

**Town of Chester
Conservation Commission
April 13, 2021
7:00 PM
Draft Minutes**

Members present (Remotely):

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

Members absent:

Selectman Chuck Myette, Liaison

I. Call to Order

Chair Chouinard called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM. He noted that there were no members of the public attending via Zoom.

II. New Business

A. Purchase and Sales Agreement, Map 004, Lot 001

Chairman Chouinard stated the first order of business was a Purchase and Sales Agreement between the Town of Chester and Michael and Wendy Ennis for the sale to the town of a 20-acre parcel, which is Tax Map 004 Lot 001. He stated that the first three sections of the P&S were unique to this P&S, stating the remaining sections were standard P&S wording.

After reading the first three sections, Chairman Chouinard gave a brief description of the parcel, stating that location is the intersection of Parsonage Lane and Warfield Road, both Class IV unmaintained roads. He also noted the best way to access the lot was down Parsonage Lane from Chester Street. He described the property as being in a natural state with no noticeable logging activity. He noted that the property contained wetlands and a stream, which are part of the headwaters for Beaver Brook.

Chair Chouinard the opened the meeting to the Commission for discussion regarding the purchase. Ms. Snyder commented as to the importance of this parcel as a wildlife corridor.

Chairman Chouinard asked that a motion be made to vote on approving the P&S.

Ms. Ragsdale made a motion to vote on approving the P&S. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Chouinard – aye, Snyder – aye, Munson – aye, Neff Ragsdale – aye, Sibley – aye, Broadwater – aye, Hume – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

At this point, the Commission realized the meeting was not being recorded and designated Ms. Munson as the recorder.

B. Lincoln Lane Fund Letter

Chairman Chouinard received a Letter of Intent from Deb Hesketh regarding their intentions. They will save their receipts.

He believes the Conservation Easement terms cover the Commission's concerns, which is access off the cul de sac. The Commission will do annual inspections. All activity is within the circle. He is willing to take the group at their word and move forward to release the funds. Ms. Neff Ragsdale thinks it is a good use of the funds, considering there is no bridge.

Since a vote was taken last month to release the funds, no further approval is needed. Chairman Chouinard will ask Finance to release the funds, with the check payable to Mr. Hesketh.

Chairman Chouinard dropped off the rebar caps; the residents will install them. During the annual monitoring in August, the Commission should check to make sure that the caps have been installed.

C. Earth Day 2021

Chairman Chouinard said the Commission has not discussed any activities for Earth Day and asked the members for ideas. There is a tradition of picking up trash along the road. There is some trash along the back of one of the fields at Spring Hill Farm that Chairman Chouinard and other members will pick up.

III. Old Business

A. Subcommittee reports

1. Treasurer's Report – Ms. Neff Ragsdale

Savings account (includes jumbo CD):

\$ 505,765.41 Starting balance

58.20 interest

\$ 505,823.61 Ending balance

Forestry account:

\$ 41,238.07 starting balance

4.74 interest

\$ 41,242.81 ending balance

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Lincoln Lane account

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\$ 3,092.20 starting balance

0.36 interest

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\$ 3,092.56 ending balance

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Emerson Conservation Easement:

\$ 10,227.89 starting balance

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1.18 interest

\$ 10,229.07 ending balance

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Regular account:

100

\$ 267.01 starting balance

7.20 expenditures (printing

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\$ 259.81 ending balance (21.65% of budget)

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Ms. Neff Ragsdale was contacted by Finance Director Smith regarding a request from Treasurer Lamphere to transfer \$1,523.27 from Conservation to the General Fund for expenses on behalf of the Conservation Commission: \$114.38 for rebar caps, \$1,258.89 for easement baseline monitoring for July and August, and \$150 for the Animals That Winter program. This account shows a remaining balance of \$33,544.58.

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She asked if there was a separate Conservation account within the Town budget.

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Chairman Chouinard explained they have been cleared through Legal to use the main conservation fund for anything that promotes conservation and easements (monitoring), such as presentations. He usually is asked to approve expenditures and will review this. Normally Ms. Lamphere pays the bills out of the General Fund and requests reimbursement. This transfer will be reflected in next month's Jumbo CD account.

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Ms. Snyder moved to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Mr. Hume seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Chouinard – aye, Snyder – aye, Munson – aye, Neff Ragsdale – aye, Sibley – aye, Broadwater – aye, Hume – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

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B. Minutes – March 9, 2021

Mr. Hume said on line 220, "...conservation easement and warranty deed spreadsheet." Chairman Chouinard will check with the recording secretary to find out why blanks were left in the minutes.

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Ms. Snyder moved to approved the minutes from the March 9, 2021 meeting as amended. Mr. Hume seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Chouinard –

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aye, Snyder – aye, Munson – aye, Neff Ragsdale – abstained, Sibley – abstained,
Broadwater – aye, Hume – aye. The motion passed 5-0-2.

C. Spring Hill Farm – Kristina

Ms. Snyder reported that Mr. Menard and Mr. Bartels have placed adult cows and calves on the farm. The fencing is in place, and people are visiting the cows.

Ryan Neal met with the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee to discuss maple sugaring. He typically donates maple products. In 2018, he donated \$562. No donation were made in 2019, 2020 since the events were not held where the product is usually sold. He would like to bottle the syrup and donate it to be offered at events this year. His lease runs until January, but it was decided to extend the lease until after maple season.

Fall Festival is scheduled tentatively for September 25th. Cindy LeBlanc is leading the organization of this event. The 300th Anniversary celebration committee wants to add the Festival to their calendar and work closely with the SHFAC to coordinate events.

The AARP grant for the farmhouse must be submitted by April 14th. Ms. Sautter and Selectman Myette are working on it. The architect needs to examine the building for ADA compliance. The building inspector listed a number of items that were noted during the fire inspection in 2018. The SHFAC is continuing to research avenues to raise funds for this project.

There is a constant drive to increase membership for the SHFCA and to generate interest in the farm, which has been waning. They believe the cows will help generate that interest, as there have been social media posts and discussions about their presence.

Ms. Snyder has approval to create milkweed areas for Monarch butterflies, as their numbers have been drastically reduced and they are losing habitat. Ms. Munson and Ms. Neff Ragsdale have agreed to work with Ms. Snyder on this project. They explored the area near the pond and met with a member of the Xerces Society, who can also help with funding and growing milkweed saplings. They hope to generate habitat for the pollinators. Pollinator Pathways is also involved.

D. Wason Pond Conservation area – Kristina, Kathie

Ms. Neff Ragsdale said there has been an issue with unleashed dogs at the pond and there has been at least one attack. Mr. Wright planned to meet with Chief Berube to discuss this.

The firemen wanted to hold a muster in August, but there were concerns regarding damage to the fields. This issue is still unresolved. Ms. Reishus planned to present it to the Board of Selectmen for their guidance.

The fields are open for individual and approved group use.

178 There was a request for a wedding to be held at the covered bridge on May 1. They
180 are assuming all responsibility for social distancing and understand it is a public
location.

182 Selectman Myette has received the design for the pavilion. Copies of the design
184 sheets are available if the Commission members would like to see them.

186 The Eagle Scout project to replace the walkway does not need a wetlands permit, so
that can proceed.

188 The fishing derby is scheduled for June 5th. The police have no objection to it being
190 held.

192 The Girl Scouts wanted to install a free library box at the playground as a Bronze
Award project. After discussion, the WPC decided not to approve this project as it
194 could invite vandalism or dumping of other objects. It is another structure that would
need to be maintained. The WPC suggested the Girl Scouts consider an alternative
196 location.

198 Ms. Snyder reported that the ADA ramp is still in the works. A contractor has been
notified.

200 The sign by the beach is in poor condition. Committee member Dave Webster has
202 offered to replace it. He has been a great asset to the property and the Committee.

204 The beaver sign has been erected near the lodge. Selectman Myette asked for another
sign to be erected to explain the beaver pipes that were installed. There is debris
206 building up around the cage, which Ms. Snyder and Chairman Chouinard will clear.

208 The fishing line receptacles and signs are completed. They tentatively plan to install
them on Friday, weather dependent. The Fish and Game Public Relations
210 representative would like to have a conservation officer present during the
installation. Chester Rod & Gun Club donated to the project, so they will also be
212 present. Anyone interested in attending the installation is welcome to attend.
Chairman Chouinard said this is a good opportunity to raise awareness of the fishing
214 line problem.

E. Easements, Monitoring and Stewardship – Aaron

216 Chairman Chouinard shared a note and excerpt from Mr. Hume's baseline report on
Tax Map 12 14-3. The Commission thanked Mr. Hume for the work he has done. The
218 report will be filed with the Town, if any member would like to review it.

220 Chairman Chouinard is pleased the Commission is moving forward with easement
baseline and monitoring. This is a responsibility that has been neglected, so he is
222 appreciative of Mr. Hume's efforts.

Mr. Broadwater moved that the Commission approve a payment of \$450 to Mr. Hume for the baseline work done on Tax Map 12, Lot 14-3. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Chouinard – aye, Snyder – aye, Munson – aye, Neff Ragsdale – aye, Sibley – aye, Broadwater – aye, Hume – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Mr. Hume spoke with Town Planner Hadik regarding the filing of the easement for the Emerson property. Since Abdallah is no longer in business, the document would not be legal if they signed it now. Mr. Hume will speak with counsel regarding this issue.

Mr. Hume spoke with Kevin Hatch regarding the Hatton property, who says his drawing of the tax map was recorded and he will send copies of the documents. Mr. Hume has not received those copies. The three parcels were combined into a single piece of land, which Mr. Hatch blazed. Mr. Hume will forward the documents to Jean to fix the tax map as the documents for this parcel would be under parcel numbers which are now incorrect.

Mr. Hume plans to work on the Dolloff property next. There is concern due to recent trucking activity.

IV. Plan Reviews

There are no plan reviews.

V. Miscellaneous Business

A. Presentations, Legislation – Kristina

Ms. Snyder reported that there are no presentations scheduled. She, Ms. Munson, and Ms. Neff Ragsdale have discussed a presentation in the future in coordination with Pollinator Pathways. The Second Annual Dandelion Contest will happen next month.

VI. Subcommittee Reports, continued

A. Strategic Land Protection Committee - SLPC – Victor (Non-Public)

Ms. Munson moved that the Commission go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (d). Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Chouinard – aye, Snyder – aye, Munson – aye, Neff Ragsdale – aye, Sibley – aye, Broadwater – aye, Hume – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Ms. Snyder moved that the minutes to the non-public session be sealed for an indefinite period. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Chouinard – aye, Snyder – aye, Munson – aye, Neff Ragsdale – aye, Sibley – aye, Broadwater – aye, Hume – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Ms. Snyder moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hume seconded the motion.

268 The meeting was adjourned.

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272 Respectfully submitted,
Beth Haggeli, Recording Secretary

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