



**Seymour Beautification Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Conference Room 107, Community Center
20 Pine Street, Seymour, CT 06483
Thursday August 21, 2025 – 6:00 PM

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 8/27/25
TIME: 2:30 PM
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Our duty is to oversee and manage town-owned parcels and open spaces through routine maintenance or enhancement, and to monitor all passive recreational trails. We shall develop work plans, produce maps, and ensure the safety of residents by promoting trail rules.

Members: Stuart Brannen, Chair; Nancy Chucta, Vice-Chair; Jeff Baryla, Sec.; Zachary Succow

Others: John McKenzie, Land Use Liaison

Members Absent: None (1 Vacancy)

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Brannen called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM

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

2. Public Comment

Nancy said she will be away during the Sept 18 meeting and will not be attending.

3. Approval of July 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion by S. Brannen to approve the Minutes of the 07/17/2025 meeting, as presented.

Seconded by N. Chucta. No discussion. Board voted 4-0 to approve.

4. Reports & Correspondence

The board received an email from Paul Wetowitz on 07/18 stating he is regrettably stepping down from involvement with this board due to personal reasons. Paul was one of our Trail Stewards and participated in a number of our volunteer work parties this year.

On 07/31, Jeff and Nancy each completed their year-long state educational/training program and are now certified Master Woodland Mangers.

The board congratulated both Jeff and Nancy.

Jeff was pulling mugwort in 18 Osprey [Gary Park] on 08/07 and observed uncommon native plant diversity in and around this parcel. He is curious about the history of this area prior to the development of residential homes and Gary Park. He will look into this and report back to the board with his findings.

On 08/19, Jeff participated in the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) webinar on 'Public Use, Recreation, and Management of Forested Habitats'. The next free USFWS webinar 'Finding Refuge in Suburbia: Managing Forests for Habitat in an Urban Environment' will be on Tuesday Sept 16 at 12:00 pm. All webinars are recorded for later viewing, as well.

At their regular meeting on 08/19, the town's Board of Selectpersons voted to move forward with purchasing 56 Squantuck Road from the Regional Water Authority. Once finalized, this will add approximately 5 acres to the Keith Mitchell Forest and allow for expansion and seamless legal connection of trails on both sides of Fourmile Brook.

5. New Business

A. Sharing Duties with the Seymour Land Trust

At this board's organizational meeting, the First Selectwoman reviewed our duties and also charged us to work alongside the Seymour Land Trust (SLT) on management of their parcels. Jeff met with SLT president Alex Danko on 08/14 to discuss this in more detail. Mr. Danko asked Jeff what he had in mind. Jeff gave two examples: removing chocolate vine from 24 Chucta, and cleaning 338 Roosevelt. Mr. Danko gave approval to begin both. Jeff recommends formalizing this relationship prior to hosting any volunteer work parties on SLT property. Mr. Danko will announce this to his board at their Sept meeting, which is a closed meeting. The Land Trust's meeting on Sun Oct 5, however, will be open to public. Jeff encourages all commissioners and volunteers to attend, if they can.

J. Baryla moved that the Seymour Beautification Commission, under the direction of the Seymour Land Conservation Trust, help with routine maintenance of their open space parcels, which shall include: the control and/or eradication of invasive plants and pests, the establishment of new native plants/shrubs/trees, and the regular upkeep, improvement, and construction of hiking trails, as requested and/or approved by the Seymour Land Conservation Trust, its president, or other designated representative. Seconded by N. Chucta.

Nancy stated she loves the idea of helping, but expressed her concern that this board might be taking on too much. She also wishes to clarify that we are offering to help, which does not mean this board and its volunteers will be responsible for doing all of the work. The rest of the board agreed. Jeff reiterated that the motion specifies select duties. Should the Land Trust request anything beyond that, it would need prior approval by this board. *Board approved the motion 4-0.*

B. Potential Funding Opportunities

- Trees for Communities Grant. This grant was only brought to our attention last month, and the application deadline is Aug 31. Should we not receive it, it ought to be kept on our radar in case it re-opens. It doesn't apply to just street trees. Other projects may qualify.
- DEEP Recreational Trails Grant. This grant typically opens in the springtime, but it was delayed this year through the state's bonding commission. Kim Bradley recently stated that DEEP will attempt to open applications in the fall with recipients possibly announced in Jan 2026. This would be an excellent opportunity for this board to acquire funding for not only KMF and LLLRP, but also smaller parcels with planned trail improvements, like Fountain Lake, Gary Park, etc. Jeff will share more details with this board as they unfold.
- Community Connectivity Grant. This grant typically opens early in the year. Projects that would likely qualify in 2026 are the North Benham ROW/brook crossing/pocket park, Middle Benham ROW via LLLRP to Red Clover Farm, and the cross-town greenway/trail.

C. Next Issue of 'The Seymour Sun'

This board voted at the June meeting to publish the newsletter quarterly. There is less than one month until the Sept 20 deadline, and only one article has been started so far. Jeff asked the board for submissions. Discussion on various suggestions/topics followed.

D. Any Other Business

- Volunteers are needed to help at the Sunset Hike on Sat Oct 4.
- Registration for the 7th Annual CT Trail Symposium (Fri Oct 3) should be opening soon.
- The Seymour Parade & Events Committee invited us to be in the Christmas Parade (Sun Nov 30). We can participate if we have access to a truck and trailer to decorate as a float.
- Nancy shared her story about collecting bee balm seeds from a privately owned wildflower meadow in Wallingford. The owner said all board members are welcome.

6. Old Business

A. Annual To-Do List Update

The board's to-do list [**Attached**] had only minor changes and updates made.

B. Schedule of Work Parties

Thursdays are for 'mini-events' (approx. 2 hours); Saturdays reserved for larger projects (3-4 hours). Rain Dates for Sat will be on Sun. Jeff shared this proposed schedule:

Thr Aug 28 at Chucta	Sat Aug 30 at LLLRP	Thr Sept 4 at GP	Sat Sept 6 at KMF
Thr Sept 11 at Chucta	Sat Sept 13 at PPG	Thr Sept 18 at GP	Thr Sept 25 at Chucta
Sat Sept 27 at FLS	Thr Oct 2 at Chucta	Sat Oct 4 at LLLRP	Thr Oct 9 at KMF

Z. Succow motioned to approve the upcoming work party schedule as presented.

Seconded by S. Brannen. No discussion. Board approved 4-0.

C. Status of Volunteers/Stewards/Liaisons

As brought up earlier, Paul Wetowitz stepped down. LLLRP currently has no Stewards. Jeff recently re-posted the recruitment to our Facebook group, but no interest so far.

7. Public Comment

John McKenzie shared that in early Sept, the Ordinance Committee will review changes made regarding the maintenance and upkeep of sidewalks, as it pertains to blight. In addition to removing snow in the winter, property owners with abutting sidewalks will be responsible for upkeep during the growing season as well, (weeds, grass, etc.). Sidewalks are important infrastructure for pedestrians and ought to remain clear year-round.

Jeff reminded the board they voted to swap meeting start times with the Conservation Commission as of September. Our next meeting is scheduled for 7pm instead of 6pm.

8. Adjournment

J. Baryla made a motion to adjourn. Z. Succow seconded.

All in favor (4-0). The Meeting adjourned at 6:59 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Baryla

Secretary/Trail Manager

Seymour Beautification Commission will next meet on Thurs Sept 18 at 7:00 PM.

Attachment – Seymour Beautification Commission's 2025 To-Do List

Status & General Maintenance

- ☐ Boundary markers to be posted at all properties (fall/winter)
- ☐ Universal signage for all properties. Ask Land Trust what future plans are for their parcels.

Kieth Mitchell Forest (188 & 34. Eagle Landing, Falls Trail, Great Hill Reservoir)

- ☒ Continue action plan for controlling invasive plants, replacing them with native plants
- ☐ Long-term plan to work on all details outlined in CERT report (after RWA parcel purchase)
- ☐ Improvements to Falls Trail, connection to Eager Beaver Trail (north/west side of Brook)

Little Laurel (36 Tibbets Rd. Perimeter Loop, Cave Trail, and paper street)

- ☐ Per CT DEEP, close all access points but one to motorized vehicles (A. Urbano/P. Picone)
- ☐ Per CT DEEP, notify nearby residents of ATV laws and ask them to report violators (Urbano)
- ☐ Install trail cams to monitor activity (suggestion by Shelton Trails Committee)
- ☐ Decommission all unsanctioned and illegal trails, especially those near vernal pools
- ☐ Fix/Address drainage issues; Restore upland habitat between the two large vernal pools
- ☐ Finalize/Promote only official trail(s) (produce map and send to NVCOG for CTtrailfinder)

Fountain Lake North (131 Davis Rd i.e., North Loop Trail)

- ☐ Look into native shrubs that can be hedge/privacy rows. Acquire and plant in key areas.
- ☐ Restore original trail. Partner with BSA to build footbridges for stream crossings.

Fountain Lake South (899 Fountain Lake Rd i.e. South Loop Trail, Lemay's Pond)

- ☐ Follow-up on invasive plant action plan this fall (sched. cut & paint work party)
- ☐ Meet with Derby & Ansonia boards to discuss ATVs (possibly form joint citizens' focus group)

Paramount Pollinator Garden (21/22 Paramount Drive, paper street)

- ☐ Continue mapping/identifying invasive plants on property. Create a list of native alternatives.
- ☐ Preliminary design and layout of native/pollinator garden [early-to-mid 2026]
- ☐ Meet with Scouts to share ideas & proposals [mid-to-late 2026]

Gary Park (18 Osprey)

- ☐ Meet with Scouts to discuss preferred native plants & interpretive trail design suggestions
- ☐ Survey and flag narrow connection to Osprey (part of our 2026-2036 Greenways Plan)

Seymour Dog Park (10 Moss/1 Colony)

- ☐ Invasive plant management around parking area and pond
- ☐ Start coming up with potential locations and designs for Rainbow Bridge

- Land Trust Parcels -

(24 Chucta)

- ☐ Invasive plant management. Removal of Akebia quinata (Chocolate Vine) from property.

(338 Roosevelt)

- ☐ Organize Clean-Ups, similar to how KMF was done a few years ago [Spring 2026 – Fall 2027]

(2 Butternut/25 Maple Ridge, paper streets)

- ☐ Ask SLT about their land/forest management plan here and potential future design(s)
- ☐ Update and Revise the outdated Seymour Land Trust Trail Guidebook (on Town website)