



*Town of Seymour*  
**Conservation Commission (CNC)**  
Thursday, February 19, 2026 6:00 PM

COPY RECEIVED  
DATE: 2/24/26  
TIME: 11:54 AM  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

**Regular Meeting Minutes**

Christopher Willis Conference Room  
20 Pine Street 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Seymour, CT 06483

**Members Present:** Karen Bertapelle; Nancy Chucta; George Cipows; Marietta Sabetta  
**Others:** John McKenzie, Land Use Dept Liaison; Jeff Baryla, Advisor  
**Members Absent:** Joe Niezelski, Jr.

**1. Call to Order**

*Vice-Chair Karen Bertapelle called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM  
All present stood, saluted the flag, and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.  
Vice-Chair appointed Jeff Baryla to Secretary Pro Tempore for this meeting.*

**2. Roll Call**

*A quorum was established. There were no alternates present.*

**3. Public Comment**

None present. The commission also received no written request for comment.

**4. Approval of January 15, 2026 Minutes**

*Motion by N. Chucta to approve Jan 15, 2026 regular meeting minutes as presented.  
Seconded by M. Sabetta. No discussion. Motion carried 4-0.*

**5. Reports & Correspondence**

**A. Monthly Trail Manager's Report**

All commissioners reviewed the report. Baryla noted one amendment and correction, removing the previously stated March 14 event. There were no questions or comments.

**B. Emails/Letters to Commission**

*The commission had received no emails or letters of correspondence.*

**6. Old Business**

**A. Information on 2026 CLCC Conference**

All board members were provided their discount code for registration, and a link to the current schedule and conference itinerary. Brief discussion took place on who was considering attending and the workshops they might be interested in.

**B. Discussion on 'Open Space & Greenways Plan'**

Baryla provided an outline [**Attached**] on the typical process for drafting and adopting an Open Space Plan, as allowed by state statute. Commissioners reviewed the outline before sharing feedback/opinions. All took turns asking questions & offering suggestions.

*Motion by M. Sabetta to move forward with requesting the First Selectwoman form a committee in order to draft and adopt an Open Space & Greenway Plan for inclusion in the town's upcoming Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).*

*Seconded by G. Cipows. There was no further discussion. Motion carried 4-0.*

**7. New Business**

**A. Information on Facebook Pages & Groups**

Chairman Niezelski had asked at the previous meeting to discuss options for the board's Facebook Pages and Groups as it relates to posting rights and file sharing. Baryla looked into this and explained what is and is not possible. Pages are official accounts/profiles; Groups encourage interaction. Recommendation would be to give full power of the Page to only the present Chair and possibly Vice-Chair of the board. Access would be removed once the person steps down or no longer holds that position. Third party full control should be maintained in order to discourage potential abuse of power. For all other Pages, members of either board could request to manage. Recommendation for the Group would be to continue adding/removing board members as Moderators as they come/go. Documents can only be shared in the Group. *The board took no action at this time.*

**8. Adjournment**

*Motion by K. Bertapelle. Seconded by N. Chucta.  
All in favor (4-0). The meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM*

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jeff Baryla*

Secretary Pro Tempore/Advisor to the Commission

***Seymour Conservation Commission will next meet on Thurs Mar 19 at 6:00 PM.***

## **Attachment – Overview on Creating an Open Space Plan**

### **How to Draft and Adopt an Open Space Plan for a CT Municipality**

C.G.S. § 7-131a allows for a town's Conservation Commission to draft an Open Space & Greenway Plan for inclusion in the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). This is typically performed through a multi-phase process via the following steps:

#### **1. Initiation, Review & Research**

- **Form a Committee (optional):** Oftentimes, special committees with diverse members are formed to assist and provide input (Conservation, Inland Wetlands, Planning, Parks).
- **Research:** Gather data on existing open spaces, wetlands, habitats, cultural sites, and potential corridors, mapping natural and man-made features such as views/vistas and trails.
- **Review Existing Documents:** Examine the town's current POCD to align with future goals.
- **Natural Resource Inventory (NRI):** Implement, use, or update the NRI, a comprehensive list of wetlands, water bodies, wildlife corridors, and other features.

#### **2. Identify Needs**

- **Set Vision:** Establish a community vision for greenways. Pinpoint areas needing protection, habitat connectivity, and recreation opportunities.
- **Establish Objectives:** Define clear goals for greenways, such as increasing protected land, preserving farmland, or enhancing ecosystem resilience. Include specific parcels or corridors for preservation based on wildlife habitat, scenic views, groundwater protection, or recreational potential (trails, fishing spots, gardens).
- **Public Input:** Gather input from residents, landowners, and other stakeholders.

#### **2. Develop Goals & Strategies**

- **Develop Strategies:** Propose specific actions, like linking existing trails, creating buffers and wildlife corridors, or protecting water supplies.
- **Address Challenges:** Consider threats like development, habitat fragmentation, and the need for more residential access, connectivity, or ADA accessibility.
- **Formulate Alternatives:** Develop strategies like land acquisition, conservation easements, or Open Space Development (OSD) zoning.

- **Prioritize:** Assign priority levels to focus areas based on their significance (e.g., habitat, water quality).

### **3. Planning & Drafting**

- **Draft the Plan:** Write detailed recommendations, including management structures, specific trail segments, and implementation phases. Include maps showing greenways, focus areas, and existing protected lands.
- **Outline Action Steps:** Detail how to achieve goals (e.g., working with landowners, using land trusts). Include stewardship and management plans for newly protected properties.
- **Incorporate State/Regional Goals:** Align with state Greenways Plans and regional initiatives, including climate resilience (integrate considerations for flooding, erosion, and habitat shifts).

### **4. Review & Adoption**

- **Collaborate:** Work closely with Planning & Zoning, Parks & Rec, Wetlands, and other boards.
- **Public Hearings:** Present the draft plan for public review and feedback.
- **Submit for Review:** Send the draft to the legislative body and regional planning agency for comments.
- **Formal Adoption:** Submit the final plan for adoption as part of (a chapter or section of) the town's official Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD).

### **5. Implementation & Monitoring**

- **Seek Funding:** Identify state/federal grants and other funding sources for projects. (e.g., LoTCIP, CT Rec Trails, OSWA, Community Connectivity).
- **Execute Projects:** Implement identified projects (e.g., trail construction, land acquisition).
- **Monitor & Update:** Regularly review and update the plan, reporting annually on progress.

These steps create a guiding document that balances development with the long-term protection of the community's natural heritage.

Outline shared and submitted by: **Jeff Baryla**  
Certified CT Master Woodland Manager  
Secretary/Trail Manager, Seymour Beautification Commission