

Lyme Common Committee

May 6, 2019

7 pm

Present: Barbara Balch, Judy Brotman, Tim Cook, Lisa Hayes, Russell Hirsch, Katie Kalata Rusch, Earl Strout, Laurie Wadsworth

Absent: Vicki Smith, Michelle Whitcomb

Public: Lynore Bolton, Richard Brown, Jane Fant, Yolanda Knight, Rusty Keith, Michael Whitman

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Katie moved to approve the minutes from 4/1/19. Barbara seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

Public Comments:

Yolanda: She has lived here six years. This year Festival of Trees left a lot of debris as did skating area and other events. She would like to establish some kind of protocol around these types of events so they are not so open ended and result in two or three people trying to clean up. As a community, we should be more involved. There are children out and about on the Common. She is also concerned that people are going too fast on the backside of the Common – kids not dressed properly and are in dark clothes. She is afraid there will be some sort of tragedy with no borders/signage and parents more aware.

Lynore: An individual with limited mobility on the backside of the Common would like to sit on a bench. There are two at the east end but nothing on the west end. She potentially has someone lined up who would be willing to donate a bench.

Jane: There is a huge lack of places for people or organizations having events to put a sign. Whoever gets there first gets the spot - creating anxiety. Some signs look nice and some don't. They are only supposed to go up a week ahead of time but no policing and no one to take it down.

Subcommittee Reports

Safety & Parking:

Lisa reported that Michelle, Barbara and herself met with Chief O'Keefe, Kevin Sahr, and reps from the DOT. We talked about a crosswalk from the Common, landing in the vicinity of between Dowd's and the Country Store. We heard that a crosswalk with a blinking light is 60% more effective than just a plain crosswalk. This is the only location we looked at for a crosswalk.

We also discussed parking. In order to help with this, it has been suggested that the backside of the Common become one way from east to west. If moving in this direction, we would need to determine if the state would be willing to give us the road.

Regarding parking, we continue to hear that there isn't enough parking when there are events in town. We talked about just a portion of parking on the east end of the Common v. down the entire length of the Common. We are still exploring options.

There were concerns with a one way about how snow would be plowed. There were other thoughts that it would help get rid of the speeders going to the Skiway and the trucks going to the local businesses. It was felt it would be a safer situation. However it was pointed out that one way streets result in people going faster and more signs would be needed. Speed bumps were also suggested.

Structures & Landscaping:

The subcommittee had a meeting and walked the Common. Signs, gardening, trees, ways to slow down traffic, parking proposals and the Little Common were all reviewed.

Katie said signage is pet peeve. Personally she would love to see a better system that is useful and tasteful. She has started a Pinterest board about signage that would also include something that indicates you have arrived to this special place as well as a National Historic district. The cannon greeting you may not be the best welcome. There are memorial stones here and there that don't have any relation and there might be a better way to honor them. Benches and removing power lines were also discussed.

The group spent a lot of time discussing trees. One suggestion was to move them out to the edge to help slow down traffic and create a canopy. Hydrangeas at the east end make it feel like that is where the Common ends - how do we draw people there? For next subcommittee meeting they would like to draw a map of what was discussed.

Russell reported about the trees, saying they are in rather rough condition. There are ash trees that aren't going to survive emerald ash bore. Red maples are a bad choice for a municipal tree – pretty but have health problems. Norway maples are now considered invasive species so there is a movement out there to not use them outside of urban environments. Trees are missing so it is like “teeth are getting knocked out”. Trees on Route 10 side were trimmed by the electric company and structurally are not in good shape. Sugar maples on the backside are actually in the best shape. Trees on the Route 10 side need to be salt resistant – which leaves you with northern red oaks. Perhaps a grove of trees on the east end to help connect that part of the Common. Flowering magnolia would also be nice. A canopy over the road has proven that shade on the road slows down traffic. This all doesn't have to be done at once in terms of wires going away and planting trees – can plant trees underneath now.

Regarding the power lines, Tim talked to Dina a couple of weeks ago to ask for the email from Eversource. Dina was looking for it.

Barbara reminded the group that we aren't considering making decisions but are exploring if things are a feasible idea.

Selectboard Feedback

Lisa brought forth the idea of soliciting selectboard feedback at this point before spending too much time and doing too much research on something that might not be of interest to the board. She also noted that we might not want to engage in a conversation with an organization or a company about doing one of these projects if it wasn't going to happen.

It was felt among the committee that this was a good idea. Judy said they meet on Thursday mornings and that we could contact Dina to get on the agenda. Earl noted that we should be well organized for our presentation. People thought it best to meet with them after our June meeting and that the major agenda for June's meeting is to prepare what to say to the board.

Other Feedback:

Jane asked if people knew procedures for things like signs, putting a bench on the Common, etc. Judy said she couldn't answer if people knew or not but there is an older Common policy from 2015. It was suggested this be sent to the committee.

Next Steps:

We will plan to meet with the selectboard and come up with a concise, organized presentation for that meeting.

Each subcommittee should develop what they are doing in preparation for that meeting and at the June meeting we will organize the presentation.

Tim will follow up with Dina regarding the Eversource email.

We have one year to complete our process and we have spent a lot of time on the first phase. Laurie asking the subcommittees to begin to look at the second phase. October 18th is our listed deadline although we didn't start meeting until January. We should ask for some clarification.

Katie asked if we had a drawing of the Common that has details of structures or power. The tax map has correct measurements. David Robbins would be good contact to secure a map. Katie's next step is to get a more accurate map.

Earl made a motion to adjourn at 8:08 p.m. Laurie seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Next meeting is June 3rd at 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Hayes