

**Town of Chester
Conservation Commission
January 11, 2022
7:00 PM
Approved Minutes**

Members present:

Chairman Victor Chouinard
Kristina Snyder
Kathleen Neff Ragsdale
Rick Sibley
Deb Munson
Ted Broadwater
Nick Tranquillo
Selectman Chuck Myette, Liaison

Guests present:

Chester PACT

I. Call to Order

Chair Chouinard called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM.

II. New Business

A. Annual Report

Chairman Chouinard said the Annual Report must be submitted by January 27th. Commission members are continuing to contribute information. He thanked Ms. Munson and Ms. Snyder for their help.

B. Wason Pond Bridge

Selectman Myette said the Recreation Commission has included the Wason Pond bridge project in the CIP to pay for the engineering. There are funds for the design work, but a motion is needed to bring the project forward by contacting Dubois & King. They will also serve as the site engineer. The construction of the bridge will be put out to bid. Chairman Chouinard will contact Recreation Director Reishus.

III. Regular Business

A. Review Minutes – December

On line 223, **Ms. Munson** should be **Ms. Neff Ragsdale**. On line 196, **Selectman Myette** should be **Mr. Alex Bartels**.

Ms. Neff Ragsdale moved to approve the minutes from the December 14, 2021 meeting as amended. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Mr. Broadwater, who abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

B. Subcommittee reports

1. Strategic Land Protection Committee – SLPC

Chairman Chouinard said there are a couple of issues pending but until there is something substantial, he has no report. He hopes to have something to share next month.

2. Treasurer's Report

Savings account:

\$ 480,602.42 starting balance
15,390.00 credit – current use
40.01 interest
\$ 496,032.43 ending balance

Conservation Forestry account:

\$ 41,270.84 starting balance
3.40 interest
\$ 41,274.24 ending balance

Lincoln Lane account:

\$ 3,094.66 starting balance
0.25 interest
\$ 3,094.91 ending balance

Emerson Conservation Easement:

\$ 10,236.02 starting balance
0.84 interest
\$ 10,236.86 ending balance

Regular account:

\$ 990.00 starting balance
200.00 Exeter River watershed dues
260.00 Monarch butterfly presentation and book
\$ 530.00 ending balance (44.17% of budget)

Mr. Broadwater moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Ms. Munson seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Spring Hill Farm

Ms. Snyder reported the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee did not meet last month. A small group met to discuss the Winter Carnival, which will be held on February 26th. There will be activities for children, snowshoeing, snowman building, ice skating, hay wagon rides, and a bonfire sponsored by the 300th Anniversary Celebration Committee after 5 PM. There will be warming tents, a chili cookoff, and hot drinks.

Selectman Landau, Selectman Myette and Mr. Chris Hadik will contact the Fire Department to discuss the location of the bonfire. Activities will be weather dependent. They are holding another meeting on January 31st to continue planning. Volunteers are needed to run the activities.

4. Wason Pond Conservation area

Ms. Neff Ragsdale said the Wason Pond Conservation and Recreation Commission updated their Annual Report at the last meeting. Selectman Myette reported that installation of the ADA ramp has stalled due to the need to replace a rotted section of the deck. The slope at the end of the ramp also needs to be verified. Due to the weather, he is not sure when this project will be completed.

The Commission discussed how to eliminate bittersweet, including using goats and cutting plants by hand. Ms. Munson attended a meeting where the presenter said it wasn't advisable to remove invasive plants all at once due to the potential harm caused to wildlife habitat. He supported the idea of removing a patch at a time and replacing it with a beneficial plant.

Chairman Chouinard said the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) has advised working around nesting birds when removing invasive plants.

Mr. Broadwater reported that the final Pounder in its current state will be held on May 21, 2022. About 500 people have registered; participation will be capped at 1,110. Anyone who registered for last year's race can participate this year. The Boy Scouts will take some of the materials after the race and the rest will be donated to make space in the barn.

Chairman Chouinard had a grapple hook built to remove the debris from under the bridge placed there by the beaver.

5. Legislation

Ms. Snyder reported that a bill was heard regarding wetlands but Selectman Myette explained that it doesn't apply to Chester. She said another bill will be heard on January 25th regarding solar arrays and utilizing the habitat under them. She noted that 2022 is the 50th anniversary of conservation commissions. The NHACC has asked for the date of origination for each commission; she will contact Town Administrator Doda to obtain that information.

6. Fish & Game moose presentation

Selectman Myette met Doug, a representative from the Fish & Game Department who is working on a moose presentation, which will be the first in the state. Doug will reach out when it is ready. The Commission agreed they would be interested in sponsoring the presentation locally.

7. Easements, Monitoring, and Stewardship

The Commission discussed the need for baselines to be done on easements. The RCCD is willing to do baselines but need a package of information on each easement. The Commission agreed that 178 Derry Road and the Emerson easement should be done first; funds have been put aside to do the Emerson work. These will be done by the RCCD.

Selectman Myette explained that baselines are needed to establish and mark boundaries, identify encroachment (sheds, barns), if ATVs are using the property, if there is trash on the property, and so on. It's important to document the baseline condition of an easement to identify if there is an issue and to be able to correct it before it exists too long and they have no case to address it.

It is difficult to find organizations willing to take easements. The Commission discussed the issues with the Town owning both a property and its easement.

The Commission agreed to look into hiring a college student this summer to perform the baseline work. Mr. Tranquillo offered to assemble the appropriate packages for each property. Ms. Munson will find out if there are students available and interested in the position.

IV. Plan Reviews

There are no plan reviews.

V. Miscellaneous Business

VI. Adjourn

Ms. Neff Ragsdale moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 PM. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary