

**Town of Chester
Conservation Commission
October 13, 2020
7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting
Approved Minutes**

**Zoom I.D. #82155358139
Phone: (929) 436-2866**

Present (Remotely):

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

Absent:

Guests:

Lindsey White, GZA
Jeni Menendez
Elizabeth LaRocca (@7:15 PM)
Patrick Connelly & Daniela Connelly

I. Call to Order

Chair Chouinard called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

II. New Business

1. Eversource – 373 Transmission Line

Ms. White posted the plan for the proposal by Eversource for upgrading the wood poles with steel on the 373-transmission line and adding optical ground wire. The project will start off Bridle Path and end on Lane Road and include two poles off Bridle Path, five off Chester Street (293-289), two off Old Chester Turnpike (285, 284) and one-off Lane Road (271). The 292 pole will be used for wire pulling with work pads on either side. The pole replacement project will begin in the fall and end in the spring of 2021. The optical ground wire project will start in the spring of 2021.

45 Ms. White noted representatives of Eversource will appear before the Planning Board
46 tomorrow night and are looking for a recommendation from the Conservation
47 Commission for their CUP. Chair Chouinard indicated he will attend that meeting.
48

49 Selectman Myette noted in the past upgrades to roads have increased illegal OHRV
50 traffic. Mr. Broadwater questioned why the Commission hasn't seen any barriers or
51 signage up. Ms. Menendez indicated three gates are on order and the legal team is
52 reviewing the posting language of the signage so they won't give up their indemnity if
53 someone gets hurt on the property. Mr. Broadwater noted signage has never been tried
54 and people need to understand they shouldn't be out there. Chair Chouinard agreed
55 noting the RSA could be posted. Ms. LaRocca proposed posting no OHRVs. Ms.
56 Snyder reminded that having Eversource representatives attend court appearances
57 would give Fish & Game the support they need to enforce it. Chair Chouinard noted
58 Fish & Game is a State organization and recommended working with them on access
59 that abuts State roads to make their job easier.
60

61 Ms. Neff Ragsdale recommended the same proviso with previous visit to block access,
62 put gates up, clean up and put up signage relative to ATVs.
63

64 ***Ms. Neff Ragsdale motioned to recommend approval of the CUP with the provisos***
65 ***discussed. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken***
66 ***Chouinard – aye, Snyder – aye, Neff Ragsdale – aye, Sibley – aye, Broadwater –***
67 ***aye, Myette – abstain, and Munson – aye. The motion passed 6-0-1.***
68

69 2. Jenkins Farm Open Space 70

71 Chair Chouinard indicated he received the notarized deed from the Planning
72 Coordinator, Mr. Hadik. It has not been recorded yet. Chair Chouinard noted the deed
73 contained some fairly restrictive covenant language.
74

75 Chair Chouinard discussed some of the ways the Commission could hold easements,
76 whether it be a third-party easement holder or having a document approved at Town
77 Meeting which would give Conservation Commission approval to put the easements on.
78

79 Selectman Myette questioned who wrote the deed. The Commission will review the
80 deed language and discuss it further prior to accepting it.
81

82 3. Lincoln Lane Discussion 83

84 Chair Chouinard indicated members of the Commission visited the site and violations
85 were noted as reported by RCCD in 2017. The Commission needs to make sure the
86 house lots are pinned so owners know where the boundaries are. Mr. Dufresne and Bill
87 and Deb Hesketh have been cooperating with the Commission and their boundaries are
88 pinned. Chair Chouinard would like to turn it over to the Code Enforcement Officer with
89 a copy of the 2017 monitoring report to look at the stakes and violations. Chair
90 Chouinard will draft a letter to Building Inspector Bunker. Chris Hickey at Eric Mitchell's

office noted the back boundaries were pinned and offered to assist with a recon job but would charge \$100/per pin to reset them.

Ms. Neff Ragsdale asked about the \$3,000 bridge account and Chair Chouinard indicated the Commission is under no obligation to replace a bridge that never existed and if the survey costs are offset, the funds could be used for whatever the HOA and the Commission agree to.

III. Old Business

1. Review Minutes – September 8, 2020

Ms. Snyder motioned to accept the September 8, 2020 minutes, as amended. Ms. Munson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Munson – aye, Broadwater – aye, Neff Ragsdale – aye, Sibley – aye, Chouinard – aye, Myette - abstain and Snyder – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed 6-0-1.

2. Subcommittee Reports

A. Strategic Land Protection

Chair Chouinard noted there has been no new activity.

B. Treasurer's Report (Kathie)

Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported there have been no expenses incurred by the operating budget which is \$1,200.

Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported as of September the balances are as follows:

Conservation Account

\$ 408,195.38

69.15 interest

\$ 408,264.53

Forestry Account

\$ 41,201.49

6.98 interest

\$ 41,208.47

Lincoln Lane

\$ 3,089.46

.52 interest

138 \$ 3,089.98

139
140 Emerson

141
142 \$ 10,218.82

143 1.73 interest

144 \$ 10,220.55

145
146 ***Chair Chouinard motioned to approve the Treasurer's Report as stated.***
147 ***Selectman Myette seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken***
148 ***Chouinard – aye, Snyder – aye, Neff Ragsdale – aye, Sibley – aye,***
149 ***Broadwater – aye, Myette – aye and Munson – aye. With all in favor, the***
150 ***motion passed unanimously.***

151
152 C. Spring Hill Farm

153
154 Mr. Broadwater reported the Advisory Committee met to vote on the budget, the
155 Ortins have been growing vegetables in the high tunnel and operating the
156 produce cart. Approval of the food truck is being applied for. The fields have
157 been hayed. Selectman Myette added Bob Pepper hayed North Chester and
158 Wason while he and Mr. LeBlanc hayed around the house. 300 bales have been
159 sold. Some equipment needed repairs. Selectman Myette indicated the
160 Trustees would like to see the garage finished this fall.

161
162 Selectman Myette added that Ms. LeBlanc and Ms. Sautter went before the BOS
163 to see about having an engineer look at the building and identify what ADA
164 compliant and other items need to be done so they can move forward with their
165 management plan.

166
167 Selectman Myette thanked Julia Webb for the donation of \$2,400 to the Trust for
168 barn restoration. Ms. Webb donated the money she made making masks.

169
170 Mr. Broadwater questioned whether some signage should be placed in open
171 buildings to enter at own risk or no trespassing as the barn floor is wide open and
172 the post beam shed is rickety. Selectman Myette recommended bringing that up
173 at their next meeting. Mr. Broadwater added that a half day clean up day would
174 do a lot and would like to organize a team.

175
176 D. Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Commission (Kathie, Kristina)

177
178 i. Culvert Project & Fishing Line Receptacle (Victor, Kristina)

179
180 Ms. Snyder indicated Selectman Myette sent a picture of a smaller less
181 expensive receptacle and if she does not hear back from the groups she
182 has reached out to, they could down size. The larger receptacle would be
183 easier to clean out and put stuff in. The project will move forward in the
184 spring.

Ms. Snyder reported the Tri-Town put some pictures she sent them in the paper of the beaver pipe under the bridge. Right away the beaver put debris back under the bridge but left the pipe alone which is what it is supposed to do.

Ms. Snyder reported David Webster, who is a new member, will be running their Facebook page. A Spooky Scavenger Hunt is planned the week before Halloween. Selectman Myette added the playground is open and the fields are open for individual use.

Ms. Snyder noted an RFP has gone out for the handicapped ramp at the Community Center. Selectman Myette indicated the barn which will be available for use after the last Pounder event next fall could be looked at by the NH Preservation Alliance for \$500 to get a punch list of what needs to be done before it could be used for events and possible a bathroom.

E. Easements, Monitoring and Stewardship

i. Declaration of Conservation Easements (Victor)

Chair Chouinard indicated he would like to get umbrella approval from the Town to put easements on some of the properties. The submission deadline would be the end of January.

ii. Aaron's work (Aaron)

Mr. Hume reported he has monitored ten easements. He has found the boundaries to not be 100% accurate and is looking forward to matching the information on the new orthorectifying maps in a couple of weeks.

Selectman Myette recommended going with the Town records unless there is a gross discrepancy and it is worth surveying.

Mr. Hume noted Norton Forest has three parcels with a baseline and three do not and he will not survey the three that are not Conservation properties. The Villages and Southwoods do not have easements and it doesn't look like the boundaries have been determined. Selectman Myette noted that is a Planning Board issue to discuss with Mr. Hadik. The Villages were set up to be an open space years ago and contested. Mr. Hume noted Isaac Foss, M/L 9-12 has no clear boundary on the Assessor's map. Mr. Hume is trying to make contact with landowners but found some information to be out of date. Chair Chouinard recommended sending them a certified letter, return receipt requested.

F. Trails

Mr. Hume indicated the new orthorectifying tax maps could change the dynamics of the maps. Layers can be developed in the next couple of weeks.

IV. Plan Reviews

1. Conceptual Review of Field to Fork Farm agritourism proposal at 522 Haverhill Road ("Schneebaum" 70-Acre Conservation Easement) for installation of a second high tunnel and six elevated camp sites.

Patrick Connelly and Daniela Connelly, owners of the Field to Fork Farm at 522 Haverhill Road presented a conceptual request to put up a 20'x72' high tunnel and six elevated camp sites. Mr. Connelly posted the plan showing the location of the proposed second high tunnel, showed the location of the existing 20'x48' high tunnel and the proposed location for six elevated camp sites. The high tunnel will be purchased with a NRCS grant. There will be no water or electricity. A 200 gallon above-ground tank will serve as a reservoir. The structure is steel with plastic on top. Chair Chouinard noted the easement permits agriculture.

Mr. Connelly noted the area closer to the house is outside the easement and is used for agritourism events, corporate retreats, weddings, and education. There will be port-a-johns, and the riding paddock provides parking. The Connelys would like to do overnight tenting stays in conjunction with events and would like to build six elevated platforms. The platforms would be wood beams and not permanent.

Mrs. Connelly noted vehicles would not be allowed to drive on the easement and there would be no campers or utility hook-ups.

Mr. Hume shared a pdf with the Commission of the easement document.

Chair Chouinard noted a cottage not to exceed 200 SF with no electricity is allowed, sugar shacks are allowed. Chair Chouinard noted the Commission would have to review the easement language and give a little more thought to modernizing the approach to agriculture and meet with the Connelys again.

V. Miscellaneous Business

1. Contest (Kristina)

Ms. Snyder indicated she would be reaching out to local business for prizes and donations for the proposed wildlife photo contest.

2. Presentations (Kristina)

Ms. Snyder reported she sent an email to the Squam Lakes Science Center concerning virtual presentations. Each presentation is 45 minutes to an hour and cost \$150 per event. There is a \$25 discount for scheduling more. Ms. Snyder will provide a list of topics. Chair Chouinard indicated the first could be scheduled six weeks out.

278
279 3. Kiosk (Rick & Kathy)

280
281 Ms. Neff Ragsdale indicated they will donate the polycarbonate material for the kiosk
282 which is about \$200. They hope it will be in by late November. The Commission
283 thanked them for their generous donation and work on the kiosk at North Pond.

284
285 4. NHACC Virtual Workshop

286
287 Ms. Munson reminded it is time to sign up for the NHACC workshop.

288
289 **VI. Adjournment**

290
291 ***Ms. Snyder motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10 PM. Mr. Sibley seconded the motion.***
292 ***A roll call vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

293
294 Respectfully submitted,

295
296 Nancy Hoijer,
297 Recording Secretary