

**Lyme Conservation Commission (LCC)
Meeting Minutes
Monday August 10th, 2026 @ 7pm
Lyme Center Academy Building**

Present: Blake Allison (Chair), John Biglow (Alternate), Matt Stevens (Alternate) and Jill Niles (Secretary pro tem)
Member via Zoom: Sue MacKenzie
Guest via Zoom: Ben Hoffer ~ Sign Maker
Public in Person: Richard Menge

Blake called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. He appointed Matt and John full, voting members for the meeting.

1. Review and Approve Minutes from 2026-06-11 Meeting

The 2026-07-13 minutes could not be approved because three of the members present did not attend the July meeting and were not eligible to vote, leaving us short of the necessary quorum.

2. Land Protection and Easements

- **Deliberation Regarding Selecting a Town Forest Conservation Easement Holder --**
Richard Menge attended to comment on the easement holder options. He had examined all the information from our past two meetings with Northeast Wilderness Trust (NEWT) and the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT). He is not a fan of "forever wild" due to concerns about wildfire spreading through an unkept forest and neighboring properties. He also supports an easement that allows more flexibility to address invasives and other contingencies that climate change may bring down the road. He felt that "forever wild" was too restrictive; "was overkill."

It was agreed that we need a greater number of commission members present to move forward on this matter and that we need to spell out clearly what the non-negotiable elements of an easement might be. Matt commented that if only one of the organizations can accommodate these, then our decision will be easier. He also said he felt recreation was important and suggested using the Trout Pond Easement as a template for the Town Forest Easement. He added that we'll need an accurate survey of the Town Forest.

Sue shared that she believed that no action within the Town Forest should take place for profit, and that "forever wild" was worth considering. We will have a Public Forum for public input and discussion later in the fall.

3. Trails and Land Management

- **New Signage Update** – John brought in a beautiful 'sample' sign for the Chaffee Wildlife Sanctuary that Ben Hoffer made for us. There were several suggestions pertaining to font type and size that Ben will incorporate into all the signs. He will make up a new one with these revisions, also adding a tree graphic along each side. The basic prototype of property signage was approved, and he'll start moving forward on production. It was agreed that a 2'x3' format will be used.

- **Trout Pond Management Plan Revision** – Blake noted that his draft revision has been distributed and invited comment.
- **Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) HS Trails Corps Chaffee Bog Bridge Replacement Update** – Blake said that work had been progressing throughout July and will continue in August. UVTA Exec. Dir. and LCC member Russell Hirschler has been actively involved and expects his field staff will finish up the project. Photos of the work in progress are posted on the LCC's webpage.
- **Post Pond Milfoil Eradication Project Update** -- Sue reported that only one plant was found and harvested so far this season. The Commission was thrilled to hear that there is currently no more milfoil. The money set aside for this year's herbicide treatment project will roll over to next year.
- **Lyme Biodiversity Working Group Update** – No report was presented, because Meg was unable to attend the meeting.

4. Project and Application Review

- **No Items Submitted**

5. Other Business

- **Trout Brook Split Rail Fence Repair** – The work will be done later in the fall after the foliage is gone.
- **Utility Club Bench Placement** -- The lovely, new Utility Club bench has been placed in the Chaffee Wildlife Sanctuary next to the footbridge, over Trout Brook ~ Thank-you Matt and John!
- **Vision and Mission Statement Discussion** -- John continues to work on a draft and reviewed the outline he distributed for us prior to the meeting.

6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by John and seconded by Sue at 8:24pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jill K. Niles, Secretary pro tem

The next meeting will take place on Monday, Sept. 14th, 2026, beginning at 7pm at the Lyme Center Academy Building and via ZOOM conference call.