

**Town of Chester
Conservation Commission
July 12, 2022
7:00 PM
Approved Minutes**

Members present:

Chairman Victor Chouinard
Kristina Snyder
Deb Munson
Ted Broadwater
Selectman Chuck Myette, Liaison

Members absent:

Nick Tranquillo
Rick Sibley
Kathleen Neff Ragsdale

Guests present:

Eric McGowan
Chester PACT

I. Call to Order

Chair Chouinard called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

II. New Business

A. Public Hearing – Southwoods Conservation Easement

A public hearing was held to review and approve the Southwoods development conservation easement. Chairman Chouinard read the notice of the public hearing, and the preamble and purposes of the conservation deed. This is a condominium development, with 31.72 acres of land going into easement.

The Commission reviewed and discussed the development plan. The boundary has been monumented with no-cut buffer and conservation easement signs. There are no exceptions requested.

Ms. Snyder moved to close the public hearing. Ms. Munson seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Munson moved to accept and approve the conservation easement as stated in the document for Brady Sullivan Southwoods LLC. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Selectman Myette, who abstained. The motion passed 4-0-1.

B. Invasives

Chairman Chouinard reported that Mr. Tranquillo has arranged for representatives from the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) to visit Spring Hill Farm and Wason Pond on October 3rd at 9:00 AM to prepare a quote to remove the invasives. Selectman Myette said the invasives can be mowed and Ms. Munson reminded the Commission to avoid disturbing ground-nesting birds.

III. Regular Business

A. Review Minutes – June 14, 2022

Ms. Snyder moved to approve the minutes from the June 14, 2022 meeting as written. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Selectman Myette, who abstained. The motion passed 4-0-1.

B. Subcommittee reports

1. Treasurer's Report

In Ms. Neff Ragsdale's absence, Chairman Chouinard reported the following:

The Commission ended the fiscal year with a deficit of \$246.81. Chairman Chouinard reported that the 2022 budget was approved with no changes, which was a mistake in hindsight due to inflation. Dues have gone up considerably, which caused some of the overspending. This will be considered when creating the 2023 budget.

Savings account:

\$ 523,782.36 starting balance
68,511.12 credits from April and May current use
\$ 592,293.48 ending balance

\$101.00 interest was accrued on this account.

Conservation Forestry account:

\$ 41,292.56 starting balance
7.88 interest
\$ 41,300.44 ending balance

Lincoln Lane account:

\$ 501.59 starting balance
0.10 interest
\$ 501.69 ending balance

Chairman Chouinard has not heard from the Lincoln Lane residents regarding their intended use of these funds. He will attempt to contact them again.

Emerson Conservation Easement:

\$ 10,241.41 starting balance

1.95 interest
\$ 10,243.36 ending balance

Regular account:
\$ 1,200.00 starting balance as of July 1

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

2. Spring Hill Farm

Ms. Snyder reported there was no quorum at the last meeting, so it was a working session. The Fall Festival will be held on September 10th. The Conservation Commission will have a table at the festival, so next month they will discuss and finalize their participation.

Ms. Snyder and Ms. Munson visited the farm and there is milkweed growing in the brush pile. The plants that were transplanted didn't survive, but the established ones have been more successful.

The Department of Agriculture invasive species specialist will be visiting the property tomorrow morning to inspect the invasives. The Ortins are considering starting a business where goats eat invasive plants. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

Selectman Myette reported the haying is going well. Lane Road is completed. All fields but one field on Wason Road have been mowed. The hay is of good quality but isn't thick. Bales are being sold from the field.

4. Wason Pond Conservation Area

Ms. Snyder reported the Wason Pond Commission met at Wason Pond and inspected the condition of the caretaker's cottage and outbuildings. The future use of the cottage will be discussed at the next meeting.

The water flow is low, so the beavers aren't building under the bridge. The pond water was tested on June 27th before summer camp and the results were good.

The 300th Anniversary Celebration Committee's 5K race is on July 23rd and the Firemen's Muster follows.

Ms. Munson has created and is maintaining a pollinator garden near the Community Center. The area by the gate at the Causeway Bridge was cleared due to the need for handicap accessibility.

5. Easements, Monitoring, and Stewardship

Chairman Chouinard reported that Mr. Tranquillo has signed off on several contracts with RCCD to provide baseline monitoring.

6. Strategic Land Protection

Chairman Chouinard should have an update next month.

7. Community Conservation assistance

Ms. Munson reported the Commission was invited to reapply for community conservation help. She and Ms. Snyder will complete the application tomorrow.

IV. Plan Review - Colby Farm Subdivision

Chairman Chouinard presented the plans for the Colby Farm subdivision. It will be presented to the Planning Board tomorrow. Two lots have been combined for a total of 36 acres and there is an existing dwelling on the property. Nine homes will be constructed on one-acre lots. Twenty-three acres will be maintained as open space. Town Planner Hadik assured Chairman Chouinard that the wetlands are being protected. The wetlands are not part of the lots.

The Commission would like the back of the lots pinned and monumented, and no-cut areas marked before the lots are sold.

The developer will have to appear before the Commission to discuss a conservation easement.

No significant environment issues were identified, but monumentation has to occur and the conservation easement has to be brought forward and filed with the plans. A public hearing will be held to discuss and review the easement.

V. Miscellaneous Business

VI. Adjourn

Ms. Snyder moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary