



Seymour Conservation Commission REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Community Center Conference Room
20 Pine Street, Seymour, CT 06483
Thursday August 21, 2025 – 7:00 PM

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 8/27/25
TIME: 2:30 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., Chair; Karen Bertapelle, Vice-Chair; Nancy Chucta

Others: Jeff Baryla, Advisor; Theresa Conroy, Marietta Sabetta; Edward Bertapelle

Members Absent: George Cipows

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

Nancy said she will not be at the Sept 18 meeting.

Karen stated she cannot make the Oct 16 meeting.

Marietta Sabetta, 24 Buckingham Road, addressed the board stating her possible interest in the vacancy. She said she'll sit for the entire meeting in order to understand more.

The board welcomed Marietta and the other members of the public.

3. Approval of the July 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Nancy stated she was not present at the last meeting and would abstain from voting.

Approval of these Minutes will appear again on the 09/18 regular meeting Agenda.

4. Reports & Correspondence

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

Jeff shared that on 07/31 he and Nancy completed their year-long education and training through the state and are now a certified Master Woodland Mangers.

The board congratulated both Jeff and Nancy.

The Seymour Conservation Commission recently joined the Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions (CACIWC) as a new voting member. Annual membership grants this board resources, networking, and other opportunities.

5. New Business

A. Status of Outreach & Education

Jeff noted that the Beautification Commission approved the volunteer Work Party schedule for the remainder of August, September, and the first week of October.

B. Updates on 2025 Goals

- Nancy summarized the Native Plant Policy of Newtown, CT. She had one hard copy, but gave it to John McKenzie at the Beautification meeting to pass along to Jim Baldwin.*

- Joe looked up the policy on his phone and was impressed. He wondered how Newtown was able to put it together. He suggested reaching out to the town and asking for info.*

- Jeff would like to schedule a date and time for board members to visit the Dog Park in order to discuss invasive plants and get feedback on the proposed rainbow bridge.*

C. Next Issue of 'The Seymour Sun'

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

D. Any Other Business

Nancy shared that a private land owner in Wallingford advertised on Facebook earlier this month, inviting people to her wildflower meadow in order to collect bee balm seeds. Nancy reached out to the poster and went to the property. She gave a description of the field and said that the owner extended the invitation to all board members, if interested.

6. Old Business

A. 2nd Annual Sunset Hike (10/04/2025)

The board approved this event at the last meeting. Commissioners discussed operational and logistical details. Jeff will create and post the flyer, asking everyone to bring their own flashlights or headlamps. Board members will start arriving between 5:00-5:15 pm. Jeff will bring a folding table and collapsible camping lantern. Participants asked to arrive at 5:30 pm. Hike to begin no later than 6:00 pm, led by Jeff and George (possibly two groups; quick/moderate pacing?). Joe will pick up the food and beverages while the others are hiking, then set it up at the table. Hikers will gather at the overlook to watch the sunset. Jeff leads the entire group back; George will wait til the end (to ensure no one gets lost). Everyone to enjoy hot chocolate and snacks afterward. Joe mentioned that there were issues with one particular section of the trail last year. Jeff said the Beautification Commission has already scheduled two work parties in advance of this hike to help ensure that the trail and its footing are in better condition for this year.

7. Public Comment

Jeff reminded all that the board voted to swap meeting start times with the Beautification Commission as of September. The next meeting will begin at 6pm instead of 7pm.

Nancy reminded everyone she will not be at the Sept 18 meeting.

Marietta Sabetta shared that she would like to join the Commission and fill the vacancy.

8. Adjournment

Motion by N. Chucta. Seconded by K. Bertapelle.

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Baryla

Jeff Baryla, Secretary Pro Tem

Seymour Conservation Commission will next meet on Thurs Sept 18 at 6:00 PM.

[Attachment] Trails Report for August 21, 2025

Little Laurel Lime Ridge Park [LLLRP]

Work Party 07/26 (2 hrs). Stuart and I had planned to walk the Blue Trail to cut back overgrowth and pull invasive plants along the way. We instead focused on picking up litter. In addition to removing a trash bag full of bottles and cans, we also made note of consistently wet and poorly-draining areas, and took measurements at all the entry points. Follow-up planned for Aug 30.

Keith Mitchell Forest [KMF]

Work Party 08/02 (3.5 hrs). Nancy, Gary, and I cleared invasive plants from the canoe/kayak launch and the surrounding parking lot area. Public Works had already removed the woody debris and placed new millings. I sent a thank you email to Frank. Next work party on Sept 06.

Paramount (pollinator garden) [PPG]

Work Party 08/16 (3 hrs). Aside from pachysandra, most plants on paper street now clear. Nancy and I worked our way outward, cutting and pulling. Next work party scheduled for 09/13.

Gary Park (18 Osprey) [GP]

Work Party on 08/07 (2 hrs) and 08/21 (1 hr). Volunteers pulled/cut mugwort and knotweed, which was bagged and removed. Follow-up on 09/04; Cut-and-Paint party to take place 09/18.

Seymour Land Trust (24 Chucta)

With approval from the board, I've scheduled our first Work Party here on Thurs Aug 28 from 5:00-7:00 pm. Due to minimal amount of trees & shade, I thought it best to work later in the day. Volunteers will start to cut the Akebia quinata (Chocolate Vine) to ease access into the parcel. We plan to return every other Thursday through the fall, which will help the spring management.

Fountain Lake (North and South parcels) [FLN/FLS]

Cut-and-Paint Work Party proposed for Saturday Sept 27 along the South Loop Trail, in FLS. A similar work party will likely be planned for the FLN parcel sometime in early-to-mid October.

Other

- I would like to meet with commissioners at the Dog Park soon to discuss invasive plant management and get your suggestions/feedback on the best location for the rainbow bridge.
- I'm asking all commissioners to provide me their Top 3 "wish list" for every parcel (municipal as well as Land Trust). I'm looking to prioritize things better for 2026, and moving forward.
- Peter Rzasa will be hosing two talks next month: The Old Woodbury Path on Sept 13 at Derby Public Library, and all about Charcoal Mounds on Sept 14 at the Seymour Historical Society.
- All commissioners/volunteers please try to attend the Land Trust meeting Sun Oct 05 at 10am!

Upcoming work party schedule (as approved by the Beautification Commission):

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

Thank you!

Jeff Baryla
Trail Manager