



*Town of Seymour*  
**Conservation Commission (CNC)**  
Thursday, May 21, 2026 6:00 PM

COPY RECEIVED  
DATE: 6/2/26  
TIME: 1:05 PM  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

**Regular Meeting Minutes**

Community Center Conference Room (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)  
20 Pine Street, Seymour, CT 06483

**Members Present:** Joe Niezelski, Jr. (JN), Karen Bertapelle (KB); Marietta Sabetta (MS)  
**Others:** John McKenzie (JM), Land Use Dept Liaison; Jeff Baryla (JB), Advisor  
**Members Absent:** Nancy Chucta (NC)

**1. Call to Order**

*Chairman Joe Niezelki, Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM  
All present stood, saluted the flag, and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.  
Chairman appointed Jeff Baryla to Secretary Pro Tempore for this meeting.*

**2. Roll Call**

*Three members present. A quorum was established.*

**3. Public Comment**

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

**4. Approval of April 23, 2026 Minutes**

*Motion by MS to approve the April 23, 2026 regular meeting minutes as presented.  
Seconded by KB. There was no further discussion. Motion carried 3-0.*

**5. Reports & Correspondence**

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

Commissioners reviewed the report. There were no questions, comments, or corrections. JB noted the later start time (10AM) for the June 13 work party because he'll be at the Community Center after 9AM to pick up a rain barrel/compost bin, and may be delayed. The trail event for July 25 (pending approval) is a proposed "S'mour Stroll" public hike.

**B. Emails/Letters to Commission**

*The Commission had not received any recent correspondence.*

**6. Old Business**

**A. Review of Annual Earth Day Hike (April 25, 2026)**

JN, NC, and JB attended this event. JN shared that he would have liked a larger turnout, as in the past, although with a crowd that's still manageable (approx. 20). JB noted that the hike this time featured a stop at the two vernal pools, one containing visible frog eggs. MS suggested announcing future hikes in Voices. Perhaps include some past hike photos.

## **7. New Business**

### **A. Review of Site Visit with CT DEEP Service Forester**

On Wednesday, April 29, JN and JB met with DEEP Service Forester David Beers at Keith Mitchell Forest to conduct a site visit/forest walk in order to assess the property and draft a Forest Management Plan for the Town. Seymour needs this plan in place prior to applying for the Resilient Forestry Practices Grant, opening sometime in mid-June.

JN shared with the board some of what was discussed that day, including surveying KMF and helping David with measurements, tree canopy assessment, and invasive plant coverage. JB added that the loss of several ash trees a decade ago opened the focus area to more sunlight. This, combined with the rich soil found here, allowed invasive plants to quickly move in and spread, creating basically a monoculture in the understory, and preventing new native trees from establishing. Additionally, lack of control over the deer population allows them to browse on any young native trees that do happen to grow.

### **B. Discussion on CT DEEP Resilient Forestry Practices Grant**

JN, JM, JB, and other town staff will meet with David via Zoom on Friday, 05/29 to discuss details of the practice plan for this grant application. As outlined during last month's meeting, secondary practices such as invasive plant management must be paired with a primary practice in order to qualify. David provided a broad plan involving erecting deer fencing to exclude around 5 acres of the forest, which will then be managed with new native tree and shrub plantings as well as manual/chemical removal of invasive plants. The fencing will remain in place until all new trees grow above deer browse height (approx. 6.5 feet, or around 3-5 years depending on the species and weather/climate conditions). At that point, the fencing can be removed, and the protected forest area should be noticeably healthier and more resilient. Town-purchased and owned deer fencing can be re-utilized in another part of the forest or even a different Town-owned open space property. This practice could essentially be repeated for as long as the fencing remains functional and undamaged, further enhancing more of Seymour's woodlands.

*John McKenzie left the meeting at 7:06 PM.*

## **8. Public Comment**

JB announced he will step away from secretary duties in Sept. He encouraged the board to appoint one, reminding them they now have 3 vacancies (including 2 alternates). He asked the board to confirm George's resignation and reach out to interested residents.

## **9. Adjournment**

*Motion by KB. Seconded by MS. All in favor (3-0).*

*The meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM*

Respectfully Submitted,

*Jeff Barysa*

Secretary Pro Tempore

Advisor to the Commission

CT Master Woodland Manager [July 2025]

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

*Town of Seymour*  
**DEPARTMENT OF LAND USE & CODE COMPLIANCE**  
20 Pine Street 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Seymour, CT 06483

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**Monthly Trails/Open Spaces Report for May 21, 2026**

**Keith Mitchell Forest (124 Squantuck [326 Roosevelt]) [KMF]**

On Wed 04/29, Joe (CNC Chair) and I met with CT DEEP Service Forester David Beers to walk the forest and help him conduct measurements for a Forest Management Plan. Town officials will join us all for a Zoom call on Fri 05/29 to share details of this plan and ask/answer any questions.

**Paramount [pollinator garden] (21/22 Paramount) [PPG]**

I will visit this area on Fri 05/22 to perform some manual invasive plant management. The next public Work Party at this location will likely take place on either 06/06 or 06/13, weather-dependent and on the execution of the knotweed management schedule at other properties.

**Little Laurel Lime Ridge Park (36 Tibbets) [LL]**

The Town held its Annual Earth Day Hike here on Sat 04/25. Seven attended. Stuart (SBC Chair) and I also noted some recent vandalism – spray painted trees and rocks, additional tire ruts, etc.

**Gary Park (21 Gary Park/18 Osprey) [GP]**

Stuart and I cut knotweed here on Sat 05/16. The highest concentrations of this plant are behind the basketball courts and near the park entrance. Like triage, we started with the least affected area near the Aquarion property. Our volunteer crew will work their way deeper in coming weeks.

**Dog Park (1 Colony [10 Moss]) [DP]**

I visited this area Thurs 05/21 to assess knotweed. Cuts will be planned Mon or Thurs mornings.

**Fountain Lake North/South [FLN/FLS]**

I would like to restore the original Davis Road trailhead at some point this year, if time allows.

**Seymour Land Trust [SLT]**

"Places I Like To Visit" educational event on May 30 at 10 AM at the Seymour Public Library.

**Other**

- The Nature Conservancy & NVCOG invited me to speak on 05/06. The event was productive.
- Recommendations and BMPs for Land Trust properties will be sent to Alex Danko when done.
- Commissioners have still not gotten back to me on visiting the Dog Park for the rainbow bridge.

Proposed upcoming event schedule (pending final approval by the Beautification Commission):

Sat May 30 10 AM Part 3 of Educational Series (Library)	Sat Jun 13 10:00 AM Work Party (later start time)	Sat Jun 20 9:30 AM Work Party Gary Park (knotweed)	FRI June 26 at SLT Part 4 in our Educational Series
Sat June 27 9:30 AM Work Party Gary Park (knotweed)	Sat July 11 9:30 AM Work Party	Sat July 18 9:30 AM Work Party	Sat July 25 Work Party (AM) Trail Event (PM)?

All planned Work Party events above are based on job & task priority at any stated location(s).

Thank you!

*Jeff Barysa*  
**Trail Manager**