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

Present:

Chairman Victor Chouinard
Kristina Snyder
Kathleen Neff Ragsdale
Ted Broadwater
Aaron Hume
Selectman Chuck Myette, Liaison
Rick Sibley, Alternate

Absent:

Deb Munson
Baron Richardson

Guests:

Vicki Brown, East Kingston Conservation Commission
Evelyn Nathan, Kingston Conservation Commission
Elizabeth Mello, Kingston Conservation Commission
Jeff Porter, Auburn Conservation Commission
Michelle Trask, Chester Recreation Commission
Kevin C. Scott, ZBA Vice-Chair

Call to Order:

Chairman Chouinard called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Pollinator Pathways: Vickie Brown

Ms. Brown invited the Chester Conservation Commission to become a member of Pollinator Pathways and join with East Kingston, Kingston, and other communities to work and educate the public with events and articles and a collaboration of ideas to preserve and promote conservation of the resources pollinators need to survive.

As part of her presentation of her efforts to connect local communities to pollinator species with the habitats they need to survive, Ms. Brown provided a flyer with resources and links to the home page, newsletters, events, and Facebook page [@KingstonConservationCommission](#)

www.kinstonnh.org/conservationcommission/pages/pollinator-pathways

[/blogs](#), [/events](#)

41 Membership would include a monthly newsletter, photo library, pdfs of handouts, access to
42 programs and talks, exhibits and display materials and connection with the online presence and
43 a seed exchange program.

44 Ms. Brown first answered the question: *What is a pollinator?*

45 Pollinators can be honeybees, butterflies, moths, wasps, beetles, hummingbirds, and certain
46 varieties of flies and even species of bats as well as incidental pollinators such as ants. There
47 are 80 species of butterflies, 2200 species of moths and 300 species of natural (non-introduced)
48 bees in New Hampshire. Ms. Brown noted tickets could be reserved now for the December 4th
49 movie on honeybees.

50 Ms. Brown noted it is important for their continued existence to provide a habitat for them that
51 restores their water, food, and landscape. The loss of marshlands causes a loss of birds.
52 There is a 1:1 relationship between certain plants and insects. Monarch butterflies lay their
53 eggs on milkweed and prefer the baby milkweed plants. Her motto "1 yard at a time" promotes
54 planting of native pollinator plants and preserving meadows.

55 Chair Chouinard asked what a reasonable sized plot would be to attract pollinators to a
56 homeowner's backyard? Ms. Brown noted a 3'x3' or 3'x4' plot would be suitable or even a 4'x4'
57 plot such as they use at UNH.

58 Ms. Brown spoke briefly about spraying responsibly, our kids, ourselves, their play areas, and
59 schools. However, even spraying doesn't ensure you won't have ticks or mosquitos. Ask UNH
60 is a great resource for more information and can be reached by email or M-F from 9-2.

61 Selectman Myette asked if there were a toolkit an average farmer might use to get started or
62 something the Commission might look for when they are monitoring conservation areas? Ms.
63 Brown recommended reaching out to Kathy Niel at UNH who has 25 years of research and the
64 seed exchange is a good start for that toolkit. Ms. Brown noted lawn monocultures do not
65 support any wildlife at all. Ms. Brown recommended also contacting Greg Jordan the County
66 Forester about managing invasive species.

67 Ms. Brown concluded her presentation indicating that if the Commission decided to join they
68 would ask them to appoint a Liaison.

69 ***Mr. Broadwater motioned to have the Chester Conservation Commission join Pollinator***
70 ***Pathways at no charge. Mrs. Neff Ragsdale seconded the motion, with all in favor, the***
71 ***motion passed 7-0-0.***

72 2. Chester Recreation – Fitness Trail (Michelle Trask)

73 Chair Chouinard referenced an email which was received by the Board on November 12th from
74 Recreation Coordinator Reishus. Mrs. Reishus indicated she spoke with the former Chair and
75 also the Chair of the Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Commission regarding putting a
76 fitness trail on Conservation property.

77 Mrs. Reishus noted originally RC was hopeful the Fitness Trail could be placed at Wason Pond
78 Conservation & Recreation Area and given the restrictions had discussions which included
79 Spring Hill Farm or the Gladys Nicols Nature Trail. The Nature Trail location was supported by
80 the Athletics' Director at Chester Academy and Mrs. Nichol's grandson who noted she was a
81 gym teacher and loved nature. Mrs. Reishus indicated the Fitness Trail would also benefit the

82 parents who attend practices for their children who could use the Fitness Trail to enjoy the
83 nature, stay active and healthy without leaving the area.

84 Mrs. Reishus noted the Fitness Trail had been included in the CIP Table 10 in 2017 and was
85 recently removed by the Planning Board because the location was not fully vetted or approved.
86 The PB will be voting on the CIP at their November 20, 2019 meeting. Recreation intends to
87 ask the BOS to reconsider removal of the Fitness Trail from the CIP but before doing that
88 wanted to have CC approval for the proposed location. The project is 100% funded by Impact
89 Fees and no taxpayer dollars. A copy of the project design was provided to the Conservation
90 Commission members which showed equipment at different stations off the trails.

91 Recreation Commission Chair Michelle Trask appeared on behalf of Recreation to discuss the
92 proposed location of the Fitness Trail. Selectman Myette explained that Conservation
93 properties and easements have restrictions which do not support cutting or clearing trees for or
94 the placement of structures. Wason Pond was a unique conservation easement in that the
95 recreation areas were set forth in the easement prior to it being put into place. Anything not
96 allowed specifically in the easement would have to be taken before the RCCD for approval.

97 Selectman Myette recommended the Nicols trail could be used as a connector trail for warm-
98 ups to lead up to the town-owned property perhaps where the children have sports practices
99 and with approval of the BOS might be a suitable location. Spring Hill Farm has an easement on
100 it which promotes agricultural use, although it does have some recreational trails structures
101 such as these would not likely be allowed. Selectman Myette advised the RC should be
102 prepared to answer questions such as who will use it, who will maintain it.

103 **OLD BUSINESS**

104 2. Review Minutes – October 8, 2019

105 Line 247 was amended to read “Fishers” not “Fisher Cats.”

106 ***Mr. Hume motioned to accept the October 8, 2019 minutes as amended. Ms. Snyder***
107 ***seconded the motion. Selectman Myette and Mr. Sibley abstained due to absence from***
108 ***that meeting. Approved 5-0-2.***

109 3. Subcommittee reports

110 A. Strategic Land Protection Committee – SLPC

- 111 1. Knapp
- 112 2. Pipit Estates
- 113 3. Jackson
- 114 4. Anderson

115

116 Non-Public Session under 91:A:3(II)(c)(d) Reputation of persons other than a board member
117 and consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property which, if
118 discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those
119 of the general community.

120 ***By Roll Call, Mrs. Neff Ragsdale motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-***
121 ***A:3(II)(c)(d) consideration of acquisition of real estate and reputation of persons other***
122 ***than a board member. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. Voting were: Neff***

123 **Ragsdale – aye, Broadwater – aye, Chouinard – aye, Snyder – aye, Sibley – aye, Hume –**
124 **aye, Myette – aye. Approved 7-0-0, so moved.**

125 The meeting room was closed to the public at 9:05 PM.

126 The meeting room reopened to the public at 9:41 PM.

127 **Mrs. Neff Ragsdale motioned to seal the minutes of the non-public session indefinitely.**
128 **Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion, with all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.**

129 B. Treasurer’s Report & FY20/21 Budget Discussion – (Mrs. Neff Ragsdale)

130

131 Mrs. Neff Ragsdale reported:

132

133 CD Account \$661,137.88

134 Interest + 558.29

135 Other CR + 9,589.47

136 Loranger - 230,680.55

137

138 Balance \$440,046.80

139

140 Mrs. Neff Ragsdale reported she was not provided with balance sheets for the savings account.

141 Chair Chouinard will check with Finance as to why these reports were not provided.

142

143 Forestry \$ 40,973.16

144 Interest 34.25

145 Total \$ 41,007.41

146

147 Lincoln

148 Lane \$ 3,072.34

149 Interest 2.56

150 Total \$ 3,074.90

151

152 Emerson \$ 10,162.19

153 Interest 8.49

154 Total \$ 10,170.68

155

156 \$954 FY 2019 Operating Budget

157 \$325 spent

158 \$450.90 remaining

159

160 Mrs. Neff Ragsdale noted the FY2020 Operating Budget of \$1,200 was approved by the Board
161 of Selectmen and will go to the Budget Committee next before the Town’s budget is voted on by
162 the public in March.

163

164 **Chair Chouinard motioned to approve the Treasurer’s Report, incomplete as to savings,**
165 **as stated. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion, with all in favor, so moved.**

166

167 C. Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee (Ms. Snyder)

168 Ms. Snyder reported on the last meeting and indicated they reviewed the Fall Festival which had
169 a good turnout and issues with parking and use of the house which is not occupied. Trees,
170 which were identified as maples, located in the front of the property, appear dead and need to
171 be removed. The tenant who was renting land for cattle grazing has moved on. One of the
172 difficulties with grazing animals is the lack of shelters. Selectman Myette noted a one-year
173 lease is not conducive to farming.

174

175 Ms. Snyder noted the maple syrup operation on Lane Road is renewed and doing well.

176

177 Mrs. Neff Ragsdale asked about other uses for the house and Ms. Snyder noted it could be a
178 museum with upgrades for ADA compliance. Mr. Broadwater noted the Town does not want to
179 be a landlord. Meetings could be a possibility. Selectman Myette advised Ms. Church's wishes
180 were that it be a working farm and open space without burden to the Town.

181

182 Mr. Sibley asked about trade schools and Selectman Myette noted they had discussions with
183 Pinkerton before, but transport was an issue.

184

185 D. Agricultural Commission (Kathy)

186 Mrs. Neff Ragsdale noted sadly interest has dwindled with only three members including herself
187 at the previous meeting. Mrs. LeBlanc is making every effort to not have the Commission
188 dissolve and she has emailed and not got a response yet.

189 E. Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Commission (Kathy, Kristina)

190 Beavers – Ms. Snyder reported no issues with the beavers.

191 Parking – the Road Agent finished the community center lot but there is a pile of
192 removed debris that needs to be relocated on site. The BOS is discussing
193 permits which could be an all use sticker issued by the Clerk which would
194 include the conservation areas and transfer station.

195

196 Pavilion – Selectman Myette noted the contract was pending with Ms. Spence and
197 hoped work would begin in late summer or fall next year after the list of
198 materials and design are finalized.

199

200 Restrooms/Porta Johns – the portables have been removed for the season. There may
201 be grant funds available for a restroom.

202

203 ADA Ramp – the ADA ramp at the Community Center is on hold.

204 Pounder – Mr. Broadwater indicated this is the last year for the Pounder.

205 Projects – Selectman Myette urged the members to consider any projects they might like
206 to see brought forward with WC&RC.

207

208 F. Easements, Monitoring & Stewardship

209 Ms. Hoijer will follow-up on the Pipit Estates easement to see if the plan has been recorded.
210 The Commission is in receipt of the easement to record and the bank has signed off on it.

211 At the last meeting Chair Chouinard noted he would like to contact someone to get baseline
212 monitoring on the new parcels and the Board indicated they would like to do two of the
213 easement monitorings themselves to get Lincoln Lane squared away since they are holding
214 money for the bridge and Webster Lane who came in earlier this year about building access to a
215 day barn. Chair Chouinard would like to send out a notice to landowners concerning the
216 easement behind their homes on Lincoln Lane. Conservation has no record of a homeowner's
217 association and would like the owners to be aware of the easement.

218 Chair Chouinard has an estimate from RCCD for the Scott and Wilson properties for \$583 and
219 noted they are not accepting anymore easements for monitoring.

220 ***Mr. Broadwater motioned to accept the estimate of \$583 from RCCD for monitoring of the***
221 ***Scott Root Farm and Wilson parcels. Mrs. Neff Ragsdale seconded the motion, with all in***
222 ***favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.***

223 G. Trails (Mr. Hume)

224 Mr. Hume reported he reached out and connected with surrounding Towns. Mr. Butler from
225 Sandown may want to get together with Conservation to discuss helping to show the trail
226 system.

227 Jeffrey Porter, the Conservation Commission Chair from Auburn NH was present and
228 introduced himself and discussed a little of what his Commission does. Mr. Porter indicated
229 most of Auburn's conservation land were easements rather than deeds. Mr. Porter welcomed
230 the idea of connecting the trail systems and invited Chester's Commission to attend one of their
231 meetings. Auburn Conservation meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month.

232 H. NHACC Reports (Attendees)

233 Mrs. Neff Ragsdale reported on the Land Conservation and Options presentation for
234 Conservation Commissions with the Forest Society. Highlights included appraisals and tax
235 implications, long-term stewardship funding, management plans for properties and resources
236 available on the NHACC website.

237 **PLAN REVIEWS**

238 None

239 **MISCELLANEOUS**

240 Presentations (Ms. Snyder)

241 Ms. Snyder noted the next presentation would be on Fishers by Meade Cadot, former director of
242 the Harris Conservation Center, and the date has changed to December 8th from noon to three
243 with the presentation beginning at 1 PM in the Multi-Purpose Room at 84 Chester Street.
244 Refreshments will be available before the presentation.

245 Mr. Cadot will illustrate how misunderstood Fishers often are and how they are an important
246 mammal to have in our natural landscapes.

247 Ms. Snyder noted Senator Morgan will be in attendance. The Fire Department has inspected
248 and asked that exits not be blocked, and chairs be fastened. Flyers have been prepared and
249 sent to the school, library, and Audubon.

250 Ms. Snyder questioned whether the wireless microphone will be needed for the audio portion
251 and whether Mr. Grimm from PACT would be recording.

252 Reimbursements: Vests, NHACC Annual Meeting

253 Chair Chouinard will submit the invoices to Finance for payment.

254 North Pond Kiosk

255 Ms. Snyder showed a picture of the kiosk which is in need of maintenance and has a lot of trash
256 nearby. Mr. Sibley recommended staining it and Mr. Broadwater recommended cleaning up the
257 site and putting in a nice laminated poster with information or reaching out to the school to have
258 the students put something together to talk about the flora and fauna found in this area such as
259 the Blanding's turtle.

260 Request by BOS to survey town-owned parcels

261 Selectman Myette reported the BOS requested Conservation survey some of the Town-owned
262 properties that had activity nearby with developments to make sure boundaries were being
263 observed. Selectman Myette indicated this could not be done with Conservation funds as these
264 were not Conservation properties. However, one survey Conservation could do is the
265 Southwood's parcel as the boundaries have been in question and are holding up the easement.

266 **Adjournment**

267 ***Mr. Broadwater motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hume seconded the motion, with***
268 ***all in favor, so moved.***

269 The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 PM.

270 Respectfully submitted,

271

272 Nancy Hoijer,
273 Recording Secretary