Town Meeting. Ideally there should be one for each of the Town's properties but there is a dearth of photographs available to create them. Matt and John discussed sites where everyone could add their favorite photos. These could then be used for the PowerPoints.
- **May Town Forest hike** -- Lin mentioned that she was not really prepared for the May 9 date being proposed. She will be in Massachusetts then but could drive up very early if necessary. After discussion, the date was changed to June 6 (Saturday) at 10am with a rain date of June 7 (Sunday) at 1pm.
- **Green up Day Review** -- Blake said he had not received the official numbers for bags of trash etc but noted that there were many volunteers out cleaning up most roads and they looked much better. He noted that the involvement of CCL has greatly improved participation and effectiveness and helped to revive the concept of Green Up Day.

## 6. Other Business

- **Change of Meeting Place and Date** -- After discussing individual preferences for dates, places and switching seasonally, the general consensus was that we will shift permanently to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month starting in June and continue to meet for the foreseeable future at the Lyme Center Academy Building. We will revisit the possibility of changing location to the Fire Station for the winter next fall.
- **Trout Brook Split Rail Fence repair** -- There was general agreement that the fence needed repair and that it was important for safety and other reasons to do so. Blake will alert Dina Cutting to this need and pursue it in the future.
- **Utility Club Bench** -- Blake mentioned that the bench was in his garage, but he was unable to assemble it and affix the plaque. John with Matt agreed to pick it up and assemble it in place near the bridge and all-accessible path on the Chaffee Sanctuary side of the bridge. Where exactly will be determined by the plants and ground available.
- **Committee Handbook rule reminders** -- Ann raised the issue of email communications among members that are permitted or forbidden under the state's "Right to Know" law. In general, members may send non-LCC-business-related messages to all but no one is supposed to do a 'reply all' or otherwise include any members other than the original sender in their reply. That rule appears to apply to everything, including corrections to the minutes. The one exception is to query about intended attendance in person at the next meeting and asked if that meant that all corrections had to be completed within 5 days. Ann said no. When sending out the first draft of the minutes, I send it to all members (including alternates), Dina, Jordan Toland, and the representative from the Select Board (Ben Kilham) so that



### Committee Handbook Rule Reminders, cont.

Jill noted that the minutes are supposed to be distributed within 5 business days of the meeting becomes the official document that needs to be reported within 5 days. That means that the Town administration receives a draft as well and can inform anyone who inquires about the minutes in draft form. Technically the Right to Know law suggests that all drafts must be saved as well as the final approved minutes. In practice at least, only the approved minutes are available on the website. Corrections only need to be sent to the Secretary (me or pro tempore) ahead of the next meeting and the Secretary should send out the corrections by email to all, particularly if they are substantive. In practice Blake usually sends the final draft out and he sends in the approved minutes.

- **Blazing the Town trails** -- Jill brought up that there are several trails that need to be blazed. She would like to use a plastic version and nail it into the trees, leaving room away from the bark so the tree does not grow around them. John objected to using plastic on general principles of avoiding all plastics where possible. Matt discussed pros and cons of plastic, aluminum or paint. Jill will look further into it and try to balance what is best for the environment and intended use and longevity.

### 7. Adjournment

On a motion by Meg, seconded by Lin, Blake adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Ann Barry Flood, 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 via Zoom conference call on Monday, June 8, beginning at 6:00 p.m., due to a request to accommodate a guest who must travel a long distance to attend.