

Chester Conservation Commission
February 13, 2018
Approved Minutes

Attendance

Chairman Chuck Myette
Deb Munson
Baron Richardson
Phil Cassista
Aaron Hume @ 7:12 pm

Absent
Ted Broadwater
Selectman Dick Trask

Guests:
Kathleen Neff Ragsdale
Christine Snyder
Victor Chouinard

Call to Order

Chairman Myette called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

New Business

1. Annual Report (March 8, 2018)
2. Meeting with Selectmen for Budget (Thursday February 2, 2018)

Mr. Richardson advised that he and Chairman Myette had met with the Board of Selectmen to review the Budget on February 2nd.

Mr. Richardson explained that in the next budget cycle there will be

- a reduction in administrative salaries from \$100 to \$50 for filing and other tasks;
- Dues and seminars from \$400 to \$300, a 25% decrease;
- Exeter River fees went from \$150-\$200;
- SE Land Trust dues remained the same.

Overall from \$800-\$703.00, a 12% decrease. Salaries and unexpended dues and seminars 86% left, \$345 remains; Misc unspent \$100.00 and Exeter fees were in the red \$50, pulled from elsewhere, probably Misc.

The budget on line item was increased (Exeter River) had been carrying \$150 but dues increased so increased that to \$200.

Fiscal year ending June 30. There is 68% remaining for attending seminars.

Old Business

1. Review minutes (November 7, 2017; December 12, 2018 no quorum, January 9, 2018 no quorum)

Mr. Hume motioned to accept the minutes of November 7, 2017 amended as follows:

Change Christine and Victor Chouinard to Christine Snyder and Victor Chouinard

Ms. Munson seconded his motion. With Mr. Cassista abstaining due to absence from that meeting, 4 voted in favor, so moved.

2. Subcommittee reports

A. Strategic Land Protection Committee - SLPC

Hawkins

Harantis Road

Crowley Road

North Woods

Pulpit Rock Road

Fremont Road

Mr. Richardson motioned to go into non-public session under NH RSA 91A-3(ii)(d) Consideration of Acquisitions of Real Estate. Mr. Cassista seconded his motion. Voting in favor were Chairman Myette, Mr. Hume, Ms. Munson, Mr. Cassista, and Mr. Richardson.

At 8:15 pm Mr. Cassista departed the meeting and the meeting was closed to the public. Ms. Ragsdale, Ms. Snyder and Mr. Chouinard remained in the meeting room.

The Commission reopened the meeting to the public at 9:13 pm and voted to seal the minutes for one year.

Chairman Myette advised that the Commission voted to pay the sum of \$1,500 for an appraisal on one parcel and will obtain a copy of an existing appraisal on another.

B. Treasurer's Report (Baron) BILLS

Mr. Richardson advised that there was a bill from RCCD for \$583.00 for easement monitoring due 2/28th.

Ms. Munson motioned to accept payment of the invoice from RCCD. Mr. Cassista seconded her motion, with all in favor, so moved.

Mr. Richardson reported balances in the Conservation account, which has a \$600,000 cd which is turned over once or twice, of \$51,928.48 with a \$8,000 debit for legal fees as of January 31st. The Forestry Account has some credits , \$1,924.34 bringing the balance to \$40,314.57.

Lincoln Lane has money set aside for a bridge. The project has not been worked on. Chairman Myette suggests contacting the homeowners association to let them know that the money was set aside.

Mr. Cassista motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report, as stated. Ms. Munson seconded his motion, all in favor, so moved.

C. Planning Board (Chuck)

Chairman Myette reported that Crowley Woods would come back to Conservation at some point, as well as a couple of other subdivisions where the easements were not final yet.

D. Trails mapping (Aaron)

Mr. Hume provided copies of maps he had developed and advised that he found issues with parcels shown differently on the town map with some boundaries overlapping from what is shown on Granite's maps. Chairman Myette advised that it may or may not be a mistake, some parcels own property in both and other possibilities. Chairman Myette recommended that he speak to Mr. Hadik in Planning about availability of a digital version of the standard base map.

Chairman Myette suggested focusing on Spring Hill Farm and Wason Pond and get those trails immediately surrounding them onto their web page. GPS trail head coordinates would be helpful.

Mr. Hume offered some layering that includes habitat conditions. Ms. Munson asked if he could print that out. A topographical map would be useful without overly complicating the legend. Indicating natural features and other landmarks and points of reference such as bridges, and waterfalls would give hikers points of reference.

Mr. Hume advised that he spoke to Catherine Callahan concerning the Esri discount for 501(c)(3) non-profits. Ms. Munson indicated that the town may have blanket coverage. Chairman Myette advised that if not, Spring Hill Farm Trust could help work through that. Ms. Munson advised that we could get specifications for the PC and connect into the system in the Conservation offices. Chairman Myette suggested speaking to Erin Newnan and the IT Committee concerning that.

Mr. Chouinard brought in the reproduction map that the Historical Society circulates, mentioned in an earlier meeting, and offered to lend it to Mr. Hume.

E. Spring Hill Farm and Advisory Committee (Chuck)

Chairman Myette advised that as of March 7th there will no longer be tenants at the farm. The town has started an advisory committee. Kendall Kunelius is the Chair and they are meeting on a monthly basis. There have been three meetings so far. This Monday they meet again. Anyone is welcome to go to the meeting. They are talking about having an open house to meet the members and create the vision and activities people want to see occur, with rec., education,

farming. They would then make recommendations to the Board of Selectman of how the farm should move forward in the future and how managed.

Ms. Snyder asked if anyone had considered the possibility of a farm sanctuary, with rescue animals, open to the public or therapeutic horses. Chairman Myette stated that he would pass the idea along to Corinna Reishus and Kendall Kunelius on Monday night, if she had information she could bring in or email to him. Chairman Myette advised that sustainable revenues will drive or limit a lot of their ideas.

F. Agricultural Commission (Chuck)

G. Regulations

H. Grants – Trails grant

Chairman Myette advised that the L-Chip Grants coming up, for buildings, historical buildings, town pound, easements, matching funds. Ms. Munson explained that it stood for Land and Community Heritage. Mr. Chouinard asked if Moose plate money goes into that. Chairman Myette explained that they had applied for it for building of covered bridge and when we purchased Wason we got a \$100,000 grant for that. Due May 1st.

I. Wason Pond Conservation Area (Chuck)

Chairman Myette advised that a representative for Wason Pond Conservation Commission is needed from the Conservation Commission. Ms. Ragsdale stated that she would consider it.

Chairman Myette reported that the Commission had discussed security, cameras, computer hardware and software; the barn renovations done by the corrections trustees. The timber being milled and exchanged. They are considering Jesse Remington High School timber group for the pavilion construction. Rec has worked on the ballfields and the Commission has repaired two of the bridges on the trail system with its volunteers.

J. Easements, Monitoring, and Stewardship (RCCD)

Chairman Myette reported that we receive Farmland Protection Grants, the bill we receive is for two, they put together a report and send into the NRC for us, the Wilson property on 102 that borders the backside of Ms. Snyder and Mr. Chouinard's and Straw Root Farm. Chairman Myette noticed that the monitoring sheet is incorrect for 374 Derry Road.

Chairman Myette advised that for SLPC there is a list of properties that need monitoring if anyone is interested he will bring that next month and some time can be put into that.

Mr. Richardson asked what happens with monitoring when there is a violation discovered such as finding out there has been ATV use. Chairman Myette advised that when it comes to our attention we make a report and it's up to us to figure out if there is a violation. "We are an

advisory commission, we don't have authority for enforcement, that goes through the Building Inspector.” “We receive complaints periodically.” “If we can handle them and approach the owners as ambassadors of the program, otherwise, the next level of enforcement is the Building Inspector, then its a legal issue and we can get legal counsel, town counsel.” “Other part is RCCD can step in, and final if there is a wetlands violation or NH DES or we can report to the Chester Police.

Chairman Myette advised that there is an enforcement on Haverhill Road that has come to our attention, a violation for cut trees, fill placed adjacent the Exeter River, stumps, construction, fence, other trash near the bank, recently cut trees within 50 feet of stream channel. Per DES.

Plan Reviews – None

Miscellaneous Business

New Members

Mr. Richardson motioned to appoint Katherine Neff Ragsdale to the Conservation Commission. Ms. Munson seconded his motion, with all in favor, so moved.

Chairman Myette instructed Ms. Ragsdale that he would write a letter of recommendation and she would then need to go before the Board of Selectman to be appointed and then get sworn in at the town clerk's office.

Ms. Munson motioned to appoint Victor Chouinard and Christine Snyder as alternate members of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Richardson seconded her motion, with all in favor, so moved.

Seminars

Ms. Munson advised that there is a seminar on April 8th *Saving Special Places*.

Adjournment

Mr. Hume motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Munson seconded his motion, with all in favor, so moved. The meeting of the Conservation Commission was adjourned at 9:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Hoijer
Recording Secretary