

**Board of Governors of the Lake Champlain Yacht Club**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 7, 2016**

**Present:** Jeff Bourdeau, Bill Bresee, Walt Marti, Gerry Davis, Scott Bowen, Bob Schumacher, Jean Sievert, Jean White, Don Holly, Bob Gurwicz (Tris Coffin was present, but recused himself from the discussion and of any BOG activity/action for tonights meeting)

**Absent:** Doug Purdy, Marc Gamble, Bob Finn

**Financial Committee Guests:** Chris Leopold, John Harris, Doug Merrill

**Other Guests:** Lisa Falcone, Jill Burley, Marcel Beaudin

6:10 PM - Meeting called to order, and Introduction of topics by Walt Marti

Question posed by Tris Coffin regarding tonight's agenda, specifically regarding the circulated LCYC policy regarding LCYC Grounds as it pertains to management of its trees.

**I. New Membership Application**

- Kati Wight for Associate Membership DOB = 9/19/87.
- Motion to approve Kati Wight for Associate membership by Scott Bowen. Motion second by Bob Schumacher. BOG vote resulted in the following action - APPROVED
- Motion made to approve membership initiation fees for Associate Membership for Katie Wight at \$500.00, with the ability granted to Katie to pay her membership initiation fee over two seasons, with \$250 paid per season, by Jean Sievert. Motion second by Don Holly. BOG vote resulted in the following action – APPROVED

**Trees**

Coffin-Falcone have requested to trim branches from some larger trees (large oak trees east of Butler Building [referred to as BB throughout the rest of the minutes] and south of the junior sailing dock stairs), and removal of two trees (Maple Tree 1038 and smaller maroon-leafed maple tree)

How did we get to where we are currently? - John Harris – switch to Doug Merrill

Doug Merrill – in May of 2014 an awareness of impending changes in Shelburne town laws prompted action towards a replacement for the Butler Building, a project that had been on the minds of LCYC members for decades. As part of this process a tree survey was performed, due to desire to remove cedars along the north-easter side of the Butler Building. Civil Engineers presented a plan to town of Shelburne, and the town of Shelburne approved it, and it was executed. Tris Coffin was informed by Doug Merrill of this tree removal, and Tris was reportedly pleased, as this action was beneficial to him. A Maple tree, to the north-east of the Butler Building was approved by town of Shelburne for removal

(tree #1038). Later that summer, in August, is when the cedars were removed by Joss Besse and Dave Main. The maple tree (#1038) was left as it was not in the way of floor plan for Butler building. An Email exchange with Doug Merrill and Tris Coffin to evaluate and discuss trees was had, with plans to meet and further discuss and develop a tree plan, however this meeting never took place.

Tris Coffin desired removal of tree at southwest corner of parking lot, and two others.

October 2015 Tris requested that tree removal request be presented to board. Fall workday 2015 discussion was had by Doug Merrill and Dave Main pertaining to the removal of the tree at the southwest parking corner.

Scott Bowen brought to light the minutes from November, 2015 where removal of the tree at the southwest corner of the parking area was approved by the BOG, as Don Holly was concerned that he decision had been made to remove this tree by Doug Merrill and David Main independently, based on Doug Merrill's presentation of this tree's removal.

Lisa Falcone clarified at this time that their request, regarding the trees, does not make it necessary to "cut them down, but possibly move them (transplantation)".

John Harris assumed review of history at this time. John Harris shared that the finance committee (FC) decided that it would not be in the club's best interest to remove the trees.

Walt Marti asked about consideration of FC to move trees? Trimming Trees?

John Harris – presented request by Tris to remove smaller trees (tree #1038 and maroon-leafed maple) and trimming of the bottom 1/3 of the larger trees (Oaks east of Butler Building and south of junior sailing dock stars). Arborist and State Forester offered recommendation about what should and should not be trimmed off of larger trees. These recommendations were general guidelines, not a tree limb trimming plan specific to which limbs could or should be removed. The focus of this inquiry was to determine which of the larger limbs could be removed. FC recommends that the club put together a plan for trimming which benefits LCYC and the Coffins.

Lisa Falcone – reports that she was under the understanding that the building was to be shifted and that there would be "no problem" trimming and removing/relocating the trees. Lisa also provided clarification of their action to ensure that all know that there has been no effort or intent on the part of Tris and her, to be sneaky or subversive in regard to their interests in these matters.

Doug Merrill – Explanation as to how the intent and action of the Butler Building process has been from the start to: A. Build a new and better Butler Building, and B. to make any changes to the building and grounds to be better for LCYC and for its neighbors.

Jill Burley– Provided an explanation of the January 2016 evaluation of the view of the anchorage from Tris and Lisa's house.

Don Holly – Statement of his position regarding trees and his love of them. Don then left the meeting at 7:11 PM

7:12 PM

Gerry Davis – Asked if the arborist who had visited the LCYC grounds, had considered moving trees. Lisa states Jake Brown, the arborist, stated that trees could be moved.

Doug Merrill – Red maple (Maroon-leafed maple) is behind the set-back and not required to be on the plan.

Walt Marti – Clarification from John Harris – FC consensus is to not move or remove the smaller maple trees (#1038 and the maroon-leafed maple), but to trim the larger trees (oaks to the east of current Butler Building and south of the stairs to the junior sailing dock).

John Harris reviewed design aspects of the building. Presentation. Drawings and sight plan included in material sent prior to this BOG meeting. Other issue regarding the building is the cost. There is no cost estimate from a contractor at this point. Desire to stay on budget (\$50,000), with affordability as long as it does not cost more than \$75,000. “We are here today predicated on the time table to try to build the building this fall...this time table does not need to be kept”

Doug Merrill states that there may be time sensitivity to taking down trees, as tree #1038 (Green Maple) may need to be taken down this month. Lisa Falcone requests clarification of proposed roof heights for the replacement Butler Building. There are two alternative designs, differing only in roof-line and height. One roofline is one foot higher than the other. 15’ for the lower, the higher is 16’. Walls are 8’ high, from the slab to the bottom of the trusses, just like current BB. Currently roof on Butler Building is 11’.

Jean White asks if the cost goes from \$50,000 to \$75,000 does the membership need to be informed?

Bill Bresee asks if we need to get an estimate from a contractor prior to the BOG voting on the Butler Building.

Presentation by Jill Burley, with sketches, diagrams, and models.

7:40 PM

LCYC BOG, LCYC FC, and Tris Coffin & Lisa Falcone went outside to be shown the proposed sites for the new, replacement BB. The two possible positions of the slab were marked out with string and nails. 8’ boards were used to show the height of the walls, and a longer board was used to show the height of the roof peak. Questions were answered. Lisa Falcone voiced that she is “100 % against” the taller roof design.

8:10 PM – Return to inside of clubhouse.

John Harris – the porches add to the width of the proposed building, and therefore the roof will require greater height.

8:15 PM – Lisa Falcone presents:

“Thank you for opportunity to present” Expressed sentiment that the LCYC property and their property are special to both she and Tris and their family. She reviewed her credentials, past experience, and qualifications that allow her special insight and ability in having her opinions regarding the project being undertaken by LCYC. She expressed concern that the other LCYC neighbors may not be aware of the planned project, and expressed that “neighbors matter”. She reported that historically their property has been in the Coffin family for 28 years, and that when LCYC was building its new clubhouse, Larry and Roberta Coffin conceded to the height of its roof, despite reportedly losing half of their water view, because Larry and Roberta felt it was of greater importance to maintain a good, LCYC property, back to when the Webb’s sold it to LCYC. Lisa asked the BOG to consider that for 12 months of

the year LCYC is “shut down” and not utilized, and so for ¾ of the year the new, replacement BB will be in their view, but non-functional. Lisa also stated that she was surprised by the recent emails sent, regarding LCYC tree management policy, and asked if this really was, or should be, a primary mission of LCYC.

Here is her attached, written statement:

### **Notes on Butler Building**

**Presented by Lisa Falcone to LCYC BOG 6/7/16**

**I am here to speak about the proposed storage building being considered this evening by the LCYC BOG.**

**As a member of the club since 1999, your closest neighbor and the property owner most impacted by this proposed project, I appreciate the opportunity to share my position and ask that you consider the long-term relationship you have had with our family for the last 28 years while making your decision on this project.**

**Since most of you know who I am, but do not know me, let me take a few minutes to introduce myself.**

**I live with my husband, Tris Coffin, in the little gray house you all drive by to get to the club. We live there with our three children Sam, Emily and Nate, all of whom grew up on this property and participated for many years in the junior sailing program. Our two oldest are in college and Nate will be a junior at CVU.**

**I am employed full-time by the United Way.**

**For six years, I was an elected school board director in the CSSU school district (along with Bob Finn) where I was involved in the multi-million dollar renovation of HCS.**

**Currently, I am an appointed socioeconomic-representative on the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and a member on its long-term planning committee. My rep position is design to ensure the interest of low-income citizens is considered in the regional planning process. I also am a member of the Clean Water Taskforce called Voices for the Lake Project, which is a working group of government, business and other community members, trying to do everything possible to protect Lake Champlain.**

**Finally, I want to mention that years ago I was UVM’s community and government liaison on all their building projects. My job was to LISTEN to the community and work with them and the zoning and planning regulation process to bring forward the best projects possible to meet the needs of both the university and the community. Projects including the Stafford Medical Building and the Redstone Student Apartments are a few on which I worked.**

**As you can imagine, keeping the peace with neighbors and other interested parties as we planned, designed, presented, listened, redesigned, listened again, permitted and built very large, impactful buildings was not an easy task! During that time, I learned some very important lessons about the process, particularly that neighbor’s opinions matter! Really matter! A project was only a success when all parties had the opportunity to fully vet it and all agreed and felt good about the outcome. It was really hard work and sometimes contentious. It required a ton of compromise. But, at the 2**

end of the day, maintaining a positive relationship with neighbors and other interested parties was among the most important outcomes.

A short history lesson on our joint properties—as you probably know, it was 1961 when the Webb family sold the existing club property to a group of sailors to renew LCYC (from Bern's historical account in the log book). What you may not know, however, is at the same time two long lots were created and also sold by the Webbs - one to the Langdell family who still own that property today and the other (our parcel) to the Steven's family. At that time, the Butler Building, which has been on the property since the 1930's I believe, was the only built structure and the land was open farm land.

It was in 1988, that Roberta and Larry Coffin bought our home from then owners, the Mitagy family. Roberta and Larry were long-time, active and contributing members of the club. Before the new, much larger clubhouse was built in 1995, the Coffins gently requested a scaled-down version of what was eventually built. The club overseers of that era decided the cathedral ceiling and cupola were a “must-have” architectural design. The result is a beautiful clubhouse for sure, but the new expansive building forever blocked more than half of the Coffins' view of the lake. It was a significant loss to their property value.

For any of you who were lucky enough to know Larry Coffin, you can attest to the fact that he was a true yachtsmen and gentlemen. He and Roberta, in their typical neighborly style, settled on the club's plan, even though it forever changed their view.

I discussed that process with Roberta this past weekend, and she explained in exchange for their loss of view, the club leaders at that time tried to mitigate some of their loss by pruning the large trees on the shoreline and removing other vegetation with some assurance that the club would maintain the remainder of the view.

Fast forward to 2014—Tris and I and our kids moved into our new home after living in Hinesburg for 20 years. There are two reasons why we purchased this home—the view of the lake and mountains and the ability to get to our sailboat quickly. We also thought being near friends at the club would be fun.

Doug Merrill was Commodore at this time and he starting talking to Tris about the proposed building project. I was not involved and frankly didn't pay much attention to any of it. I trusted that the club and Tris would work this issue out in a mutually acceptable way.

Just to put it on the record, when approached about the project, we were nothing but agreeable (see email exchanges between Tris and Doug M.). We thought Doug's conversations with Tris meant we had resolved to agree on this project in a neighborly way. Namely, we would support a somewhat bigger building--even though it meant a significant loss of our view-- in exchange for the club taking some reasonable steps to move or remove some minor amounts of vegetation to open up other areas of the view that have become overgrown over the years. Since the club had already applied for a 3

permit from the Town of Shelburne to remove several trees and other vegetation within the sensitive setback, Tris and I never imagined our request would become such a contentious issue between neighbors, between club members—it had not been the Coffins' way in their day, and it was not our way!

For the record, we have never had any type of contentious relations with neighbors, EVER!

I am very grateful to John Harris for providing the documentation related to this project. I must admit I was somewhat surprised to learn of the underwhelming nature of the club support for this project among members—as reflected in the club survey. I ask the BOG to remember that this project from the club's perspective, according to the results of the survey, is primarily to fix up or replace an auxiliary building for the purpose of storing boats and equipment.

The club members were very clear that a much larger structure or “architectural masterpiece” as one person called it was not what the club needed or wanted. I also ask that the BOG consider during their discussions of this project that eight months of the year the club will be completely shut down.

As for our perspective, I ask that the BOG think about the significant impact this much expanded storage building will have on our HOME. Our family, who lives in our home 365 days a year, plans to be your neighbors for at least the next 25 years. Please consider that your decision today will significantly impact us. A much larger storage building will block our view every single day, for the rest of our lifetime.

As for the issues of the trees--I must say, it is surprising to me that an organization with the mission--*to promote and encourage boating and sailing on Lake Champlain, while emphasizing racing, cruising, and education without financial gain* is becoming so concerned over secondary issues related to vegetation. I will also note that this concern strikes me as new found and somewhat selective, since it was never mentioned to Tris or me anytime during this two-year process when we have been discussing the project.

I ask the BOG to consider how many members really are mindful of the minor reductions in tree branches and movement or removal of a couple of secondary trees—one of which the club already sought and obtained a permit to be removed. (BTW, the club had no problem cutting down a few trees on our property this past spring along the upper road).

I do want to point out that the last-minute email I was sent from Walt from Don Holly, who I do not know and have never met, is strikingly selective. I happen to agree the club should prioritize its responsibility to protect the Lake and its ecosystems. In fact as a club member and property owner with lake access, I believe this is the most important issue facing the club and this project. I asked about mitigation plans when speaking with John Harris and Jill Burly. As you saw, Don focused his remarks and opinion only 4

**on the vegetation aspects of the zoning laws as it relates to this project, which is way too simplistic in my opinion.**

**The addition and construction process of this expanded building poses a much greater threat to the lake and its ecosystems than moving one or two trees. For example, increasing the impervious surfaces, specifically the added foundation and roof dimensions significantly increases the storm water runoff. The added volume of storm water, without a mitigation plan, will likely end up in Lake Champlain.**

**I note that no where does the recommendations of the FC address these significant issues: proposed change in parking, loss of permeable surfaces, and risk of increased storm water runoff and added pollution to Lake Champlain caused by this project.**

**Speaking as club member, I believe these significant issues along with the cost of the building need to be resolved before the BOG takes action.**

**Okay, I wish this hadn't become so formalized, but here we are!**

**I can't help think about my UVM days and the wise lessons I learned long ago-- that no construction project is more important than your community, your neighbors, your friends.**

**Thanks for listening to my comments**

Chris Leopold shared his desire that the BOG approve the replacement BB project as proposed, to allow the FC proceed and obtain bids/quotes, that the FC will then bring back to the BOG for review and voting. He also discussed the long history of desire and intent to replace the BB. He also provided that the club has seldom, if ever, been unified on the decisions that have been made to make LCYC what it is today.

John Harris shared that he would like the BOG to give clear direction back to the FC. For example, he would like direction from the BOG to the FC to either proceed, or to stop and "go back to the drawing board, and revisit the BB project and plans." "It is more important to do it right then to do it now." Whatever happens, it needs to be best for LCYC and its membership.

Doug Merrill shared that he would like the BB project to move forward, including if "forward" means "taking a new direction". He stated "What is best for LCYC may be worst for LCYC's neighbors, so some give and take may be necessary in this project" He also made a point of being sensitive to the awkward and uncomfortable position that Tris Coffin has been put in, by being asked to be Commodore during a time in which this project is coming to the forefront of LCYC activity and action.

Jill Burley shared that if a fall start to construction is desired, then LCYC will need to move forward with permitting and drafting. She indicated that there would be fees of \$500 for drafting, and of \$500 - \$1000 for permitting.

8:40 PM

The Financial Committee, and Tris Coffin and Lisa Falcone are dismissed, leaving the BOG to meet.

Much discussion was had by the BOG, with all members voicing opinions and thoughts.

**Motion made to accept the design of the replacement Butler Building with the lower roof height (sky-light roof), to be build in the position which has been rotated 6 degrees to align better with the**

**Coffin/Falcone view, and proceed with the permitting and drafting process in hopes of construction in fall of 2016. Additionally the approval for \$1500.00 to be available for the permitting and drafting process. This motion was made by Bob Schumacher. The second for this motion was Jean Sievert. Action by BOG vote = APPROVED**

**Motion made to develop a plan to explore the specifics, details, costs, logistics, and permitting for the trimming of tree limbs, and the removing or relocating of trees, to be performed in a manner which serves the interests of both LCYC and its neighbors. This motion was made by Gerry Davis. The second for this motion was Bob Schumacher. Action by BOG vote = APPROVED**

Suggestion made that BOG have the "Long Term Capital Plan" explained to the BOG, in order that all BOG members be made aware of this

Motion to adjourn by Gerry Davis. Second by Jean Sievert. Action by BOG vote = APPROVED.  
Meeting adjourned at 9:47 PM