

Chester Conservation Commission
January 9, 2018
Minutes – No Quorum

Attendance

Present:

Chairman Chuck Myette
Deb Munson
Aaron Hume

Absent:

Ted Broadwater
Phil Cassista
Selectman Dick Trask
Baron Richardson

Guests:

Kathleen Neff Ragsdale
Christine Snyder
Victor Chouinard

Call to Order

Having no quorum, the meeting began at 7:06 pm on Tuesday, January 9, 2018.

New Business

1. Review minutes (November 7, 2017, December 12, 2017) - Tabled

Chairman Myette urged the members to review the minutes and suggest any changes.

2. Subcommittee Reports

A. Strategic Land Protection Committee – SLPC

Hawkins
Alex Davis property off Ledge Road (27 acres) complete
(need to prepare Conservation Easement)
Harantis Road
Crowley Road
North Woods

Pulpit Rock Road
Fremont Road

Chairman Myette summarized the last meeting of Strategic Land Protection, which had no quorum as only 3 members had attended. Ms. Ragsdale asked if the BOS had pushed to form this separate committee. Chairman Myette advised that SLPC intends to meet with Planning and other departments to discuss their needs in the next 5-10 years. Ms. Munson suggested that SLPC members could interview representatives from the police department, fire and schools. Ms. Snyder indicated that properties in southern New Hampshire especially, are being eaten up by developers, if there are even any offered and now is the time to act. Ms. Munson's email was discussed. She felt that SLPC was not a function of Conservation but more geared to acquiring properties for municipal development and that Conservation's only role was to weigh in on whether or not the property was more suitable for conservation or development.

Ms. Munson wondered if there was a large duplicate map they could get made or copied that they could update and mark up. Chairman Myette will follow up with Jean Packard. Ms. Munson stated that there is other map sets that show wildlife and wetlands that Conservation had drawn up ten years ago. Ms. Munson asked if they should add the cost of that into the operating budget. Chairman Myette stated that it was not necessary as they could draw from other types of Conservation funds if necessary.

B. Treasurer's Report (Baron) **BILLS** - Tabled

C. Planning Board (Chuck)

D. Trails (Aaron) mapping

Mr. Hume reported that Mr. Richardson had pointed out some new places for him to map. Mr. Hume stated that he still needs to contact Sandown about the GIS and GIS for wildlife. Mr. Hume asked how the commission would like to have the brochure presented. Chairman Myette suggested that it be available on the town website and that prior to publishing brochures he wants to set off those trails that are on public property and those that cross private property and get the permission of private owners to include them. Ms. Munson suggested Trailfinders. Chairman Myette added that brochures made available to Trailfinders would need to be even more accurate as they are more permanent than those provided within town. Chairman Myette stated that he would like to see legends with points of interest and distance in miles starting with the most popular areas such as Wason Pond and Spring Hill Farm. Other trails and class 6 roads such as Bridle Path, Parsonage. Mr. Hume suggested additional ideas that would be helpful. Chairman Myette stated that they could set a date and get together. Mr. Chouinard mentioned that some older maps from 1857 and 1897 were available at the Historical Society if someone wanted to reach out to them, it would be kind of interesting to know what some of those old foundations set out in the woods belonged to.

E. Spring Hill Farm (Chuck)

Chairman Myette reported that the tenants would be out as of March 7th and that the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee had been formed with 7 regular members as well as alternates and is meeting on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, currently led by Corinna Reishus.

Chairman Myette stated that if he remembered correctly from the documents, the four missions were: educational, recreation, agriculture and community with goals to link to the Historical Society, Agriculture and possibly the herb society and some plant sales.

F. Agricultural Commission (Chuck)

G. Regulations

H. Grants – Trails grant

I. Wason Pond Conservation area (Chuck)

a. Security System

b. Barn repair

Chairman Myette reported that the barn had gotten a new roof and half of the siding was finished. The lumber was provided by Dick Lewis who harvests the North Woods property. Mr. Chouinard remarked that it was a well-built barn. Chairman Myette agreed, adding the underneath is still dry, solid. Chairman Myette reported that they may next clean up the inside of the barn to use for hoe-downs or whatever.

c. CIP Gazebo/Pavilion

Chairman Myette reported that a pavilion-shelter is being discussed now.

J. Easements, Monitoring and Stewardship (RCCD)

Chairman Myette urged anyone who wanted to get involved in period walks to monitor some of the easements which need to be done each year. Some are done by Rockingham periodically.

Chairman Myette reported that he had expected Mr. Mitchell would be coming in to finish up the Crowley Woods easement.

Ms. Ragsdale asked what the process is for easements? Does this committee vote?

Chairman Myette explained that the process is to first determine the value, whether it is something we want, for wildlife, forest or wetlands. Second, they meet and discuss the easement language, determine if it's to be sold or kept by the owner with an easement on it, putting together documents, having a public meeting on it here, looking at the costs, listening to concerns of abutters. The third step is to recommend to BOS and summarize any costs associated with accepting the donation, such as surveying or in a purchase is the price reasonable,

what is the appraised value. The town property tax assessments usually run low. The fourth step is to work with the individual, drafting the final documents with our attorneys and the BOS must vote for it to pass.

Chairman Myette advised that the forest management plan on the Hatton property needed to be done every four years so would need to find a forester to work with us on that.

Plan Reviews

1. none

Miscellaneous Business

Town Report – March 8

Chairman Myette advised that the Town Report is due on March 8th.

Budget – February 2, 2018

Chairman Myette advised that Conservation is scheduled to meet with the BOS on February 2, 2018 to review the operating budget for Fiscal 2017-2018 which he provided copies of. Ms. Ragsdale asked what the line item for administrative expenses was for. Chairman Myette explained that it was in the event they hired someone to do something whether for filing or clerical work. Chairman Myette explained the \$400 dues and seminars line item and explained that was for any member who wanted to attend seminars. Ms. Munson had just attended the Nat. Conservation Commission Annual Conference which was \$55 to attend. Chairman Myette summarized that of the prior fiscal year's operating budget of \$800 they had spent \$255.00.

Accounts

Ms. Ragsdale asked who pays for surveys of land, not in this budget? Chairman Myette explained the difference between Conservation's \$800 operating budget and other accounts that it has set up under RSA in separate accounts for easements. Chairman Myette explained that Conservation has \$500,000 in a short-term, 3-month CD and earned \$354 in interest so far and that \$146,000 remains in that account. Ms. Ragsdale asked if Conservation would have access to the monies in the CD if they needed them. Chairman Myette explained to her that he works with Mrs. Lamphere, the town treasurer, regularly and before rolling over the CD she makes sure there is nothing they have planned for any of it.

Chairman Myette explained that there is additionally a forestry account of \$38,398.14 for timber and trails. Ms. Ragsdale asked where the trails were. Chairman Myette explained that there are town forests such as Herrick Woods if you go down 121, Parsonage is ½ mile on the left and was a donation. Then there is the Hatton Property, 110 acres that was logged 10-12 years ago; and another off Bridle Path near the FFA tower.

Chairman Myette advised that there is also a \$3,000 account which was set up to build a bridge in the Lincoln Lane development, although no one has stepped forward to move on that and perhaps Conservation needs to contact their homeowners association. Mr. Chouinard asked if anyone could construct the bridge. Chairman Myette responded that so long as Conservation approves it. "Wason Pond's bridge repairs, recently cost \$1,000 in materials but they had volunteers do the labor, so \$3,000 is about right."

Correspondence

Chairman Myette reported that there was correspondence for a Resource Mitigation Workshop, a NH DES notice of wetlands and forestry compliance for 92 Hanson Road with utility maintenance notice from Ever source. Ms. Munson asked if there were start and completion dates for that Chairman Myette said it was signed January 1, 2018.

Ms. Munson reported that at NHCC Annual Conference Barbara reached out with program geared to making Conservation Commissions more successful, duties, field days, outreach, looking at what we are doing. Chairman Myette suggested that they reach out to Barbara to see if she can come in.

Chairman Myette handed out a publication from Great Bay Matters and suggested that anyone could take that one home and look at it if they wanted.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm., with the SLPC-Conservation working session ending at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Hoijer