Lyme Conservation Commission
Meeting Agenda
Monday, October 19, 2026 @ 7:00 p.m.
Lyme Center Academy Building

Present In Person: Blake Allison (Chair), Ann Flood (Secretary) Jill Niles and Meg Sheehan

Present via Zoom: Sue MacKenzie (Vice-chair) and Lin Brown

Public in person or via Zoom: None.

Blake called the meeting into session at 7:05 pm.

1. **Review and Approve 2026-09-14 Minutes –** Lin offered an amendment to correct the location of the Eurasian milfoil problem discussed in "Eurasian Milfoil Update" noting that milfoil was in the pond's southeast corner and midway along Post Pond's eastern shore not southwest as originally submitted. Meg moved the amendment which was seconded by Ann. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

2. **Land Protection and Easements**

- **2026 Easement Monitoring Program –** Blake reported that all landowners have been notified that a monitoring visit is forthcoming and that all monitors have been sent their forms. He said that five properties remain unassigned, but they will get visited.

- **Deliberation Regarding Selecting a Town Forest Conservation Easement Holder** – Blake asked that this discussion be tabled until all the other night's business had been discussed

3. **Trails and Land Management**

- **Trail Maps Update –** Blake noted that work on the Town Forest easement has shown the need to update its map as well as those for all the other properties managed by the Commission. The Commission manages six properties: Chaffee Sanctuary Wildlife, Lyme Town Forest, Trout Pond Forest, Rock Nature Reserve, Hewes Brook Cartop Boat Launch and Lower Grant Brook Trail. None of the maps have been updated since 2011 when the late Elizabeth Kilmarx created them.

  He said he had explored possible mapping programs with ZBA Admin. David Robbins who recommended ARCGIS and QGIS. David said that the ARCGIS software is expensive to purchase. The QGI is free, he said, but unwieldy to use when printing. Blake also sought ought Russell Hirschler's input regarding UVTA's mapping. Russ said,

  "There are 2 components for making maps. The data collection (GPS) and the map making (GIS). For data collection, we use either Gaia or Cal Topo as an app on our phones. You can then import the data into google maps/google earth to manipulate it. For the map making, we usually use ArcGIS over QGIS. Both are not user friendly at all."

Trail Maps Update, cont.

After some discussion it was agreed that all the maps should be digitized and standardized and their narrative content updated. It was also agreed that the printed format should be retained.

Blake said he would distribute copies of the existing maps for review.

- **New Signage Update –** Blake said he had contacted Ben Hoffer but not heard back. He will ask John B to contact Ben for an update.

4. Project and Application Review

- **No Items Submitted**

5. Outreach and Education

- **No Items Submitted**

6. Other Business

- **2027 Town Budget Request –** Blake said the Commission needs to submit its funding request for inclusion in the 2027 town voted budget. He recommended we request $2233, the same amount as approved in 2026. Meg moved that the Commission submit a budget request for 2027 at same level as last year. Jill seconded, and the motion passed on a unanimous, roll call vote.

  Lin asked whether the Commission might hire someone to maintain the Chaffee's accessible trails. Blake said there is a line item in The Conservation Fund that can be used for that purpose. We would need to direct Dina to draw maintenance funds from there.

- **Vision and Mission Statement Discussion –** Blake asked that this be tabled given the amount of time being spent on the Town Forest easement discussion.

Deliberation Regarding Selecting a Town Forest Conservation Easement, cont.

- Blake opened the discussion by reviewing the documents he sent out the preceding weekend. These included:
  - Meg's "Lyme, NH Town Forest Easement Draft and Background" which constitutes a proposed easement for the Town Forest and context for it based principally on the 2024 Environmental Assessment produced by Dr. Rick Van de Pol at the Commission's request.
  - Ann's "Letter of Intent" Draft and "Addendum" which ask the two potential easement holder candidates how they would address specific concerns raised by Commissioners.
  - 1993 Trout Pond Forest Easement
  - NH Fish & Game 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan "Ranked Habitat" Map

Deliberation Regarding Selecting a Town Forest Conservation Easement, cont.
Blake said he had sent a copy of the 1993 Trout Pond Forest easement to the UVLT's Craig Privett asking to what extent the organization's current easement language aligns with the 1993 document.

During the ensuing discussion, Commission members expressed a variety of concerns pertaining to restrictions an easement might impose on fire suppression measures, invasive species control and flexibility to adapt to unforeseen circumstances such as might be brought on by climate change. Much of this was covered in Ann's "Addendum." For example, on the matter of wildfire mitigation and bordering property protection, "Will your standard easement language accommodate an explicit, permanent right for the town to maintain a **100-foot defensible fuel-reduction buffer zone** directly adjoining private residential property lines without requiring prior written consent for every action?"

It is recognized that the fact of the Town Forest being a "public holding" creates a different dynamic, when weighing access and restriction concerns, than those that a private landowner faces. For example, a private landowner could choose to place a "forever wild" restriction on his/her property. Is that approach appropriate for publicly owned land? Likely, there would be among townspeople varying opinions about how restrictive management practices should be.

It has generally been considered that the conservation easement language should establish baseline aspirations for protecting the property and that the management plan should be used to address concerns, existing and future, where flexibility is needed. Ann's Letter of Intent" and "Addendum" is intended to put these concerns before the two potential easement holders to see how they will respond within the context of their respective easement conditions.

In the end, it was decided that Meg will take finalize easement draft and consider some changes along the lines of Ann's comments. She also will make sure maps and exhibits are clearly identified. The finished document and Ann's documents will then be distributed to both easement holder candidates their review feedback. It is hoped those responses will be received before the Commission's November, 9 meeting.

7. Adjournment

On a motion from Sue seconded by Meg the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Ann Barry Flood

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Barry Flood, Secretary

If matters of business warrant it, the next meeting of the Lyme Conservation Commission will take place in person and via Zoom conference at the Lyme Fire Station on Monday, November 9 beginning at 7:00 pm.