

**Town of Chester  
Conservation Commission  
June 8, 2021  
7:00 PM  
Approved Minutes**

**Members present (Remotely):**

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

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Chouinard called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

**II. New Business**

**A. Lincoln Lane Fund Project**

Finance Director Smith has supplied the letter Lincoln Lane residents requested, verifying they will be reimbursed for any monies they spend. Chairman Chouinard will contact Road Agent Oleson and Building Inspector Bunker to clarify their position on the project. The residents need to create a written plan, as opposed to a verbal request, and send it to the Conservation Commission, the Board of Selectmen, and the town administrator. The money has been set aside, so there is no cost to the town. The only issue is ensuring that they don't affect drainage or snowplow activities. Chairman Chouinard will contact Ms. Hesketh and ask her to email a plan to Town Administrator Doda, Building Inspector Bunker, and Road Agent Oleson, and copy Selectman Myette as Chairman of the Board of Selectmen.

**B. Bat Barn Project**

Chairman Chouinard met with Vincenzo. He needs a signature verifying that the Commission supports his project. He is going to present the project to the Eagle Scout Board for approval. A location for the bat barn has been selected.

**C. In-person meetings**

Selectman Myette said that as of June 11<sup>th</sup>, the emergency order for remote meetings will be lifted and public meetings will go back to being public per RSA regulations. Meetings can still have a virtual component, but there will have to be a quorum physically present at every meeting. The Board of Selectmen will review the logistics at their next meeting.

Chairman Chouinard said if members of the Commission do not want to attend in person, perhaps something can be worked out to ensure there is a quorum physically present.

The Board of Selectmen has lifted the mask requirement for all municipal locations. The six-foot distance requirement will not be enforced in those locations.

**D. New protocol for problematic beavers**

Chairman Chouinard said moving forward, Road Agent Oleson will look to Town Administrator Doda, the Board of Selectmen, and the Conservation Commission regarding complaints about beaver situations. Selectman Myette said the animal control officer should be handling complaints about nuisance animals. When there is a safety or engineering issue, the Commission will help Road Agent Oleson and other departments come up with a plan as to how to manage those issues.

The Commission needs to put together a policy but it will be case-specific as to emergency aspects and the need to manage each situation more or less aggressively. This is an opportunity for the Commission to be involved and help determine how to manage animal nuisance issues in town.

Selectman Myette said issues should be submitted to Town Administrator Doda, who will contact the Commission. The current discussion is whether the town administrator should call Animal Control or the Commission if it's a single emergency situation or a long-term situation, such as a colony. Chairman Chouinard said that the Commission should bring ideas to the next meeting as to how to deal with these situations.

Selectman Myette suggested coordinating with Town Administrator Doda and discussing what resources the town has to handle situations like this. They need to ensure that Animal Control is part of the policy and should find out if they need to contract with a pest management company.

Ms. Ragsdale will contact other towns to find out what protocols they have in place.

**E. OHRV Accessing Private Land**

A resident who owns land between a town parcel and the power lines said that off-road vehicles are entering his property from conservation land. Chairman Chouinard and Ms. Snyder found a well-traveled path that goes from the Chester parcel (Map 7, Lot 60) across the private land to the power lines. Off-road vehicles are traveling through sensitive areas and avoid any obstacles that are put in place. Police Chief Berube will add it to the list of places to monitor once they have the new OHRV to access the location.

**F. Crowley Woods Development**

Ms. Munson reported that signs are up for the new Crowley Woods development on Candia Road. Selectman Myette said 62 units are planned and they are close to receiving approvals from the Candia Planning Board. He said that since the road is a scenic route, they are limited as to what they can do, due to its width.

### III. Old Business

#### A. Review Minutes – April and May

In the April 13, 2021, minutes, Chairman Chouinard clarified the spelling of Deb Hesketh's name. In lines 236 and 239, the words in question are **tax map**. He did not note the times the Commission entered and exited the non-public session.

*Ms. Snyder moved to approved the minutes from the April 13, 2021 meeting as amended. 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, Myette – aye. The motion passed 8-0.*

In the May 11, 2021 minutes, Ms. Snyder noted on line 59, Class IV road should be Class **VI** road. On line 61, it should say that the Fish & Game Department **is getting calls regarding OHRV issues**. On lines 84 and 85, it should read that the **Commission has no enforcement authority nor any authority to grant exceptions to the easement**. On line 108, fill in the missing word: Chairman Chouinard **asked** the members. On line 173, the missing name is **Ortins**. On line 236, **Ms. Munson** was speaking about the Facebook comments

Selectman Myette suggested on line 66, omitting the verbiage after "long-term investment."

*Ms. Munson moved to approved the minutes from the May 11, 2021 meeting as amended. 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, Myette – abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.*

#### B. Subcommittee reports

##### 1. Strategic Land Protection Committee - SLPC (Victor)

There is no news on the Strategic Land Protection Committee. Chairman Chouinard has sent out enquiries but has received no response.

##### 2. Treasurer's Report – Ms. Ragsdale

Savings account (includes jumbo CD):

\$ 468,664.34 starting balance

38.94 interest

\$ 468,703.28 Ending balance

Forestry account:

130           \$ 41,246.65 starting balance  
              3.39 interest  
132           \$ 41,250.04 ending balance

134           Lincoln Lane account:  
              \$ 3,092.84 starting balance  
136                 0.26 interest  
              \$ 3,093.10 ending balance

138           Emerson Conservation Easement:  
140           \$ 10,230.02 starting balance  
              0.84 interest  
142           \$ 10,230.86 ending balance

144           Regular account:  
              \$ 259.81 starting balance  
146                 00.0 expenditures  
              \$ 259.81 ending balance (21.65% of budget)

148  
150           There are only a few weeks remaining in the fiscal year. There is \$259.81 available  
              in the regular account. Chairman Chouinard suggested returning the remaining funds  
              to the general fund.

152  
154           *Ms. Snyder moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Ms. Munson*  
              *seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Chouinard – aye, Snyder – aye,*  
156           *Munson – aye, Ragsdale – aye, Sibley – aye, Broadwater – aye, Hume – aye,*  
              *Myette – aye. The motion passed 8-0-0.*

158           **3. Spring Hill Farm**

              Ms. Snyder said this Saturday is Volunteer Day at the farm from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.,  
160           with set-up at 8 a.m. There will be tents, a sign-up sheet with a list of chores, and  
              food. She and Chairman Chouinard will clear up the invasive plants around the  
162           pond.

              Ms. Snyder said a person interested in joining the Advisory Committee attended the  
164           meeting.

              They were not awarded the \$20,000 1772 grant for the barn work. Selectman Myette  
166           said they have not heard if the AARP has made a selection on their grant, which  
              would be for handicap accessibility for the farm house totaling \$96,000. It is  
168           possible that the AARP might approve a portion, as the project was broken into  
              phases.

170           There are eight calves at the farm. Rich and Selectman Myette have been haying this  
              week.

Selectman Myette said they are still planning to hold the Fall Festival on September 25<sup>th</sup>, and are lining up vendors and activities.

Ms. Snyder and Ms. Munson planted bee balm and strawberries at the farm. Ms. Snyder is growing 50+ milkweed plants at her home. She saw a milkweed plant growing by the pond so is optimistic others will thrive there.

**4. Wason Pond Conservation area – Kristina, Kathie**

Recreation Director Reishus said the fishing derby was a success. The Senior Center is reopening since the mandates have changed. The handicapped access issue is not the ramp but that the pathway from the ramp to the parking area needs to be compliant.

Selectman Myette thought Road Agent Oleson addressed the mud problem in the parking lot. As it is in the easement, impermeable material cannot be used, so Mr. Oleson used packed granite that allows drainage. That should have resolved the problem for Building Inspector Bunker; Selectman Myette will check.

There continues to be an issue with unleashed dogs. Town Administrator Doda has asked the Town Counsel for a definition of "at large" and whether the existing leash law can be enforced. She have not received an answer.

There is a policy regarding horses not swimming in the pond between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Ranger Wright will monitor the situation and report at the next meeting before they decide to change the policy regarding dogs.

The Summer Program will run from July 6<sup>th</sup> to August 6<sup>th</sup>. A lifeguard is needed, if there is to be swimming.

The fishing line receptacles are working well. The Fish & Game Department and Powder Mill Fish Hatchery were pleased with them. They are being utilized the way they were intended. Ms. Snyder will recycle the fishing line.

The beaver pipes need regular maintenance, although water is still flowing through them. Chairman Chouinard removed parts of the dam but the beaver rebuilt it. There is debris around the cage that he plans to clear. Once the water level drops and the beaver doesn't sense the presence of a flow, both sides of the pond stay level. Ms. Snyder said the beavers are drawing people.

**5. Easements, Monitoring and Stewardship – Aaron**

Mr. Hume has finished a new conservation layer for Chester. It is an improvement over what was publicly available before.

He visited the Dolloff property and found nothing out of compliance with the deed. The Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) has deeds on file but not the amendments that were made in 2001. This explains why they consider that it cannot be subdivided and why there was verbiage in earlier reports that it might not be a

conservation easement. He will contact the conservation technician to straighten this out.

Selectman Myette reported that according to the RCCD, the property was separated when the Dolloffs owned it due to a hardship. It was sold to individual owners, which was permissible as long as both parcels remained conservation land. Mr. Hume said everything is fine legally on that piece of land.

Selectman Myette said the Emerson conservation easement fund is accruing interest. A baseline needs to be established and monitored; this is what these monies were set aside for. There is an issue with the conservation easement not being signed. Mr. Hume has discussed this with Town Planner Hadik, but he has not had time to contact Counsel. Selectman Myette will discuss this with Mr. Hadik.

Mr. Hume asked for a list of priority parcels to work on. North Pond was suggested.

#### **IV. Plan Reviews**

There are no plan reviews.

#### **V. Miscellaneous Business**

##### **A. Presentations, Legislation – Kristina**

There were 15-18 entries in the dandelion contest. Chairman Chouinard will forward the pictures to the commission members to judge. Ms. Snyder will obtain prizes for the participants and for the winners.

*Ms. Snyder made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Chouinard – aye, Snyder – aye, Munson – aye, Ragsdale – aye, Sibley – aye, Broadwater – aye, Hume – aye, Myette – aye. The motion passed 8-0-0.*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary*