



Seymour Conservation Commission REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Conference Room 107, Community Center
20 Pine Street, Seymour, CT 06483
Thursday July 17, 2025 – 7:00 PM

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 7/12/25
TIME: 2:25 PM
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Our mission is to inventory, manage, and protect town open spaces and natural resources while preserving Seymour's historic character. We promote and foster public appreciation of the environment through education, community engagement, sustainable practices, and conservation efforts that enhance watershed resources.

Members Present: Joe Niezelski, Jr.; Karen Bertapelle; George Cipows

Members Absent: Nancy Chucta

Others Present: Jeff Baryla, Advisor

1. Call to Order

Chair Joe Niezelski, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM

All present stood, saluted the flag, and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair appointed Jeff Baryla to Secretary Pro Tempore for this meeting.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Approval of the June 26, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes

Motion by K. Bertapelle to approve the Minutes of the 06/26/2025 Special Meeting, as presented. Seconded by G. Cipows. There was no discussion. Board approved 3-0.

4. Reports & Correspondence

Jeff Baryla, Trail Manager, summarized the Trails Report [Attached] for the board.

5. Old Business

A. Status of Outreach & Education

Jeff shared that the Beautification Commission just approved the volunteer Work Party schedule for the remainder of July, August, and the first week of September. He will have more free time once he completes his Master Woodland Manager program on July 31.

B. Updates on 2025 Goals

Nancy was not present to update the board on the Native Plant Policy status.

Joe, Karen, and Jeff visited four parcels on Sunday June 29:

21 Gary Park, 24 Chucta (Land Trust), 142 Botsford, and 13 Ross (Land Trust).

Karen liked the potential for the Gary Park parcel. Joe called it low-hanging fruit. The Chucta parcel will be challenging, but can be managed with patience and determination.

Nothing will be done on the other parcels at this time. Jeff will reach out to board members next week to schedule a date and time for everyone to visit some other parcels.

B. Planning for 2nd Annual Sunset Hike

This year's event will be on Sat Oct 4. Visitors will be asked to arrive between 5:30-5:45PM to sign in. Jeff will start the hike just before 6:00PM. The Beautification Commission will schedule a few work parties in advance of the hike to ensure the trail and its footing are well-maintained. Of note, we will need: a folding table, camping lantern (table center piece), extra flashlights and/or headlamps, two volunteers to help guide the back of the pack [George offered], possibly a couple solar tiki torches (if readily available), and someone to pick up and setup the hot chocolate while the hike is taking place.

Motion by G. Cipows to approve and schedule the 2025 Sunset Hike to take place on Saturday October 4 at Little Laurel Lime Ridge Park in Seymour.
Second by K. Bertapelle. There was no discussion. Board voted 3-0. Motion passed.

6. New Business

A. Discussion and Action on Changing Scheduled Meeting Time

Members of this board approached the Beautification Commission last month with a proposal to swap meeting start times. The Beautification Commission approved the time swap, agreeing to meet at 7 pm beginning Sept 18. Conservation will meet at 6 pm.

K. Bertapelle motioned to change the meeting start time of the Seymour Conservation Commission from 7:00 pm to 6:00 pm, effective September 18, 2025. Seconded by G. Cipows. There was no discussion. Board voted 3-0 to approve.

G. Cipows made a motion to change the official regular meeting location of the Seymour Conservation Commission from the Flaherty Room in Seymour Town Hall to the Conference Room of the Seymour Community Center. Seconded by K. Bertapelle.

Joe liked the room. Karen said it offered more options. George found it convenient.
Board voted 3-0 to approve.

B. Any Other Business

None.

7. Public Comment

None.

8. Adjournment

Motion by J. Niezelski, Jr. Seconded by G. Cipows.
The meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Baryla

Jeff Baryla, Secretary Pro Tem

Seymour Conservation Commission will next meet on Thurs Aug 21 at 7:00 PM.

[Attachment] Trails Report for July 17, 2025

Paramount

We held a work party on July 12. Work parties will continue here every 2nd Saturday monthly (rain date Sunday) in order to control the invasive plants on-site and restore native species.

Keith Mitchell Forest (KMF)

During the work party on July 5, Stuart and I pulled out invasive privet from along the main Falls Trail, taking care to identify and not disturb any native plants. In addition to the abundant Northern Spicebush, we also observed: White Aven, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Stiff Cowbane, and White Baneberry. The forest edge is showing great improvement. What was once a large patch of Japanese Barberry, Burning Bush, and Bittersweet is now filling in with several natives. We will continue to host monthly work parties here every 1st Saturday (rain date Sunday).

Little Laurel Lime Ridge Park (LLLRP)

A work party is scheduled here on July 26. Volunteers will walk the Blue Trail to cut back overgrowth and pull any invasive plants along the way. We will make note of any consistently wet or poor-draining areas and take measurements at the three main entry points for future improvements. Follow-up work parties scheduled as needed.

Fountain Lake

Zach and I walked the North Loop Trail on July 10, taking note of invasive plants while we looked for signs of the Scout/Land Trust trail spur. Using a Geo-referenced assessors map and GPS app, we didn't stray off municipal land. Having an extra set of eyes was helpful. Zach spotted some anomalies and breaks in a stone wall that I didn't notice when I visited alone last time. We were able to trace, more or less, where the Scouts had made the trail. Some fragments are still visible even deeper into the parcel. We also found two surveyor's pins, confirming our map/GPS was accurate. Prior to completing this trail restoration, I recommend posting property boundary signs, then planting the following native trees/shrubs along the edge, which will provide more privacy for neighbors as they grow: eastern red cedar, winterberry, American holly, serviceberry, mountain laurel, inkberry, summersweet, and ninebark. Fountain Lake's South Loop Trail will be visited again sometime in the fall for a cut-and-paint.

Other

- Gary Park will be the site of a small work party on Thursday July 24 at 9:30am. Mugwort and Japanese Knotweed are spreading towards the wooded area behind the athletic field. Our plan is to restore a small loop trail that's shown in Seymour Land Trust's trail guide, and turn it into an educational interpretive trail, similar to Webb Mountain Discovery Zone or the Ansonia Nature Center. This trail will also be incorporated into our overall Greenway plan.
- 24 Chucta (Land Trust property) was visited by Commissioners on June 29. We were warned that the property is overrun with Kudzu. However, Joe and I confirmed the invasive plant climbing over everything is actually Five-leaf Akebia or Chocolate Vine. Slightly less aggressive than Kudzu and easier to manage, but an issue, nonetheless. Chocolate Vine has caused major problems in NC & VA. We are in the northernmost range of it's invasion, with spots in MA & RI.
- The Dog Park will be visited early afternoon on July 31. Volunteers will manage some of the invasive plants around the property and look for ideal locations to potentially construct a bridge.

Thank you!

Jeff Barysa
Trail Manager