

**Town of Chester
Conservation Commission
June 13, 2017
Approved Minutes**

Attendance

Aaron Hume
Deb Munson
Ted Broadwater
Selectman Liaison Dick Trask

Absent

Chairman Chuck Myette
Phil Cassista
Baron Richardson

Guest(s)

Selectman Jeremy Owens, SLPC Liaison

Call to Order

Acting Chairman Broadwater called the meeting of the Chester Conservation Commission to order at 7:05 pm on Tuesday, June 13, 2017.

Acting Chairman Broadwater welcomed and introduced Selectman Jeremy Owens who is the Selectman Liaison for the Strategic Land Protection Committee (SLPC).

Old Business

1. Warrant Article for Current Use Funds (Town Meeting)

There was a Public Hearing on April 20, 2017 concerning the Warrant Article proposed for Town Meeting to establish the LUCT Fund, which was defeated.

2. Review Minutes (May 9, 2017)

Ms. Munson motioned to accept the Minutes dated May 9, 2017, as written. Mr. Hume seconded her motion, with 3 in favor, so moved.

3. Wason Pond Bridges (Repair)

Selectman Trask explained that there are three (3) areas of concern with both the covered bridge (where boards have been kicked out) and rotting issues requiring repair at other locations adjacent inlets.

Selectman Trask continued that there is a lot of overlapping grey area concerning which commission is responsible for coordinating the repairs and funding the repairs. The Wason Pond Commission has no funding allocated for such repairs in this year's budget, which is probably why it's being addressed here. Acting Chairman Broadwater recommended tabling a vote until a cost estimate is provided and Chairman Myette is available to consult with, which was agreed to by all those present.

Selectman Trask recommended a joint repair schedule, pooling volunteers from both commissions and suggests working with Dick Lewis who may be able to provide the lumber.

4. Tanglewood, Crowley Road Subdivision

Selectman Trask suggested, considering the distance from this subdivision to the two popular ballfields in town, what about working with the developers to put in ballfields there?

Acting Chairman Broadwater agreed that Tanglewood subdivision is quite a distance from Wason Pond and the school. They are providing funding to Candia to build roads, and Mike Oleson agreed to take care of those roads. Selectman Owens questioned this as he is "spread pretty thin." Ms. Munson explained that the Planning Board meeting is coming up and Candia is fighting it pretty hard. The subdivision is in Chester but has no access roads in Chester, those are in Candia. Selectman Trask explained that the new RSA requires meeting and regional impact statistics, how much traffic will be generated, etc. Ms. Munson added travel down Candia Road, additional bus routes. Acting Chairman Broadwater asked if there was anything they could ask for to cut down those costs/trips, conservation doesn't set policy but can suggest.

5. Treasurer's Report (Chuck) TABLED

6. Subcommittee Reports

A. Strategic Protection Committee – SLPC

Acting Chairman Broadwater reported that under consideration were Alex Davis off Ledge Road and 102 and a 20-acre piece, Harantis Lake, with Chairman Myette driving those. The Turnpike piece (owner preferring to remain anonymous) has a letter of intent signed by him, with a survey company engaged, with quote from them, for first week of July. The lot-line adjustment is to bring a 14 and 16 acre parcel together. The owner is only looking for support on his legal fees and survey cost.

Selectman Owens asked if SLPC are all purchases for conservation, or any reason? Acting Chairman Broadwater clarified that purchases are to put parcels into conservation, not changing ownership. "We have funded bridge repairs, trail mapping, the AG Commission."

Selectman Trask asked how the upkeep on Conservation structures and properties were handled. Acting Chairman Broadwater explained that they utilize the RCC who run the policing of the conservation lands. "We hire them to do walks of the different parcels on a yearly basis."

Selectman Trask asked if there was any purchasing of properties for town use at all. Acting

Chairman Broadwater responded that he did not know of any. Selectman Trask understood that a warrant article established two purposes, conservation easement and to purchase land for the town for other uses. Ms. Munson clarified that having an easement on it doesn't necessarily preclude it from public use. Selectman Trask, as an example, asked about the Fire Department trying to do cisterns for water. "We can't do that if there's a conservation easement, I assume the land use committee becomes involved."

The SLPC should be looking to purchase those kinds of things according to the warrant article. If we wanted to build a cistern, the SLPC would coordinate that. Ms. Munson asked "When was that set up?" Selectman Trask responded in the 1990s when building was up. Ms. Munson continued "That is probably something that needs to get on the map, there is a building boom."

Acting Chairman Broadwater explained that we were suggesting that they look at community projects like that, high impact subdivisions, put a chunk into conservation that is an unbuildable area.

B. Planning Board

C. Trails (Aaron)

Mr. Hume reported that he is done mapping and next up will be activating the 60-day free trial. Then, it's considering whether they will want to continue to license the contract to make edits and revisions in the future at \$1,275 initially and \$400 maintenance fee. Selectman Trask cited that with building going on, future use looks imminent. "Doing an easement is one thing, having a mapped easement the taxpayers can enjoy is even better." Ms. Munson suggested contacting the *Trailfinder* group for assistance. They had an expert listed in the Tri-Town. Selectman Trask suggested that he could also call some surrounding towns, such as Raymond and Sandown, share costs in a joint function. Mr. Hume agreed that it was his understanding that the cost is cut by adding more users. Acting Chairman Broadwater asked what app Mr. Hume had been using. Mr. Hume responded that he was using an exercise app and Google Earth.

D. Springhill Farm (Chuck) - Tabled

E. Agricultural Commission (Chuck)

Selectman Trask reported that the Agricultural Commission was busy getting ready for the Town Fair in September and had discussions about signs and the Building Inspector's enforcement of the sign ordinance for the first time in roughly 25 years. Acting Chairman Broadwater asked if some were grandfathered in. Selectman Trask responded that "Lack of enforcement doesn't a waiver make." Selectman Owens added that a lot of them were moving the signs back. Selectman Trask continued that a lot of farmers are upset, they are getting together with the Planning Board to rewrite those regulations, explaining the Durham court decisions "If you have to read the sign to determine if it complies then it's unconstitutional." Ms. Munson clarified "all signs have to be treated equally."

F. Regulations

None

G. Grants – Trails grant

H. Wason Pond Conservation area (Chuck)

Selectman Trask reported that there were Eagle Scout projects completed recently, horseshoe pits and benches. The Scouts had come to the BOS meeting recently.

Selectman Trask reported that the county workers are fixing the barn roof on the 14th of August, it will be asphalt. There are some bags of concrete to be cleaned up from repair of the dam.

I. Easements, Monitoring, and Stewardship

Acting Chairman Broadwater reviewed easements at the start of the meeting, continuing with Monitoring. Mr. Myette has a spreadsheet delegated to RCCD (Rockingham County Conservation District). **Rockinghamccd.org**. Selectman Trask asked what are the criteria? What are you looking to accept and stay away from? Ms. Munson responded that “We've talked about having that talk, but haven't.” Acting Chairman Broadwater stated that now we're looking at three. There is a vetting process, there's an assessment process as well, but there isn't a glut of people coming to us right now. Selectman Owens asked about seeking easements. Mr. Broadwater continued that many don't know the possibility exists. Selectman Trask suggested an outreach program may be in order. Ms. Munson added, “and something that outlines was the benefit is to the taxpayer/donor.” Mr. Broadwater continued that RSA dictates minimum acreage, want to say 10, past that don't think we're in the business of saying no. Ms. Munson added that “We do look at whether there is an adjacent property.”

Selectman Trask asked if there were top priorities and what criteria is for prioritizing them? Selectman Trask also inquired about the annual monitoring costs. Acting Chairman Broadwater will find that out for him. Ms. Munson added that “We have full surveys initially and then maintenance.” Selectman Trask asked about cost is per acre or for all your properties? Acting Chairman Broadwater responded that he believes it's per acre but will find out. Selectman Owens asked if maintenance included inspecting bridges? One of the things they do is look at easement language compared to usage. Selectman Owens stated that for example if someone is riding horses on this guys' easement, that doesn't want horses. Ms. Munson continued that they would flag it and bring it to us and we would take it to the code enforcement officer. Ms. Munson explained that if we had more volunteers, the state cooperative extension holds training and the land protection agencies offer training to people to learn how to do it. Ms. Munson attended an L-Chip seminar a couple of weeks ago and they spoke on different methods of monitoring, they have a pretty concrete way of doing that, get forms and examples from them, if we had the manpower they would provide help with training. “You need to have spotless record keeping, detailing what's required and conversations with landowners.” Selectman Trask asked if they were the only game in town? Ms. Munson explained that there are other private individuals and other land conservation groups, it just so happens that RCCD has been doing it for us. Selectman Trask asked if they were a government entity or a non-profit. Acting Chairman Broadwater stated that will

find out.

Selectman Trask asked if any of the members of Conservation were serving on other boards or committees. Mr. Broadwater said that he had an interest in Wason and Recreation, Mr. Hume is also serving on the Planning Board, Ms. Munson is a Library Trustee as well as Southern New Hampshire Planning together with Janet Boyden.

Selectman Trask summarized the 4A project and its traffic impact concerns. "Before you double traffic on a road that's already on the governor's red-list for accidents."

7. Plan Reviews (3)

8. Miscellaneous Business

Beaver trapping.

Selectman Trask reported that they had busted up the dam, there was some trapping on Norton pond, but no updates.

9. Webpage

Ms. Munson had volunteered to go through our historical records and put them on the webpage. Selectman Owens asked "what would those be?" Ms. Munson responded "Copies of easements, minutes, trail maps, projects, cooperative stuff." Selectman Trask asked if she had them all compiled? Selectman Owens asked if they were electronically anywhere? Ms. Munson responded that they were kind of disbursed among people, we're all newbies. Ms. Munson has been on for two and half years, Mr. Hume since September and Mr. Broadwater two months before that.

The next meeting of the Conservation Commission will be July 11, 2017.

10. Adjournment

Selectman Trask motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hume seconded his motion, all in favor, the meeting of the Conservation Commission was adjourned at 8 pm on Tuesday, June 13, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Hoijer,
Recording Secretary