



Seymour Beautification Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
 Community Center Conference Room
 20 Pine Street, Seymour, CT 06483
 Thursday November 20, 2025 – 7:00 PM

COPY RECEIVED
 DATE: 11/24/25
 TIME: 11:00 AM
 TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Members: Stuart Brannen, Chair; Nancy Chucta, Vice-Chair; Jeff Baryla, Secretary/Trail Manager; Zachery Succow; JoElle Anderson

Others: John McKenzie, Land Use Liaison; Joe Niezelski, Jr., Conservation Commission; Lauren Higgins, Roosters Landscape/Garden; Melissa Smith, Seymour Lions; Jen Edwards; Chris Edwards (7:43); Rocky Stone and Allie Miller, Seymour Land Conservation Trust

Absent: None

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Brannen called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM

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

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Approval of October 16, 2025 Minutes

Motion by J. Baryla to table the approval of the October 16, 2025 regular meeting minutes until the board's December meeting. Seconded by J. Anderson.

All board members had not received or read them. *Motion carried 5-0.*

4. Reports & Correspondence

J. Baryla, Trail Manager, reported that he attended the ribbon cutting on Tuesday, Oct 21 for the newly acquired parcel of the Keith Mitchell Forest. Later that evening, Peter and Barbara Rzasa's presented the history of the forest at the Seymour Public Library.

Kurt Miller emailed instructing the board to discuss and vote on a FY26/27 budget soon. The board will discuss and possibly vote during 'Any Other Business' later this meeting.

5. New Business

A. Approval of 2026 Regular Meeting Schedule

Commissioners discussed and agreed upon the following dates for all 2026 meetings:

January 15	February 19	March 19	April 23	May 21	June 18
July 23	August 20	September 17	October 15	November 19	December 17

The Beautification Commission will meet regularly in the Christopher Willis Conference Room of the Seymour Community Center beginning at 7 PM, unless otherwise specified.

Motion by J. Baryla to approve the 2026 regular meeting schedule, as presented.

Seconded by N. Chucta.

The board changed April 16 to April 23, and July 16 to July 23, in line with Conservation.

Motion carried 5-0.

B. Approval of Work Party Schedule

Jeff presented the following schedule for the rest of November through January 2026:

Sat Dec 6 at PPG	Sat Dec 13 at KMF	Sat Dec 20 at LLLRP	
Sat Jan 3 at PPG	Sat Jan 17 at KMF	Sat Jan 31 at LLLRP	Sat Feb 7 at PPG

S. Brannen motioned to approve the upcoming work party schedule as presented.

Seconded by Z. Succow.

There was no discussion. Board voted 5-0 to approve the schedule as presented.

C. Discussion on Adopt a Spots

J. McKenzie led the discussion with several participants of the Adopt a Spot program in attendance. John mentioned that the Town would like to establish a set of guidelines for seasonal plantings to encourage participants to maintain their Spots year-round, not just in the warm months. The goal for 2026 will be to enhance these locations and make them "pop". L. Higgins of Roosters offered a small discount for program participants who want to purchase items for their Spots. N. Chucta recommended all program participants use only native plants at their Spots. J. Baryla suggested reaching out to the Culture & Arts Commission, who has experience with placing floral arrangements and decorating various locations in Town. M. Smith said there is a poisonous vine in her Spot that they attempted to eradicate, but it persists. She said some of her workers needed to be treated for blisters and other skin reactions, and that the plant could not be identified with her plant ID app. J. Baryla offered to help identify this plant next time he's in the area. The existence of such a plant presents a hazard to visitors of the nearby fish bypass and NRG trail section. John thanked all members for attending and said he will be in touch regarding any possible revisions to the program or if he needed anything else from them.

6. Old Business

A. Update on Annual To-Do List

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

B. 'The Seymour Sun'

The next issue is due out Dec 20. Articles may be submitted for consideration. Stuart will try to send something in for the next issue, asking if there was a deadline. Jeff said ASAP.

C. Seymour Land Trust Collaboration

A. Miller wished to revisit last month's discussion on the proposed free public workshop at the Legion Pool building. Jeff shared that he is still interested in presenting the 'Field, Forest, and Stream' activity. He believes this would be a great introductory event for all ages. He can get into invasive plants and how to identify/manage them another time. The group discussed the goal of these events in more detail, and proposed some dates before settling on Sat Feb 21 for the first event, and Sat Mar 21 for the second, from 11:00-12:30.

Motion by J. Baryla that the board host ongoing collaborative public events with the Seymour Land Trust beginning on Saturday, February 21, 2026.

Seconded by J. Anderson. There was no discussion. Motion carried 5-0.

Any Other Business

J. Baryla proposed that the board host a New Year's Day Walk/Hike at Fountain Lake. The

board discussed details of said hike, and what time it should begin.

J. Baryla moved that the Beautification Commission host a New Year's Day walk/hike at the Fountain Lake property, around the Lake Loop Trail, starting at 11:00AM. Seconded by Z. Succow. No further discussion. Motion carried 5-0.

J. Baryla shared that the USFWS monthly webinar series will resume on Tues Dec 16. The topic is "Collaborative Conservation Successes, Challenges, and Building Trust". USFWS hopes to host the webinars that would have taken place in Oct and Nov at later dates.

J Baryla presented a budget submission for FY 2026/2027 [**Attached**].
Motion by N. Chucta to accept the budget proposal, as presented. Second by S. Brannen. S. Brannen and J. Baryla discussed some of the funding line items. Motion carried 5-0.

7. Public Comment

None.

8. Adjournment

S. Brannen made a motion to adjourn. J. Anderson seconded. All in favor (5-0). The Meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Baryla

Secretary/Trail Manager

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

Attachment 1 – Seymour Beautification Commission's 2025/2026 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 focus on all work outlined in ERT summary (posted on GoogleDrive)
- ☐ 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 (A. Urbano/P. Picone), close all access points but one to motorized vehicles and install a locked gate at the final point for official municipal and emergency access only.
- ☐ Per CT DEEP (Urbano), notify nearby residents of ATV laws and ask them to report violators
- ☐ Install trail cams, monitor activity (suggestion: T. Gallagher, Shelton Natural Resource Mgr.)
- ☐ 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 / CTtrailfinder.com)

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 2 or 3 footbridges for stream crossings.

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

- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Meet with Scouts and Culture & Arts Commission to share ideas & proposals [mid-2026]
- ☐ Preliminary design and layout of native/pollinator garden [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. Schedule cut-and-paint party.
- ☐ Conduct site visit and come up with potential locations and designs for Rainbow Bridge.

- Seymour Land Trust -

(24 Chucta)

- ☒ Trail Manager to submit a report to the Land Trust with BMPs for invasive *Akebia quinata*.

(338 Roosevelt)

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

Attachment 2 – Seymour Beautification Commission FY 2026/2027 Budget Submission



Town of Seymour
Beautification Commission

FY2026/2027 BUDGET SUBMISSION

The Seymour Beautification Commission provides community outreach via social media posts, hosting free educational hikes, and publishing a quarterly newsletter. Cleanups of properties have resulted in the removal of nearly two hundred pounds of litter and illegally dumped waste this year. Volunteers also assist the board by helping to eradicate invasive plant species, improving the health and diversity of native flora, and maintaining hiking trails. Public interest and appreciation for Town trails and their related amenities continues to grow.

Traditionally, neither Beautification Commission nor Conservation Commission has had any funding allocated. This document serves as a Budget Submission to help us fulfill our mission. We request the following funds for the purposes stated, per discretion of the Board of Finance.

FEES/REVENUE

\$0.00	Total Annual Revenue
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The Commission does not collect any fees for the use of municipal land.

Additionally, there are no permit programs in place for timber, firewood harvesting, or deer hunting on town-owned land. Other municipalities in CT allow for and permit such things.

In the future, Seymour should consider implementing such programs. Proper timber and firewood harvesting helps improve the diversity of woodlands, and a well-controlled deer population and/or exclusion plan would increase the abundance of white oak trees, which are host to several hundred species of organisms, boosting the health of ecosystems.

SALARIES

FY25/26	FY26/27	Comments:
\$0.00	\$0.00	Board has no paid positions or hired staff and does not anticipate needing any at this time.

BUDGETED EXPENDITURES

Description	FY 25/26	FY 26/27	Comments:
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$0	\$0	
DUES	\$0	\$100	CT Land Conservation Council.
CONFERENCES & EDUCATION	\$0	\$875	Annual CT Trails Symposium and CLCC Conferences.

EQUIPMENT	\$0	\$0	
TOOLS & GEAR	\$0	\$500	PPE & hand tools for maintenance.
MATERIALS	\$0	\$1730	Lumber, hardware, and fasteners.
PRINTING	\$0	\$225	Large format weatherproof signage, maps, and other color publications
OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$0	\$25	
MISC	\$0	\$325	
TOTALS	\$0	\$3780	

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

\$0 REQUESTED

While the Beautification Commission is not looking to hire any professional services *at this time*, CT DEEP has recommended that the Town hire a state-certified Forester to implement a Forest Management Plan in both the Little Laurel Lime Ridge and Keith Mitchell Forest properties. Should the Town decide to utilize such services within FY26/27, these would need to be funded accordingly through the Town's own budget and expenditures.

Additionally, this board has not budgeted for any labor costs associated with the maintenance and/or upkeep of town-owned parcels. We intend to rely solely on volunteers for such tasks.

DUES

\$100 REQUESTED

Annual membership to Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) is \$100 [due Jan 1]. CLCC provides helpful resources and benefits to land trusts, town land boards, and their respective municipalities. Funding would be for membership to CLCC in calendar year 2027.

CONFERENCES & EDUCATION

\$875 REQUESTED

We are requesting funding to cover the cost of all five (5) members of the Beautification Commission to attend the annual CT Trails Symposium in October (\$65 each), and the annual CLCC Conference in March (early bird registration is \$110 each). These are all-day conferences with continental breakfast and lunch included. They provide workshops, discussions, and learning opportunities about trails and conservation topics. Attendance and participation would boost board members' overall knowledge and add value to the Town.

EQUIPMENT

\$0 REQUESTED

The board is not budgeting for any equipment at this time. The Public Works Department may be able to provide any equipment, if ever necessary.

TOOLS & GEAR

\$500 REQUESTED

This line item is to cover the cost of safety glasses/goggles, gloves, other personal protective equipment, and some light hand tools (shears, loppers, etc.). These tools would be considered property of the Town of Seymour, for use by the Beautification Commission.

MATERIALS

\$1730 REQUESTED

These requested funds are for the purchase of lumber and hardware needed to construct two to three small footbridges and some trail signage within town-owned open space parcels.

PRINTING**\$225 REQUESTED**

Expenditures under this line item include ordering weatherproof prints of maps, color signage, and oversize documents, which cannot be printed or produced with Town-owned equipment.

OFFICE SUPPLIES**\$25 REQUESTED**

This line item is for the cost of writing utensils (pens/pencils), note pads, and clipboards only.

MISC**\$325 REQUESTED**

The amount requested would be used to pay for refreshments at hosted events, and for the purchase of any unforeseen last-minute items not covered under the above lines.

SEYMOUR BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION

Stuart Brannen, Chair

Nancy Chucta, Vice-Chair

Jeff Baryla, Secretary

Zachary Succow

JoElle Anderson

HISTORY OF EXPENDITURES

Most of the data prior to FY 25/26 reflects expenditures of the Conservation Commission. Beautification Commission took over trails and related duties when formed in early 2025.

Description	FY 22/23	FY 23/24	FY 24/25	FY 25/26 TO DATE	PROPOSED FY 25/26
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
DUES	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$65*	\$100
CONFERENCES & EDUCATION	\$0	\$0	\$160*	\$175*	\$875
EQUIPMENT	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOOLS & GEAR	\$27*	\$65*	\$142*	\$261*	\$500
MATERIALS	\$52*	\$125*	\$379*	\$119*	\$1730
PRINTING	\$29*	\$47*	\$65*	\$52*	\$225
OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$1*	\$2*	\$3*	\$5*	\$25
MISC	\$0	\$17*	\$55*	\$120*	\$325
TOTALS	\$109*	\$256*	\$804*	\$793*	\$3780

*approx dollars donated or paid by board members, neither budgeted nor claimed/reimbursed

TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED \$3780

Increase of 1.08% over funds requested FY24/25 (\$3495), which were not granted/received.

Approved by the Seymour Beautification Commission – November 20, 2025