

**Town of Chester  
Conservation Commission  
March 12, 2019  
7:00 PM  
Approved Minutes**

**Present:**

Chairman Chuck Myette  
Deb Munson  
Kristina Snyder  
Victor Chouinard  
Aaron Hume  
Kathleen Neff Ragsdale  
Ted Broadwater

**Absent:**

Selectmen Liaison Stephen Landau  
Baron Richardson

**Guests:** Alex Greer, Nicholas Palmquist, Bill Gregsak and Mr. Zahorik

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Myette called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. Chairman Myette directed that the active alternates would be Kristina Snyder and Victor Chouinard.

**New Business**

1. Boy Scouts – Alex Greer, Nicholas Palmquist

Mr. Greer and Mr. Palmquist, members of the Boy Scouts, introduced themselves and informed the Board they were looking to earn their Citizens' badges. The requirement is to attend a meeting of a Town, choose an issue discussed in that meeting and communicate to the counselor why you agree or disagree with the opinions discussed.

Chairman Myette gave the Scouts a history of the Conservation Commission and some of the things it does, such as helping the Town protect environmental resources, forestry management, properties that need protection, easements, keeping property in its natural state, wetlands, farming and agriculture. Chairman Myette advised the Town held 40 or so easements and Conservation looks at wildlife areas, habitats and works with Planning Board regarding subdivisions, runoff into brooks and streams and are responsible for guidance with issues concerning those type of properties with the Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustment. The Board members went around the table and introduces themselves and indicated their backgrounds.

Chairman Myette gave the Scouts a brief history of the Gardner Road donation which was specifically used by the Scouts for camping. Mr. Broadwater noted it has a stone bridge and there is a monument out there.

Chairman Myette noted Pinkerton Academy had a natural area with a trail system which included bridges and the rare Atlantic White Cedar Swamp area at Forsaith Forest.

2. Buffers UNH Grad Student Mr. Zahorik

Mr. Zahorik advised he is a grad-student at UNH and is conducting a survey concerning flood risk and wetlands and is doing 30-40 interviews with varying Towns, Conservation and Town Planners which he started with the Seacoast. He has a consent form and can't include the entire Board. Chairman Myette asked Mr. Zahorik to stay at the end of the meeting and do the survey with him.

3. Transforming Conservation Properties – Agricultural Possibilities Workshop – April 16, 2019 Brentwood Community Center

Chairman Myette advised there would be a workshop on April 16, 2019 at the Brentwood Community Center and will speak to the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee to see if someone could go.

4. BioBlitz – UNH Extension

Mrs. Neff-Ragsdale explained what the BioBlitz was and how a community would get involved with a group of people coming together on a property to identify species and plants. Ms. Munson will follow up.

**Old Business**

1. Review minutes (February 22, 2019)

***Ms. Snyder motioned to accept the February 22, 2019 minutes, as written. Ms. Munson seconded the motion, Mrs. Neff-Ragsdale and Mr. Broadwater abstained, approved 5-0, so moved.***

2. Treasurer's Report, Bills, Budget

Chairman Myette advised the budget of \$703 had \$601.20 spent with a balance of \$101.80 remaining.

Chairman Myette advised the following balances, with no new bills except for a potential donation to the American Forest Foundation which is not budgeted. Ms. Munson advised they are the agency concerning tree farms.

Conservation Fund Savings	\$ 75,760.67
Forestry	\$ 40,681.78
Lincoln Lane	\$ 3,000.00
Emerson	\$ 10,089.92
CD	\$709,678.44

**Ms. Munson moved to accept the Treasurer's Report as stated. Mrs. Neff-Ragsdale seconded the motion, with all in favor, so moved.**

**Mr. Broadwater motioned to donate \$25 to American Forest Foundation. Ms. Munson seconded the motion, with all in favor, so moved.**

3. Subcommittee reports

A. Strategic Land Protection Committee -SLPC

Pulpit Rock Road – on hold

Raymond Road – ongoing

B. Planning Board (Chuck)

Cedar View Estates wetland flagging

Chairman Myette advised that the developers of Cedar View had started cutting and there was concern that no flagging was done. Mr. Chouinard agreed to go out and survey the property before this weekend. Chairman Myette advised there is a map in the packet and to email the Planning Board Coordinator, Mr. Hadik if he needs anything further. Chairman Myette noted as an example, all vernal pools and large brooks should have a visible, obvious flag.

C. Trails (Aaron) mapping

Chairman Myette provided a history of the mapping Mr. Hume had done thus far which included ten or so maps with the intention of adding notes concerning interests such as waterfalls and putting up trail markers. Chairman Myette noted the Norton Cemetery had been marked by the Boy Scouts as a project and is off Lane Road. Mr. Hume stated he has been marked the private properties with numbered addresses. Chairman Myette advised he could go on the Town webpage through the Assessor. Mr. Hume emailed Mr. Hadik some mobile data. Ms. Munson noted Chester was one of the only Towns who were not digitized. Mr. Hume explained how he was able to utilize an exercise app to help map the trails.

D. Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee (Chuck)

Chairman Myette gave a brief history for the benefit of the Scouts concerning the 400 acres donated by a school teacher, Ms. Church which the Advisory Committee is trying to rent the high tunnel which is a greenhouse structure and get RFPs for haying the fields. The Committee had its first Fall Festival last year with hay wagon rides.

F. Agricultural Commission (Chuck) - Tabled

G. Regulations - Tabled

H. Grants – Trails Grant - Tabled

I Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Commission

a. Security and Access

b. Barn Repair

c. CIP Gazebo/Pavilion

Chairman Myette noted the Pavilion would be a community project with the Timber Framers.

J. Easements, Monitoring and Stewardship (RCCD) – Review List of Easements

Chairman Myette advised Rockingham will do 4-5 of the easements this year and Emerson could be added. Mr. Chouinard will go through and considering monitoring. Chairman Myette gave some sample violations such as building or development and ATV use.

Mr. Chouinard asked about the Lincoln Lane bridge and the Student Volunteers. He is typing a letter to contact them and got the map and easement but is having trouble finding access areas. Chairman Myette pointed out the right of way and explained it is part of the open space subdivision, 50% can't be developed along the headwater of the Exeter River tributary. The proposed bridge would provide access to the small wetland area behind. Mr. Chouinard will take a ride down and get contact information for the Association. Mrs. Neff-Ragsdale clarified the Commission held \$3,000 for the bridge materials. Mr. Broadwater requested if it was public access or if just for the benefit of the homeowners whom he understood each owned 1/10<sup>th</sup> interest. Chairman Myette will get that information. Ms. Munson agreed that SCA will want to know whose property. Mr. Chouinard noted there will not likely be a lot of walkers out there as it is mostly wetland.

**Plan Reviews**

1. Richard Smith, Town Farm Road

Mr. Gregsak presented on behalf of Mr. Smith that he was here about the Dolloff conservation easement. Mr. Gregsak presented the history of the property which has been a farmland and dairy farm. The property has a limited amount of land it is allowed to clear, and the owner wants to erect a three-sided pole barn for the storage of hay. The owner has been to see the Building Inspector concerning the access from Town Farm Road which is 50' wide and in the 25' setback 18' to 20'. Ms. Munson asked what type of equipment would use the access and whether the barn would be visible to other homes along the road. Mr. Gregsak advised the structure would include a driveway access used by farm equipment to get to the pole barn to store and remove hay as needed and would likely be visible to the other homes and it could be required to be accessible to fire equipment.

Chairman Myette asked Mr. Gregsak if he had been before the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Mr. Gregsak informed the Board that he has not applied to the ZBA for a variance yet so he can get the driveway permit and wanted to get a recommendation from Conservation first. Mr. Gregsak surveyed the property and there will be a wetland crossing. One way to go without a variance would be to go to DES for dredge and fill. Chairman Myette advised he would like to see minimal impact to the wetland.

Chairman Myette asked Mr. Gregsak about the acreage that has been cut. Mr. Gregsak advised that less than 15 acres have been cut so far and the owner wants to open up 3 more.

Chairman Myette asked if there were any existing wetlands violations on the property and will check the file to make sure it is in compliance.

Chairman Myette asked if there would be electricity or water supplied to the barn, or livestock. Mr. Broadwater asked if the easement covered access? Mr. Gregsak stated there was not going to be water or electricity use and the easement does not say where access is allowed from. The easement allows for the pole barn, the structure will be 24'x48.' Mr. Broadwater advised the easement may need its language amended. Mr. Chouinard clarified the total impact would be 800 sf? Or 20x40? Would there be any risk that the access road will runoff into the wetlands? Mr. Gregsak advised the slope would be 5-6% (showing on map). Chairman Myette asked how the culvert would be engineered. Mr. Gregsak advised it would be a concrete bridge. Chairman Myette advised the buffers need to be maintained whether or not the allowed acreage is cut. Mr. Broadwater stated he preferred to use the existing access. Ms. Munson asked if the culvert would have a natural bottom. Mr. Gregsak advised it would be a concrete/plank bridge. Mrs. Neff-Ragsdale added that the owner doesn't need their blessing for the structure or field clearance. Mr. Gregsak stated he is asking for a recommendation and prefer not to have to do dredge and fill.

Ms. Munson reviewed the map and advised the distance was much longer and asked about the frequency of travel. Mr. Gregsak stated the building could move. Chairman Myette asked if the owner had been before the Planning Board. Mr. Gregsak answered just for the driveway to be a structure he would need a driveway permit and go through the road agent for that.

Chairman Myette advised he would need to come back after the ZBA.

### **Miscellaneous Business**

1. Next meeting: April 9, 2019
2. Wetland Mitigation Workshop – March 11, 2019 UNH Manchester (r Munson)

Ms. Munson advised that Conservation could compile a priority list especially property developed near wetlands. Some Towns would get a penalty for violations which would allow Towns to invest in a comparable piece of property also in need of protection. There is a new mapping tool when bridges are not compliant. Mrs. Neff-Ragsdale asked if there were any in Chester. Ms. Munson advised Halls Village and Webster Lane should be discussed with the Road Agent. Chairman Myette will reach out to the Road Agent to see if he can attend the next meeting.

3. Bear Presentation (Kristina)

Ms. Snyder reminded the Bear Presentation will take place on Friday, April 12, 2019 at the Multi-Purpose Room at 7:00 pm with refreshments at 6:30 pm. Ms. Snyder showed

the flyer she prepared and explained to the Scouts about the raffle for the large stuffed bear.

Mr. Broadwater asked about sharing information with the School and Library. Ms. Snyder will attend to that and advertise in the Union Leader and it will be promoted at the Small Business Fair and on Facebook and Front Porch Chatter. Mr. Broadwater commented the Coyote project had a great turnout. Ms. Snyder added the Bear presentation would be kid-friendly. Another presentation could be on the Bobcat.

4. Coyote Pup Bill (HB442) (Kristina)

Ms. Snyder advised that Voice of Wildlife, a non-profit is endorsing HB442 for March 20<sup>th</sup> which would provide a five-month reprieve of hunting coyotes while in the pup raising stages. The NHACC has endorsed and if the Commission were to likewise endorse the bill, they would do so by vote and their names would be added to the list. Chairman Myette stated the Commission does not usually endorse other groups or get involved in politics of any kind, however from what they learned at the Coyote Presentation the pressures from hunting cause the coyotes to breed more often. Mr. Broadwater added a lot of hunters have their eye on eradication rather than control and the coyotes serve a purpose by promoting a healthier ecosystem. Ms. Munson added that coyote parents teach their pups behavior which is vital such as avoiding humans. Mrs. Neff-Ragsdale asked if the Commission wanted to make an endorsement and strongly supports the bill.

**Ms. Munson motioned to support the bill. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion, with all in favor, so moved.**

5. Appointments of Members

Chairman Myette advised that Phil Cassista notified him he has no time to serve on the Commission any longer and also Baron Richardson, so there are two slots open for full members if Mr. Chouinard and Ms. Snyder want to step up.

**Mrs. Neff-Ragsdale motioned to appoint Victor Chouinard and Ms. Snyder as full members of the Conservation Commission to fill out the remainder of the terms of Mr. Cassista and Mr. Richardson. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion, with five voting in favor, and none opposed, so moved.**

**Adjournment**

Mrs. Neff-Ragsdale motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion, with all in favor, so moved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Hoijer  
Recording Secretary