

EAST LYME COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

Present: Penny Heller
Don Danila
Mark Christensen
Harvey Beeman
Laura Ashburn
Steve Dinsmore, Alternate

Absent: Marjorie Meekhoff, Alternate

Also Present: Greg Decker

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
EAST LYME, CT
2025 SEP 17 A.M. 10:52
TOWN CLERK

I. CALL TO ORDER. Ms. Heller, Chair, called the East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources of September 10, 2025 meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. SEATING ALTERNATES (IF NECESSARY) A quorum was established.

III. CALL FOR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA. There were no additions to the agenda.

IV. CALL FOR PUBLIC DELEGATIONS. Greg Decker of Memorial Park Drive, gave copies of a summary of Bartlett Tree Service Consultation. He informed the Commission the 150-year-old Copper Beach tree on the Town Green is diseased. He sent an email to the town expressing his concern. To date he has not received a reply. He contacted Bartlett Tree Service and they did a site assessment of the tree (see attached). The cost to give the tree sonic treatment and site assessment will cost \$1,200. Mr. Christensen suggested adding potassium in the soil, which would be less expensive. Ms. Heller felt using the treatment options in the Summary of Bartlett Tree Service would help. Mr. Decker did not feel the tree should be cut down. Mr. Christensen stated the Town Green is under control of the Parks and Recreation Department. It was felt a memo should be sent to Mr. Lokken, Director of Parks and Recreation, with cc to the Board of Selectmen.

MOTION (1): Mr. Danila moved to authorize the Chair to draft a memo to the Parks and Recreation Director with a copy to the Board of Selectmen regarding the condition of the Copper Beach Tree on the Town Green. Seconded by Mr. Beeman. (5-0)
Unanimous.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 11, 2025 MEETING.

MOTION (2): Mr. Christensen moved to approve the August 13, 2025 Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources

**Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Mr. Danila. (5-0)
Unanimous.**

VI. NEW BUSINESS There was no discussion of new business.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Maintenance of the ELHS Rain Garden.** Mr. Danila reported that a member of the Niantic River Watershed Committee felt the East Lyme High School rain garden needed maintenance. The Watershed Committee is willing to offer payment for necessary plants or equipment. Ms. Ashburn reported her class of students have worked on cleaning the area. She added Mr. Lund has taken away the debris the students have cleaned. It was felt Ms. Meekhoff should be asked to visit the area and give her input.
- b. **2025 RBV Sampling.** Mr. Danila reported that it is uncertain that personnel from the National Estuarine Research Reserve can help this year with RBV sampling. However, a member of the Watershed Committee is willing to help. Ms. Ashburn asked Mr. Danila to help her students perform RBV sampling this fall if possible or perhaps next spring. Low streamflow remains an issue at this time.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Replacement of the Commission Event Tent.** Ms. Heller reported to date she has not received a response to her email from Mr. Goeschel regarding replacing the Commission's event tent. She will continue to work with Jessica Laroco, Office Manager, to order a replacement with funds from this Commission's budget.

VIII. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- a. **Communications.** There were no new communications.
- b. **Agribusiness Subcommittee.** Mr. Christensen reported there will be an event entitled Bees, Birds and Butterflies at the Samuel Smith House on September 13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Steve Dinsmore from Old Ledge Apiaries will offer his honey for sale. Drew Burnett from Drew's Honeybees will discuss local native pollinators and how to keep our plants fruiting and reproducing. He will also sell honey and other products related to his honeybees. Pollinator Pathway East Lyme will give information on attracting pollinators and have activities that will include seed mud balls and microscope view opportunities for youngsters and adults. Smith Acres will have a selection of pollinator friendly plants for sale.
- c. **SustainableCT Subcommittee.** As the only outstanding action from the last certification process, Mr. Beeman will continue to pursue a baseline audit of energy efficiency for all town-owned buildings. He said he will contact Joe Brgraw again to obtain the necessary energy cost data.

d. Chairman's Report. Ms. Heller will get back to Kristine Holohan of the Pattagansett Art Center about their interest in SustainableCT. Ms. Ashburn asked that she be invited to a meeting of this Commission to give an update.

e.Ex-Officio Report. Ms. Hardy was unable to be present and there was no report.

Ms. Ashburn reported September 20 is National Beach Clean-up Day. Her students will be participating.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (3): Mr. Danila moved to adjourn the September 10, 2025 East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources Meeting at 7:50 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Christensen. (5-0) Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary

Summary of Bartlett Tree Service Consultation

Tree Condition Overview

- Species: European beech
- Diameter: 74"
- Current health: Overall fair condition, though the top shows decline.
- Diseases/Issues observed:
 - **Beech Leaf Disease (BLD):** Present, though European beeches tend to tolerate it relatively well. Dark leaf coloration also helps mask symptoms.
 - **Decay:** Present within the tree; the tree has been worked on previously.
 - **Root Rot:** Minor presence noted.
 - **Possible Beech Bark Disease:** Alligator-like bark texture observed.
 - **Canker:** Some evidence present.
- Additional concerns: Soil compaction around the root flare and minor structural risks from deadwood in the crown.

Treatment Options Discussed

1. **Fungicide Injection (Recommended)**
 - Product: **Arbotect 20-S** (thiabendazole hypophosphite).
 - Method: Systemic injection into the root flare (currently well exposed).
 - Purpose: Historically used for Dutch elm disease and sycamore anthracnose; now approved for use against BLD.
 - Effectiveness: Suppresses BLD symptoms and reduces nematode populations for up to two growing seasons when properly applied.
 - Timing: Best applied from full leaf expansion through late July/early August, before nematodes migrate into buds.
 - Estimated cost: ~\$600 per treatment, applied every other year.
 2. **Nutrient Support**
 - Potassium polyphosphate fertilizer (both injection and soil application) recommended to strengthen the tree's natural defenses against BLD.
 3. **Soil and Root Health**
 - **Root Invigoration:** Use compressed air to reduce soil compaction.
 - **Mulching:** Apply mulch around the root flare to protect from foot traffic, regulate soil temperature, and add organic matter.
 4. **Structural Support & Maintenance**
 - Update and replace existing cabling between the two stems.
 - Remove deadwood in the upper canopy (safety measure).
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Risk Assessment (Strongly Recommended Before Treatment)

- Cost estimate: \$1,000–\$1,200.
 - Methods: Drilling into areas of decay and/or using sonogram technology to determine internal density.
 - Purpose: Establishes the extent of internal decay and determines whether the tree is structurally sound enough to warrant treatment.
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Key Takeaways

- The tree is currently viable but has multiple stress factors (BLD, decay, minor root rot, soil compaction).
 - Bartlett Tree Service recommends conducting a **risk assessment first** to determine if treatment is justified.
 - If viable, proceed with **Arbotect 20-S injection**, fertilizer applications, soil/root health improvements, and structural maintenance.
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