



Seymour Conservation Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Community Center Conference Room
20 Pine Street, Seymour, CT 06483
Thursday September 18, 2025 – 6:00 PM

COPY RECEIVED
DATE: 9/23/25
TIME: 2:12 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. (6:40); Karen Bertapelle; Marietta Sabetta

Others: Jeff Baryla, Advisor

Members Absent: Nancy Chucta, George Cipows

1. Call to Order

Chair Joe Niezelski, Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:40 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

K. Bertapelle reminded the board she will not be at the Oct 16 meeting.

3. Approval of the July 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion by M. Sabetta to table approval of the July and August minutes to next meeting.

Seconded by K. Bertapelle.

This was decided because George was present at the July meeting, and Nancy was present at the August meeting, but both were not in attendance. This is Marietta's first meeting.

Motion carried 3-0.

4. Approval of the August 21, 2025 Meeting Minutes

The motion above tabled approval of these minutes until the October 16, 2025 meeting.

5. Reports & Correspondence

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

The board received no correspondence this month.

6. New Business

None.

7. Old Business

A. Status of Outreach & Education

*Jeff noted that the Beautification Commission will be approving their volunteer Work Party schedule for the remainder of September and most of October later this evening. It will be included in the final monthly **Trails Report**, attached to this meeting's minutes.*

The CT Trail Symposium is on Friday October 3 in Manchester. Jeff purchased his ticket.

CACIWC's Annual Meeting/Conference will be Saturday November 15. More info soon.

B. Updates on 2025 Goals

• No one had reached out to Newtown for info on their Native Plant Policy [Attached].

J. Niezelski said he will attempt to do so in the coming week. What would other Land Use

boards and the Board of Selectpersons think of this idea? Jeff will draft a summary overview and forward it to all relevant commissioners, agents, and/or officials.

- Nancy was not present to update everyone on the private wildflower meadow.
- Brief discussion took place on the suggested site visits, with possible dates and times.
- Jeff still needs all board members' "Top 3 Wish List" for 2026 priorities, etc.

C. 'The Seymour Sun'

Joe had emailed Jeff a couple articles for the new issue. One about autumn hikes in Seymour, and another focusing on Japanese knotweed. Zach did not contact Peter about the old gate valve above Fountain Lake. He will instead send Jeff an article about the spotted lanternfly. The next issue should be done by Saturday. Digital copies available by email; Print copies will be distributed at the Pumpkin Festival and at the Sunset Hike.

8. Any Other Business

None.

9. Public Comment

None.

10. Adjournment

Motion by K. Bertapelle. Seconded by M. Sabetta.

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Barysa

Secretary Pro Tempore/Advisor to the Commission

Seymour Conservation Commission will next meet on Thurs Oct 16 at 6:00 PM.

[Attachment 1] Trails Report for August 21, 2025

Little Laurel Lime Ridge Park [LLLRP]

Work Party 08/30 (3 hrs). Nancy, Gary, and I further improved an original trail section that I restored just prior to last year's Sunset Hike. This section gave visitors the most trouble during that hike due to leaf litter. Leaves weren't crushed because it hadn't experienced any traffic in a number of years. Once the entries are done, I plan to fix ATV ruts that have caused water to be redirected onto the trail. Next work party here planned for the afternoon of Thurs September 25.

Keith Mitchell Forest [KMF]

Work Party 09/06 (3 hrs). Moved soil from a borrow pit onto an eroded section of trail. Also pulled invasive plants from along trail. Cut-and-Paint work party proposed for Oct 25.

Paramount (pollinator garden) [PPG]

Work Party 09/13 (3 hrs). Volunteers continued monthly assault cutting and pulling invasive plants from both parcels. Focused on pachysandra. Next work party here scheduled for Nov 8.

Gary Park (18 Osprey) [GP]

Work Party on 08/07 (2 hrs) and 08/21 (2 hrs). Volunteers pulled mugwort and cut knotweed. Lanternflies are eating native fox grape. Follow-up on mugwort 10/16; Cut-and-Paint on 10/23.

Seymour Land Trust (24 Chucta)

Work Party held here on 08/28. Began cutting Akebia quinata (Chocolate Vine) to create access into the parcel. "Seymour Land Conservation Trust" sign is now visible from road. I will produce a report on the property with recommendations and BMPs for the Land Trust to pursue further.

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

Cut-and-Paint work party will take place on Sat Sept 27 along the South Loop Trail in FLS. Another Cut-and-Paint work party is proposed for Sat Oct 18 along North Loop Trail in FLN.

Other

- I'd still like commissioners to visit the Dog Park with me. Perhaps on a Thursday? Invasive plant management is needed, and I'd like feedback on the 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'd like to prioritize things a bit better for 2026 and beyond.
- All commissioners and volunteers please attend the Land Trust meeting Sun Oct 05 at 10am!
- CACIWC's Annual Meeting & Environmental Conference has been scheduled for Saturday, November 15. As a voting member of the association, all Conservation appointees are invited.

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

Thr Sept 25 at LLLRP	Sat Sept 27 at FLS	Thr Oct 2 at LLLRP	Sat Oct 4 at LLLRP
Thr Oct 9 at RHF?	Thr Oct 16 at GP	Sat Oct 18 at FLN	Thr Oct 23 at GP
Sat Oct 25 at KMF	Thr Oct 30 at ?	Sat Nov 1 at SDP?	Sat Nov 8 at PPG

Thank you!

Jeff Baryla
Trail Manager

[Attachment 2] Native Plant Policy of Newtown, CT (Sept 2021)

Non-native plants, also called exotic or alien plants, are not naturally found in our local area. Many are imported from Europe and Asia. They have been introduced by human intervention (intentionally or accidentally) and include agricultural crops, ornamental plants, naturalized plants (including invasive species). A naturalized plant thrives without human intervention but can never be considered “native” since it has not evolved to provide the same benefit here as it would in its own country of origin.

While many non-native plants are benign for aggressive spread, they dominate our landscapes. As development increasingly encroaches on our wild places, our native flora is being replaced by exotic plants and lawns. Loss of native flora threatens healthy ecosystems, a balance essential for all life including our own.

Invasive plants are non-native plants recorded on the CT Invasive Plant List. The list includes plants prohibited by state statute, plants having potential for invasive spread, and invasive species with cultivars yet to be evaluated for invasive characteristics. Invasive plants are able to establish on many sites, grow quickly, and spread to the point of disrupting plant communities or ecosystems. Planting of any plant listed on the CT Invasive Plant List is prohibited by the Town of Newtown Ban on Invasive Plants, Oct. 24, 2017.

Native cultivars or nativars can be hybrids, (products of two or more plants intentionally selected by breeders and crossed to create certain traits), or they may be clonally-produced copies of one particular wild-type plant. While these are technically the same species as wild-types, they may represent only a fraction of the natural diversity of the species.

When plants are selectively bred for a particular trait(s), (changing flower or foliage color, weeping form or creating double flowers), the result is often cultivars that have lost what made them attractive to important pollinators and beneficial insects and may even lack the nutrition needed to sustain them.

POLICY REQUIREMENTS

This policy will be a minimum standard and will apply to all new plantings of trees, shrubs and other plants planted on municipal properties. It also applies to seeds used in place of plants. The policy applies to any replacement plantings, including but not limited to trees, shrubs, and perennials felled by storms, disease, redevelopment/expansion, or other reasons.

Trees

Due to the high wildlife value of native trees, 100% of new and replacement tree plantings on municipal properties will be native to the Northeast. Many trees, when not harmed by storms, disease, injuries from equipment, etc., can live for hundreds of years. They should be considered permanent parts of a landscape. Many native trees support hundreds of insects and the birds and wildlife species that consume those insects. Non-native trees do not support this diversity.

Shrubs

New and replacement shrubs will be a minimum of 85% native for municipal properties. There are a great variety of native shrubs to fit all growing conditions and aesthetic desires. Every effort should be made to select native shrubs. Native shrubs also support a high number of insects and many produce berries or other fruit that are important fall and winter food for birds.

Grasses

New and replacement grass plantings will be 100% native for municipal properties. Due to the large number of seeds grasses produce and potential to spread by wind, only native grasses may be planted. Some ornamental non-native grasses that were commonly planted are believed to be detrimental to our ecosystems. Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*), for example, is an emerging invasive threat in some areas.

Groundcovers

New and replacement plants intended as groundcovers will be 100% native for municipal properties. These low-growing plants spread quickly and form a dense cover.

Herbaceous Perennials

New and replacement herbaceous perennials will be a minimum of 75% native for municipal properties. There are a great variety of native perennials to fit all growing conditions and aesthetic desires. Every effort should be made to select native perennials.

Every effort should be made to select and plant straight-species of native plants that are local ecotypes.

Care should be taken to source plants and seeds that have not been treated with neonicotinoids. These pesticides are deadly to pollinators.

There are native trees and plants for every site condition. *The Native Plant Resource Guide*, published by the Newtown Conservation Commission in association with Monroe Conservation Commission, contains comprehensive lists of native plants for different uses and includes resources and more information on native plants.

EXCEPTIONS

This policy does not apply to plants grown for food, lawns, green roofs, or other applications that have a clear reason to use non-native plants.

This policy does not apply to annual plants since they complete their life cycle within one growing season.

Existing trees and other plants will remain unaffected by this policy. For any trees or plants replaced for damage or any other reason, replacements must be native species as specified in policy requirements.

ENFORCEMENT

This policy shall be implemented, administered and Town departments will be held in compliance with it, by the First Selectman.