

**Town of Chester
Conservation Commission
July 11, 2017
Approved Minutes**

Attendance

Aaron Hume
Chairman Chuck Myette
Deb Munson
Ted Broadwater
Baron Richardson
Selectman Liaison Dick Trask

Absent

Phil Cassista

Guest(s)

Selectman Jeremy Owens, SLPC Liaison
John Dalrymple
Ryan Neal
Fred Borman

Call to Order

Chairman Myette called the meeting of the Chester Conservation Commission to order at 7:02 pm on Tuesday, July 11, 2017.

New Business

Maple Syrup Taps (Ryan Neal, Ryan's Sugar Shack)

Chairman Myette invited Ryan Neal to the table. Mr. Neal, a resident of Chester, is the proprietor of Ryan's Sugar Shack, featured on WMUR. Mr. Neal is looking to tap sugar maples, using a tubing system, on town owned land off Lane Road (as shown on maps he produced and distributed among the board members).

Chairman Myette asked Mr. Neal how many trees he has identified and how far down to the pond and how much tubing line will be used, as well as how long he intends to leave the tubing out there and how he would access the site during the winter sugaring months, January thru April.

Mr. Neal responded that he has identified a few hundred trees, some fairly mature, and a few young maples. He proposes to use 3/16 laterals, shown in yellow on the map, red being the main line,

1/2 or 3/4 100 or 200 feet of 1/2 to 3/4 inch line, few hundred feet, mostly gravity fed.

Mr. Broadwater questioned how the tanks would be accessed and whether any lines would cross existing trail systems.

Mr. Neal proposes to go down and pump up the lines. On the area shown to the right is one access road, from the other side you can drive in. In another location he would walk, using a one inch gas pump and pump up through the half inch line to the truck on Lane Road.

Chairman Myette expressed limited concerns of vandalism to his equipment, with the area open to the public for hunting bird and deer. Chairman Myette suggested having a legal agreement reviewed by the board and the BOS and perhaps putting up a small sign signifying the project at the site.

Fred Borman, who was present on another matter, was asked his opinion and suggested making sure this was covered by the town's blanket liability policy, Selectman Trask stated that while Mr. Neal had offered to pay the town \$160 for the lease, the town could not accept financial compensation for the taps under that policy, but added that the Fireman and Legion hall would certainly appreciate some fresh maple syrup for their fundraising breakfasts.

Selectman Trask motioned to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that Mr. Neal be allowed to tap the trees, which was seconded by Ms. Munson. All were in favor, none opposed, so moved.

Chairman Myette stated to Mr. Neal that he would put something together and get back to him.

Updating Town Forestry Project, Data & Mapping (Fred Borman)

Chairman Myette invited Mr. Borman to the table and introduced him to the other members and the Selectmen.

Mr. Borman stated that he had recently retired from UNH in March and stayed on part-time to work on the town forest project update and data layer for town-owned conservation lands in Rockingham and Hillsborough County. Mr. Borman explained that in addition to a seven-page survey they came up with, he has to fill out additional forms to identify, map and lots, dates purchased or donated and which have management plans, and the primary purpose of protection, indicating whether a professional was used in the management of the properties. Mr. Borman has previously met with Mr. Hadik who was a wealth of information. Mr. Borman indicated that he would leave a copy with Chairman Myette as it would take approximately an hour per parcel to complete the survey. Chairman Myette asked if any were RSA 3110 designated and whether it was just conservation easements or all town-owned conservation lands greater than ten acres in size.

Selectman Trask asked for clarification of the different types.

Chairman Myette explained that a number of years ago, under the Strategic Land Protection Committee, they looked at lands they should think about such as wetlands, wildlife, forest management, prime wetlands farmlands, grant programs, farm land protection. A spreadsheet had been compiled a year ago, and needs cleaning up, "it's a good time to do that now." Some boundaries were controversial for a number of years and would cost as much as \$50,000 to survey. Selectman Trask expressed that now might be a good time to clean those up since they have the funds to do it. Mr. Broadwater offered that he could make phone calls send some emails.

Chairman Myette summarized some of the properties for Mr. Borman, including: the Hatton property, 110 acres, for timber and wildlife management; Herrick Woods, South Woods, the Muriel Church properties, North Pond, Shattigee, Ruth Ray, Pomp Road, Wilcomb, Stow Road, Fremont, Towle and Isaac Foss as well as Jenkins Farm, Bridle, the Wason Pond Conservation area and Town Center.

Mr. Borman asked about conservation fund stipulations. Chairman Myette explained, "We've done that, we have two funds that are separate, Conservation and Forestry. " The Conservation Fund, for SLP monitoring. Current Use funds that one. Significant update last years, more subdivisions, more houses, others in process, one may be part of a forest that we're working on. Chairman Myette stated that he could provide a lot of that information, older ones may be difficult. Chairman Myette continued that a lot of town-owned land borders our easements, contiguous properties accessed by Class 6 are open spaces, don't know if you want or need those. Mr. Borman responded that town-owned greater than ten acres, whether or not third-party easement, need to know, even if town-owned. Chairman Myette explained that private land gets a little complicated. "With the earlier ones we bought the rights and monitor those, any town-owned is third party, the RCC monitors those."

Chairman Myette offered that if you want to set some time up with Mr. Broadwater, Mr. Hadik can give you a finished list confirming what we have. "We have a good deal electronically."

Chairman Myette thanked Mr. Borman for his time and suggested to Selectman Owens that it may be a good opportunity for him on SLPC.

Chairman Myette will get back to everyone with dates and check with Ms. Munson who would like to sit in.

Wason Pond Bridge Repair & Security

Bridges

There was some damage (vandalism) to the covered bridge which they have gone down and fixed the interior wall. There are other bridges in disrepair, the second of which is in the worst condition. They will be securing the bridge with pressure treated lumber similar to what is there now, looking for volunteers. Expect the cost per bridge for materials to be around \$1,000. Derry

Trailriders sent \$100.00; the “Pounders” offered volunteers and discussed funding, added Mr. Broadwater.

“August 19th is the Saturday we're shooting for” said Chairman Myette. “We are shooting emails to different groups, approaching the building inspector, and taking care of permits for the roof repairs on the barn.”

Security

Chairman Myette reported that it was likely next year there would be more people on the ground, rangers or park staff as an extension of the Recreation Department to look for issues and report on problems. They are going to look into whether some cameras and signs could be added as a deterrent after speaking to the police department to see what things could be done.

Ms. Munson added that the Lions Club had painted some picnic tables and were concerned they would be vandalized.

Selectman Trask explained that there are going to be days when you have someone scheduled and it isn't crowded, and we could have them doing some light maintenance and that the Police Chief feels that if you have someone enforcing the rules down there, the laws won't be broken as often. Ms. Munson advised that according to Facebook, a lot of it would be picking up trash.

Old Business

Minutes

Selectman Trask motioned to accept the Meeting Minutes dated June 13, 2017, amended as follows:

- correction of typo on Line 64

Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. With Mr. Richardson abstaining, 5 in favor, none opposed, so moved.

Subcommittee Reports:

Strategic Land Protection Committee

The CC is in discussion with the owners of three (3) properties and walked one of these with the owner and surveyor yesterday. One is on 121 (Old Chester Turnpike), is a donation, not accepting land, accepting easement, with a trust involved there. The second is off 102 close to Lane Road, an estate purchase of 24 acres, going through probate, landlocked but contiguous to other parcels CC has in there. The third is in discussions, down closer to Harantis and 102, not sure whether donate or hold onto, wants to put an easement on so as not to be built. No cost to first, second will be purchased to settle the estate.

Selectman Trask asked what they were targeting. “Is there a guideline?” Chairman Myette explained discussions with Fire Department and BOS, for public and municipal uses such as cisterns, cemeteries, parks, farmlands bought up for developments. Active SLPC members called ambassadors, solicited a number of them, larger land owners asked to be part of it, got a three-million dollar bond to make a dent in protecting farmlands, wetlands. “Look at the map, these areas should be protected for specific reasons” i.e. wetlands, flood control, run off, prime wetlands. Have surveyed those greater than 2 acres. “Which did we want to protect?” “Trails, connecting trails, have a list, still have 8 or so on list that we'd like to see.” Selectman Owens showed interest, good nucleus for us to go back on that, where it shapes up where we need to be, 2-3 key farm lands, prime, never have farming in future.

Anyone welcome to come in on that, careful about sharing list, sensitive info. The table we put together has price per acre, understanding the value. Every property - either have them get an appraisal, fair market price, having a fiduciary responsibility to the town and a couple large programs who wanted money. Crowley Woods wanted a million dollars, five years ago. “Today they want more, still don't have that.”

Selectman Owens added that some key stakeholders occasionally weigh in and tell us what their needs are down the road, “it doesn't appear they had that interest before.”

Chairman Myette explained that 4-5 years ago, they made an announcement and there was an article in the paper, with 2-3 interested people, so it didn't go anywhere. “Three or so years after, it stepped up because of subdivisions.” “Those are the only ones giving us a problem with people infringing.”

Selectman Trask pointed out the benefits to firefighting, having places they can go and draw water, with 300 plus new homes, needing pressurized water without traveling a significant distance.

Selectman Trask advised that people ask all time about the parcel next to the school. Chairman Myette added that CC reached out to the owner a number of years ago, it's still sitting there for sale (the old restaurant). Selectman Trask added, that the field behind the church also. “We have a shortage of ballfields, approach Rec and come together and identify and layout fields in the future. Mr. Broadwater added that on a grander scale, possible for the town to have regulations, if a ten plus acre lot, you have to have so much community property, not just green space. Ms. Munson advised that Planning would have to propose that and then go to town meeting. Chairman Myette suggested that Planning could charge impact fees. Selectman Trask explained that there are impact fees, if Rec wants a swing set or playground in the southern part of town, you could find property down there and construct that with those impact fees. Selectman Trask suggested if 50 homes built, they could require a playground. Ms. Munson offered that Southern New Hampshire Planning would be happy to facilitate and use their experience and inject ideas, not the smallest town but not as big as other more developed in region.

Chairman Myette agreed that they should move Strategic Land forward, identify a number of members, 8 or 10 people and he will send some emails around to get interest. Tuesday nights could be a good night, the first Tuesday is open.

Ms. Munson expressed concerns with the Crowley subdivision and putting together some talks with the Candia people. The meeting is tomorrow night for Planning. Chairman Myette suggested that someone attend that as Candia has reached out to him but he isn't able to attend that one Chairman Myette will set up some contacts.

Treasurers' Report (Chuck)

Chairman/Treasurer Myette reported a beginning balance of approximately \$500,000 in the Conservation Account, with a smaller account for Forestry and the Lincoln Lane account of \$3,000 for a bridge, should a trail be created.

The larger account has earned interest in a cd that matured recently and that \$500,000 in beginning principal has been rolled over for an additional short-term leaving about \$166,000 in the Conservation Account, after receipts.

Budget:

\$750 new budget

There were \$400 in dues and seminars last year

Maintaining the line items for Administrative Salaries, periodically to do filing and such and the second being Contracted Services which are historically used for wetlands specialists and scientists.

Chairman Myette added that the ballpark figure for expenses on the three newer parcels, for surveying, purchasing and legal is in the \$75-\$80,000 range which is why he requested that not be rolled into the cd.

Appointment of Ted Broadwater as Treasurer

Chairman Myette asked Mr. Broadwater if he would consider taking over the responsibilities as Treasurer. After a brief explanation of those duties, Mr. Broadwater agreed to serve as Treasurer.

Selectman Trask motioned to appoint Ted Broadwater as Treasurer of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Hume seconded his motion. With all in favor, so moved.

Planning Board

Crowley is the biggest subdivision plan. Chairman Myette would like to see back part with causeway, phase 3 island wiped off.

Benson project off Ledge Road, has easements worked out with them to be filed,

Jenkins 150 acres, we own but deed questionable (question whether everything was filed).

Trails (Aaron Hume)

Mr. Hume reported that last month was busy, and he is going to activate the GIS license tomorrow. Mr. Hume has done research on Trailfinders, with Derry, Sandown, Candia, and different branches of Rockingham Recreational Rail Trail which is managed by bureau, and we don't have a rail trail. Jan Kent of Raymond needs to be contacted to see how GIS license can be split.

Chairman Myette summarized Mr. Hume's mapping of trails over the past few months.

Mr. Broadwater added that Kingdom Trails in Vermont has a huge network of biking trails that go across.

Ms. Munson asked if there was a place where we can have a computer, and store files. Selectman Trask announced that they are running a line for CC's computer next week, redoing the entire computer system and having two jacks put in the ZBA office for CC. Selectman Trask advised that you might have to spend some of your money for a computer. Chairman Myette agreed that there is an unfunded line item.

Spring Hill Farm (Chuck Myette)

Chairman Myette reported that he has had discussions and meetings with the Town, the tenant is there at this point but the lease is not going to be renewed. Selectman Trask clarified that the Selectman voted not to renew their lease. Mr. Richardson asked why the Trustees were not consulted. Selectman Trask explained that they were given goals and they hadn't met them. Mr. Richardson stated that as an outside observer he felt that they had done an outstanding job and was curious to know what the unmet goals were. Mr. Broadwater agreed, asking where could those goals be seen. Selectman Trask directed them to discuss the matter with Selectman Buckley as he is the Selectman Liaison for the Spring Hill Farm. Chairman Myette agreed that it was best to consult with Mr. Buckley as he should be anywhere discussions are happening. Mr. Broadwater expressed the hope that, as an outside observer, that they would find as good a tenant, who will do just as good, or even better.

Agriculture (Chuck Myette)

Chairman Myette reported that Agriculture has begun preparing for the annual Town Fair and acquired new tables and a tent.

Wason Pond

Backstops. The backstops are moving forward.

Barn

Selectman Trask added that the barn roof is being done the week of August 14th by the county workers. Mr. Broadwater asked if there were any other structural concerns with that barn. Chairman Myette advised that they looked into the feasibility of a barn assessment and whether we can we turn it into a usable facility, for barn dances and whatever else.

Ms. Munson asked if there wasn't a State Historic Barn Grant. Chairman Myette explained that there was, such as had been applied for with Spring Hill Farm of which they qualified for that one for the \$200 amount.

Scout Projects

Mr. Broadwater commented that the Boy Scout projects looked great and wondered if projects were ever suggested to them? Chairman Myette responded that several have come about because of that. Another Scout is building a kiosk with information on it about Wason Pond ecologically, the flora and fauna, which should be completed within a month.

Debris Cleanup

Mr. Broadwater reported debris by the barn, bags of concrete specifically and Selectman Trask stated that it was on the list for the corrections guys.

Caretakers Cottage Vacancy

Selectman Trask reported that as of August 1st there will no longer be someone in the Caretakers Cottage and it will be up to the WPC and Rec what they want to do with it.

Water Cannon

Chairman Myette asked Mr. Dalrymple to report on the success of testing on the irrigation and water cannon system. Mr. Dalrymple explained that it was a traveling hose that retracts, turns a turbine that pulls the sprinkler back to the roll of hose, turns the pump and pulls back slowly and can water 150 sections in two hours, if needed. Selectman Trask added that the grass looked great. Mr. Richardson asked about the draw depth. Mr. Dalrymple estimated that they drew 8200 gallons. Chairman Myette explained that they would look to make sure it wasn't taxed to a point where turtles and fish were suffering. Selectman Trask asked if the system measured the draw. Mr. Dalrymple explained that he had determined the amount by time and pressure calculations.

Easements Monitoring, & Stewardship

Need to put together a list of ones that need to be monitored.

No new plans to look at tonight.

Miscellaneous

Beaver trapping

Chairman Myette reported that he hadn't seen any activity but didn't think Mr. Sullivan took any action and has had trouble getting in contact with him.

Webpage Update (Deb Munson) – None.

Mail

Southern Land Trust - Company use monitoring newsletter; Drinking water newsletter; Training Guides and Stewardship and Educational Activities, resource from NH Municipal Association monitoring programs, no date but talk about different training programs, can link electronically.

Adjournment

Selectman Trask motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Broadwater seconded his motion. All in favor, the meeting of the Conservation Commission was adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Hoijer, Recording Secretary