

**Town of Chester  
Conservation Commission  
May 8, 2018  
Approved Minutes**

**Present were:**

Chairman Chuck Myette  
Kristina Snyder  
Victor Chouinard  
Deb Munson  
Kathleen Neff Ragsdale

**Absent were:**

Aaron Hume  
Ted Broadwater  
Baron Richardson  
Selectman Dick Trask

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Myette called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

Chairman Myette designated the alternates who would be participating in tonight's meeting as Victor Chouinard and Kristina Snyder.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**2. Town Meeting**

Chairman Myette reminded everyone that Town Meeting is Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm. At that time, members will be presenting the proposal to purchase the Crowley Woods property.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**3. Review Minutes (April 10, 2018)**

Ms. Munson recommended the following changes to the minutes:

Line 172 add the word "housing"

Header – change date to April 10

Age Friendly meeting – changed date to May 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm.

*Mr. Chouinard motioned to accept the minutes, as amended. Mrs. Ragsdale seconded his motion, with Mrs. Ragsdale abstaining due to absence from that meeting, 4 votes in favor, so moved.*

#### **4. Subcommittee Reports**

##### **A. Strategic Land Protection Committee – SLPC**

###### **Crowley Road**

Selectman Owens will do the introduction at Town Meeting concerning the proposed purchase. Mrs. Ragsdale asked if the BOS recommended for or against the article. Chairman Myette advised that it was split 2/2 with Selectman Buckley absent. The Budget Committee vote was 6/1. Chairman Myette explained that Strategic Land Protection Committee formed a steering committee and asked the departments to weigh in concerning the impact of the development. Chairman Myette advised that the warrant article was for up to 1.5 million dollars with \$500,000 from Conservation funds, and that other donations and land exchanges could be a part of it. Chairman Myette advised that he had reached out to the Chair in Candia to see if Candia would be willing to donate.

Chairman Myette approached the map and designated the highlighted area to the upper left corner as the Crowley Woods property. Chairman Myette advised that in his portion of the presentation he will go into what is the property. There will be a spreadsheet concerning the costs put together by Mr. Hadik. The impact to each, on average \$350,000 home, will be \$100 per year for the life of the bond rather than the impact, if it were built out by the developer with 25-30 new students upwards of 50, which would be approximately \$250 per year in perpetuity.

Chairman Myette advised that in addition to conservation gains and socio-economic purposes, and recreation, the control of spending for school and road costs for the property to be built out, to fix roads, at a time when they have put repairs off for a number of years already, would result in a significant savings. The savings could be put toward the 26.5 million dollar projected estimate for the currently needed repairs that are already desperately overdue.

Chairman Myette advised that this development was disproportionate in its remote location, more so than any development. Other developments that are more centralized would not have the same impact. The remoteness of the location, not just the number of students added, would contribute 4 miles, 600 additional trips for buses, and extended times for safety responses and routine patrols. Mrs. Ragsdale added that police and fire may require mutual aid with Candia.

Chairman Myette advised that the Black Gum Swamp would need to be protected by an easement and would add a natural corridor to the large contiguous piece. Ms. Munson added that purchasing without an easement on the entire property would afford them the opportunity to study it first and identify key areas of protection.

Chairman Myette added that Strategic Land Protection is looking to identify needs for potential recreation complex, cemetery and even an energy park could be considered to offset utility costs. Ms. Munson advised that there has been some pushback already about there being a lot conserved.

Mr. Chouinard stated that it pays for fixing roads with the savings. Ms. Munson added that the extra cars if the property were built out would generate even more road usage.

Mr. Chouinard advised that the Senator Bell property was on the market and is 120 acres asking 2.2 million. Chairman Myette explained that the impact of a subdivision there, would not impact the roads the way this one would.

Ms. Munson asked if the 1.5 million dollar bond amount was modifiable at the meeting and what could be done if a lower number were more palatable. Chairman Myette advised that the developer was not going to come down on his asking price because he has been tied up in this for a couple of years now but is willing to discuss possible land swaps. If the 1.5 million bond did not pass and a lower number were arrived at, at Town Meeting, then they would need to go to land banks and donations. Mr. Chouinard stated that the market won't stay high forever and Conservation could turn its efforts and resources elsewhere, at another time, if this didn't pass. Ms. Munson reminded that it depended upon what properties may slip by.

### **Pulpit Rock Road**

Chairman Myette advised that Mr. MacLean had expressed interest in the sale of his 100 or so acres on Pulpit Rock Road.

### **Fremont Road**

#### **B. Treasurer's Report**

Chairman Myette reported that the Budget was \$800 with \$594.25 spent and \$205.75 remaining. \$388 was spent on seminars and dues of which \$400 was budgeted. \$200 was spent on the Exeter River Watershed of which \$50 was budgeted. \$100 remained for Administrative Salaries and \$100 for Miscellaneous with no bill yet received from Southeast Land Trust, projected to be \$50.

Chairman Myette reported that as of April 1, 2018 the Conservation account had a balance of \$56,977.92 with \$640,000 in certificate of deposit. The Forestry account had a balance of \$40,377.73 with some revenues expected from timbering. Funds remain on account for Lincoln Lane in the amount of \$3,000 for construction of a bridge in that development if someone wants to reach out to them.

***Mr. Chouinard motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report, as stated. Mrs. Ragsdale seconded his motion, with all in favor, so moved.***

#### **C. Planning Board (Chuck)**

Chairman Myette stated that there was nothing new to report. There were a couple of projects, easements that were talked about. There is a draft of a proposed easement for Crowley Woods.

#### **D. Trails (Aaron) – Tabled**

#### **E. Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee (Chuck)**

Chairman Myette advised that the Committee had been meeting about twice a month now and put together an RFP for haying and rental of the high tunnel. The house may be used for a museum or meeting center.

**F. Agricultural Commission (Chuck)**

Chairman Myette advised the Cindy LeBlanc will be putting on a Foodscaping course at the Farm the second Saturday in June, which involves landscaping with vegetables and shapes and designs.

Chairman Myette advised that the Commission probably will not have a return of the booth at the town fair where they brought animals in the past because people were feeding them and wondered whether Conservation should put together an information booth as they had done in the past. Mrs. Ragsdale asked when the fair would be and it was determined to be September 8<sup>th</sup>.

**G. Regulations**

**H. Grants – Trails Grant**

**I. Wason Pond Conservation Area (Chuck)**

Chairman Myette advised that the Commission was in need of a member from Conservation. Mrs. Ragsdale stated that she would be willing to serve.

Ms. Munson asked if the group managed the Community Center building. Chairman Myette advised that it was a town owned building and was managed by the town.

Mrs. Ragsdale reported that she attended the Pounder on Saturday and also a walking group that meets on Mondays at 10 am.

Chairman Myette suggested that photos could be submitted by anyone who comes across something interesting. Ms. Snyder stated that it was a nice property. Mr. Chouinard stated that three towns had pooled their funds to place marker posts. Chairman Myette advised that there have been Scout projects that included trail markers and a kiosk near the bridge identifying flora and fauna.

Ms. Munson stated that she had attended a class on how to make bat houses and would like to get some more out at Wason Pond.

**a. Security System**

**b. Barn repair**

Chairman Myette advised that the Commission will be finishing the barn and will need help from volunteers as the inmates will likely not be back for that. A notice will be going out.

**c. CIP Gazebo/Pavilion**

Chairman Myette explained to Mr. Chouinard about the assistance the Timber Framers Guild had provided in constructing the Covered Bridge and hoped that they would help with the pavilion project next year as a community education project. Chairman Myette explained how when the covered bridge was built the Guild was pleased with the number of volunteers who turned out and how the bridge was built on trestle and rolled into place with large rollers and a cumalong with helpers of every age turning to move the bridge into place.

**J. Easements, Monitoring & Stewardship (RCCD)**

Chairman Myette reported that areas such as Wason Pond, Spring Hill Farm and Dolloff Farm will be coming up for monitoring.

**PLAN REVIEWS**

**MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

**Fish & Game**

Ms. Snyder reported that she attended an informational seminar put together with Fish & Game, the DOT & NH DES concerning wildlife corridors and spoke about potential funding that came about from SB 376 for wetlands and culverts and protecting the Blanding's Turtle species.

Ms. Munson reported that she had been in touch with a wildlife biologist at Fish & Game concerning evidence of rabbits on her property and learned that there were grants available to landowners with 26 or more acres to replenish their numbers. Chairman Myette stated that might be something they could get for the farm. Ms. Munson went over some of the incentives which included funds for pruning trees, clearing brush and maintaining grasslands. The grants were limited to \$4,000 per property per year up to \$10,000 in a ten-year period and they will also come out and meet with your town to talk.

Chairman Myette suggested making a list of available grants that are out there and discussing them at one of the next meetings. Ms. Munson stated that L-Chip was in their cycle but you have to attend the meeting.

**Age Friendly Lecture**

Ms. Munson reported that the lecture she originally spoke of was changed to Saturday May 19, at 1 pm.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Chouinard motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 pm. Mrs. Ragsdale seconded his motion, with all in favor, so moved.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Hoijer,

Recording Secretary