

**Chester Conservation Commission
March 21, 2017
Approved Minutes**

Attendance

Chairman Chuck Myette
Ted Broadwater
Aaron Hume

Absent:

Deb Munson
Phil Cassista

Guests:

John Dalrymple
Rhonda Lamphere, Town Treasurer

Call to Order

Chairman Myette called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm on Tuesday, March 21, 2017.

New Business

1. Annual Budget Selectman's meeting

Chairman Myette provided copies of the proposed budget to each of the members for review.

2. Statewide Trails meeting (Deb Munson) – Tabled
3. GBN Farms "Compositing monitoring" – Tabled
4. Proposed Transfer of Conservation Funds to Earn Interest – Rhonda Lamphere

The Commission recognized Rhonda Lamphere and invited her to the table. Mrs. Lamphere presented a proposal to the Commission for investing a portion of the Conservation funds into an interest-bearing account over a period of months. Mrs. Lamphere advised the Commission that she could not invest any sums into anything that would put principal at risk, including penalties for early withdrawal, that would draw upon principal. Mr. Broadwater asked "What would be the penalty, if we lock up?" Mrs. Lamphere advised that should the Commission need to draw upon their funds

prior to maturity, the penalty would be a forfeit of a portion of the interest accrued. Mrs. Lamphere's recommendation was to transfer the sum of \$500,000 of principal. Mrs. Lamphere advised that the Commission could earn up to \$900 in interest for a short term of a few months. Mrs. Lamphere stated that the Forestry account had a balance of \$33,000 and that would need to be \$50,000 prior to investing any of those funds.

Discussion

The Commission members discussed what funds need to be liquid and any time-constraints concerning funds they would like to be able to use for acquisitions in the coming months.

Chairman Myette offered "We have three easements ongoing, one for purchase of property and the other two are more reimbursement or legal and surveying costs and other things." Mr. Broadwater added that the surveyor estimate was roughly \$5,000, for the survey, description and lot line adjustment. Mr. Broadwater will follow up with Mr. Edwards, to get that survey triggered. A draft agreement was being reviewed by his new lawyers, pending our completion of the survey and lot line adjustment. Mr. Broadwater will follow up on that.

"So, at this point no large dollar amount, but we have a couple of properties we've been talking about, which is why we were building up funds." remarked Chairman Myette.

Mrs. Lamphere asked if there was anything far enough along. Chairman Myette stated that there was, closer to the \$30-\$40,000 range. There is a property in the \$50,000 range that we've been in discussions with, an estate pending settlement, but that is cold, so its been about a year, and close to closing. Wanting to cover attorney fees on both sides, \$15-20,000 total.

"The third property is a donation we haven't progressed on, toward the southern part of town, so no large dollar amount that we will be pushing within 90 days, if not six months." added Chairman Myette.

"We want to be able to have some funds, and monitoring, \$5-10,000.00 range." Mrs. Lamphere responded that if she moved \$500,000, with \$40,000 left, you still get money each time you get a lot, you get current use of \$10,000. Chairman Myette corrected that, periodically, \$6,500 per lot. "I haven't seen anything higher than that and haven't seen a lot of them come in." Mrs. Lamphere remarked that it was Important to put map and lot numbers on for research potential.

Chairman Myette concluded that 100% comes from current use. "You want to look to balance things out, as one open space disappears with a new subdivision."

Chairman Myette asked if there were any objections about taking the \$500,000 at this point, and leaving us with the \$40,000?

Motion:

Mr. Broadwater made a motion to put \$500,000 of the fund into a 90-day certificate of deposit. Mr. Hume seconded his motion. All in favor, so moved.

Chairman Myette will email Mrs. Lamphere, tomorrow, to tell her to go ahead and do that.

Old Business

1. Review Minutes (December 2016 & January 2017)

Mr. Broadwater motioned to accept the December 13, 2016 minutes, as written. Mr. Hume seconded his motion. All in favor, so moved.

Mr. Hume motioned to accept the January 10, 2017 minutes, as written. Chairman Myette seconded his motion. All in favor, so moved.

2. Subcommittee reports

A. Strategic Land Protection Committee – SLPC

B. Treasurer's Report (Chuck)

Chairman Myette reported that, as of March 1, 2017, there is a balance of:

\$530,503.44, with receipts of \$9,586.75 bringing the total to \$540,090.19;

\$3,000.00 in the Lincoln Lane account, with \$16.31 in interest accrued; and

\$33,000.00 in the Forestry account

\$750.00 budget:

-\$389.69 in expenditures (\$333 for dues and seminars and \$50 for Land Trust)

\$360.31 left which includes \$100 for administrative salaries (not needed this year)

C. Planning Board

D. Spring Hill Farm (Chuck)

Chairman Myette advised that Spring Hill Farm had received their 501c(3) status from the IRS.

E. Agricultural Commission (Chuck)

F. Regulations

G. Wason Pond Conservation Area (Chuck)

Mr. Myette reported that they had discussed the proposed irrigation system at the Wason Pond Conservation Area meeting, specifically maintaining flow and drought management.

Mr. Myette reminded that they are looking for members to serve on that committee as well.

Mr. Broadwater stated that one concern was artificial lighting. Chairman Myette added that there is to be no artificial illumination at Wason Pond, with the exception of safety, such as at the Community Center. There is not supposed to be any artificial lights for athletic games, etc., and with the Night Sky telescope event, that's good, because there aren't a lot of lights to block visibility.

Barn at Wason. Tony brought information concerning the proposed roof repair. He inspected it and got two prices, one for metal, and one for shingles. One was \$15,000. One Selectman was in favor of a metal roof. Mr. Broadwater stated that he was in there last weekend. Chairman Myette asked "Is it leaking?" Mr. Broadwater replied that there was some snow in there. "If you get moisture in there it goes pretty fast!" Mr. Broadwater asked "Who checks those out periodically?" Chairman Myette responded that "It is the responsibility of Wason Pond to identify issues and Tony has made a lot of progress fixing up structures, the only one we saw in need, was the Barn."

Mr. Broadwater asked how funds would be raised to cover the repairs. "Do we pursue grants?" "Do a fundraiser?" "Utilize the CIP process?" "Or just get it paid for under building repairs?" Chairman Myette advised that Tony was going to bring it back to the Selectmen. Chairman Myette will contact him before the next meeting. "It does need some help" Mr. Broadwater stated. "It's a beautiful old building, well built, it was moved there, not original" Chairman Myette added and "It seems solid underneath."

H. Easements, Monitoring and Stewardship

Chairman Myette explained to Mr. Dalrymple that we have 30 or so easements, some required by matching funds requirement, that we have to monitor the lands every year and send reports to the service. We have been using Rockingham Conservation District as the third party. Chairman Myette explained "You always need a third party to make sure things

are up and honest.” “If owned by private individuals, we as a town will monitor, there is always someone who monitors it, some are trained as stewards to walk the properties and for what to look for.”

Plan Reviews

1. None

Miscellaneous Business

1. Beaver Trapping

Brian Sullivan got his permit and plans approved by the NH Fish and Game. “We have a letter in the file for that” Chairman Myette explained “There was a problem at Wason Pond and he did go down and try to set some traps but ice conditions are too poor, so he is going to have to put that off until April or May.”

“There are a couple of other properties, in Norton Rd. We are going to offer to pay \$100 for his license, but he isn’t charging for the trapping itself.”

2. Logging South Woods and Town Land

“Herrick woods is one we’ve had a nice cut from. Norton Road, we did two years ago.” “There is some land being timbered off because of the Hemlock disease.” “Dick Lewis is cutting up where the towers are.” Mr. Broadwater asked, “How does that money come back to us?” Chairman Myette explained that they can either pay us the market price or we take boards. “One of the past projects was the dam at Wason Pond, all that came off Wason Pond and was milled by Dick Lewis for no cost.” “He has milled some for Spring Hill Farm.”

Chairman Myette explained that we do know what the plans are and how many board feet he is estimating. “There is no contract yet.” “Don’t think he’s cut ours yet.” Mr. Broadwater asked “Do you know what plot it is?” Chairman Myette stated that there are two of them, one is being contested, someone else believes they own the land, adjacent to the back side of the hill, 20-25 acres.

3. Trail Mapping (Aaron)

Mr. Hume reported that he needs to recover some data that was lost due to the amount of time the application saves the data for, and won’t charge for that, just needs some time when the ground is not snow-covered, when he can get out there to start physical mapping.

Mr. Dalrymple asked where the trails being mapped were located.

Chairman Myette explained to Mr. Dalrymple that Conservation has begun mapping all over town, looking at anything of special interest and the Commission has asked Mr. Hume to hike and mark trails and log them in so we can see what they look like. In the future, the Commission would like to be able to publish a brochure or something on the web that shows unique attractions, such as the waterfall at Wason Pond.

4. Selectmans' Meeting

Chairman Myette advised the Commission that the Board of Selectmen has them on the agenda for **Thursday March 30, 2017 at 7:00 pm** to discuss re-apportionment of the percentage of current use revenues which are projected for the coming fiscal year. Chairman Myette charged the members to consider in the meantime what percentage the Commission felt comfortable with retaining, being careful not to tie up too much money.

Mr. Broadwater inquired as to what the state mandated for use. Chairman Myette responded that those monies can be used as a town with one option to put it to conservation, which has to go before the town, as it did 20 years ago. Some towns retain a small percentage, he continued, while we have been collecting 100%. Another option, he advised, is that those monies can come in and go into a land use property fund to be distributed from, but they cannot go to reducing taxes and what not, they can go to CIP or other lands, such as cemeteries or recreation, roads or others CIPs. On an annual basis, the Selectmen have the right, and must go to the Town. For example, you could get 25% going to one, or some split so it can go into two funds at that point.

Mr. Broadwater asked about the timeline in which the Selectmen can float a warrant article and expressed concerns about making sure we are spending the money appropriately, as directed by the town. Chairman Myette responded "We've got a good track record for that." The biggest chunk was Wason Pond, almost \$200,000 for dam repairs and the bridge have been utilized and several farm properties, and Herrick Woods and the Norton Cemetery area. "Do we need all of it that's coming in and if you had a large parcel its several hundred thousand pretty quickly." Mr. Broadwater expressed concerns that if they do a warrant article, we may want to think of a public outreach campaign to show this is how some of this money has gone in the past and will continue to.

It was agreed to table this discussion, until after we hear, wait and formulate a plan at the April meeting.

5. RCCD Easements

6. Chester Turnpike Easement

7. Webpage Update

Deb is looking at the webpage and we haven't heard from her on that. Mr. Hume has not loaded anything up yet.

8. Membership

The Commission recognized John Dalrymple who may be interested in becoming a member of the Commission. Mr. Dalrymple is interested in what's going on at Wason Pond and has a nice background in grounds maintenance.

Chairman Myette, Mr. Broadwater and Mr. Hume introduced themselves to Mr. Dalrymple and provided their professional backgrounds and areas of study. Chairman Myette has experience in hydrology and working for environmental engineering companies. Mr. Broadwater has been on the Commission for coming up on a year, with a background in business and international logistics, with a great interest in preserving open spaces. Mr. Hume became part of the commission in December, serves as an alternate on the Planning Board, attended University of Massachusetts Amherst, earning his degree in Natural Resource Conservation with a focus in Water Resources. Currently Mr. Hume is pursuing a degree in Marine, estuarine, and fresh-water biology from the University of New Hampshire.

Chairman Myette asked if anyone had an interest in serving as Treasurer. Mr. Broadwater responded that he may be interested in a few months but will be busy with organizing *The Pounder* until June.

9. Review of Mail, Conferences

Saving Special Places seminar is coming up.

NH DES *Beyond the Beaver Dam* publication, success of mitigation fund
"To sustain high quality of life for all citizens, source of ideas, for restoration and land ideas and protection in your community." have an ARM, (mitigation fund) grant round sometime in March 2018. Grants for preservation and wetland resources.

FEMA: Merrimack watershed conducted an assessment, following waters, Beaver, Black, Castles, Peppermint, Spickett, Suncook and Vinebrook to name a few, must be more flood-prone. There are some webpages you can go to.

Plan of Land Use Regulation Book, talks about Conservation Plan, regulations of state around planning, land use, conservation. Mr. Hume already got one at the Planning Board. Mr. Broadwater asked to borrow it.

Adjournment

Mr. Hume motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm. Mr. Broadwater seconded his motion,

all in favor, so moved. The meeting of the Chester Conservation Commission was adjourned at 8:15 on March 21, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Hoijer, Recording Secretary