

**Town of Chester  
Conservation Commission  
August 9, 2022  
7:00 PM  
Approved Minutes**

**Members present:**

Chairman Victor Chouinard  
Kristina Snyder  
Deb Munson  
Rick Sibley  
Kathleen Neff Ragsdale  
Ted Broadwater (joined at 7:05)  
Selectman Chuck Myette, Liaison

**Members absent:**

Nick Tranquillo

**Guests present:**

Eric McGowan  
Ann Podlipny  
Chester PACT

**I. Call to Order**

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

**II. New Business**

**A. Nick Tranquillo – Promote to Full Board Member**

Mr. Tranquillo was not present at the meeting. His promotion will occur at the next Commission meeting.

**B. Southwoods Conservation Easement Accepted**

An invoice for \$51.25 was received from Simplifile for filing the Southwoods conservation easement. Selectman Myette questioned if it was the responsibility of the Commission to pay this fee, as they haven't seen a charge like this in the past. Chairman Chouinard said the Town Planner filed the easement.

*Ms. Snyder moved to approve payment of the filing fee for the Southwoods conservation easement. Ms. Neff Ragsdale seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Mr. Broadwater, who abstained. The motion passed 6-0-1.*

After the easement was accepted, Chairman Chouinard discovered that a document existed listing covenants that reserve rights for use of the open space, including installing trails, benches, and up to two acres for recreational purposes. The Commission was not

48 aware that these covenants existed during the public hearing. There are no specifics  
50 regarding these recreational uses. Selectman Myette recommended discussing this issue  
52 with the Planning Board, as the existence of these covenants renders the documents filed  
useless. Chairman Chouinard will meet with the Planning Board to discuss this issue  
further.

**C. Colby Farm – Planning Board meeting summary**

54 Chairman Chouinard attended the first Planning Board meeting on Colby Farm and  
expressed that the Commission consists of laypeople who are not qualified to make  
56 decisions on culvert sizes, etc. The open space will be deeded to the Commission, and the  
developer needs to meet with the Commission regarding restrictions they want to see on  
58 the easement. Chairman Chouinard stressed that the open space needs to be monumented  
before the houses are sold and the developer agreed. The Town Planner said it is standard  
60 practice that the signage is installed at the beginning of a project.

62 Ms. Snyder reported that she and Ms. Munson attended the second Planning Board  
meeting, where a question was raised regarding the 250-foot coastal wetlands setback.  
64 Selectman Myette explained that the setback is measured from a specific reference line,  
which can vary depending on flood conditions and the meandering of the river. The  
66 setback was established using the original reference line from the map, which is the  
channel of the Exeter River. Residents said the reference line is incorrect due to flooding,  
68 beaver activity, sediment, etc. The developer will find out which reference line was used  
and how it was justified. There might be modifications to the plan, if the reference line is  
70 incorrect.

**D. Jenkins Farm – no-cut zone inquiry**

72 A Jenkins Farm resident notified the Town that he was concerned about dead trees in the  
no-cut zone that he believed were a safety hazard. Chairman Chouinard visited the site  
74 and found that the trees are on private property. At least one tree is in a no-cut area; he is  
unsure about the other three or four trees. He notified the resident that the trees can be  
76 removed, but as they are on private property, it is not the Town's responsibility to do so.

**E. Taking Action for Wildlife Team**

80 Ms. Munson reported that last summer, she applied for help from a community  
conservation cohort facilitated by the Taking Action for Wildlife Team, but the  
82 Commission was not awarded the grant. She applied again this year and the Commission  
was awarded the opportunity for the group to help with a conservation initiative. They  
84 will be sending a list of questions to clarify what kind of work the Commission has been  
doing and the kind of help they might need. Ms. Munson said on the application, she  
86 mentioned the issues with invasives and that the Town has conservation land that offers  
recreation opportunities, and that the Commission needs to walk the line between the  
88 two. The cohort will be available to help by wintertime. The Commission thanked Ms.  
Munson for her work on the application.

**F. Correspondence**

92 1. Chairman Chouinard received an invoice for \$1.77 for paper for the copier machine.

2. Eversource has a program for former employees/retirees. If they volunteer, they can apply for funding for projects. Ms. Munson applied for \$100 and a check was received.

3. Correspondence was received from the Scotts, who own property on Route 121, regarding constructing a storage building within the conservation easement area. Chairman Chouinard will research the language in the easement documentation regarding the intent for any structure built in an easement.

### III. Regular Business

#### A. Review Minutes – July 12, 2022

*Mr. Broadwater moved to approve the minutes from the July 12, 2022 meeting as written. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Mr. Sibley and Ms. Neff Ragsdale, who abstained. The motion passed 5-0-2.*

#### B. Subcommittee reports

##### 1. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported the following:

###### *Savings account:*

\$ 592,293.48 starting balance

263.50 interest

\$ 592,556.98 ending balance

###### *Conservation Forestry account:*

\$ 41,300.44 starting balance

18.40 interest

\$ 41,318.84 ending balance

###### *Lincoln Lane account:*

\$ 501.69 starting balance

0.22 interest

\$ 501.91 ending balance

Chairman Chouinard will contact the Lincoln Lane residents to find out their intention for the remaining funds.

###### *Emerson Conservation Easement:*

\$ 10,243.36 starting balance

4.56 interest

\$ 10,247.92 ending balance

*Regular account:*

\$ 1,200.00 starting balance  
5.70 miscellaneous expenditures  
1,194.93 ending balance, or 99.58% of budget

She reported that she received a year-end report showing expenditures for June of \$125 for Conservation dues, subscription, and seminars. There was also a Conservation miscellaneous credit of \$227.81. So, there was a credit of \$102.81 for June. She will contact the Town Financial Director to find out more about this.

***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 the Spring Hill Farm Fall Festival will be held September 10 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.. The Commission will have a table. There will be Millstone Wildlife Center ambassador animals, music, food trucks, and vendors, and looks to be bigger than last year's event.

The SHF quarterly newsletter was sent out last week. It included information on scientists reporting that the Monarch butterfly is imperiled. Ms. Snyder has received requests for milkweed seeds and information as a result.

Ms. Kim Rairdon has installed wooden trail markers and parking signs that are very suitable for the property.

The Ortins have goats on the property. The Board of Selectmen and the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee approved of their use to remove invasives. Their CSA is doing well in spite of the drought.

Doug Cygan, Invasive Species Coordinator from the Department of Agriculture, walked the property and discussed invasive plants. He hopes to have a table at the Fall Festival about invasive plants and species. Ms. Munson and Ms. Snyder have cleared out the buckthorn by the pond.

A design has been received for the ADA ramp, but it needs modification. Selectman Myette said the Trust has been give permission to do the construction inside and outside the farmhouse. Building Inspector Bunker will have to approve any work done.

Selectman Myette reported the first cut of haying is complete, totaling about 600 bales. They are hopeful they'll be able to get a second cut.

**3. Wason Pond Conservation Area**

Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported that a prospective Eagle Scout is interested in replacing the sign at the beach and presented a preliminary plan. There was a discussion about the size and he is reworking his design.

Discussions were held about adding sand to the beach. A particular kind is needed. This is something that Recreation will need to handle.

Concrete posts near the playground were loosened during the Firemen's Muster. A storm knocked over and destroyed a tent on the property as well.

Signs prohibiting horses and dogs from swimming in the pond between Memorial Day and Labor Day have been removed and need to be replaced.

Porta potties cannot be placed at the beach due to the inability of the bridge to handle the weight of the truck needed to clean them out. People are using the woods as a bathroom instead.

The milkweed and pollinator patch created and maintained by Ms. Munson near the Community Center is thriving.

Ms. Snyder reported that members of the Wason Pond Commission inspected the caretaker's cottage. Volunteers plan to clean it out. There has been no decision as to what to do with it. It cannot be used by the public as it is not ADA compliant.

Construction of the pavilion is still on hold. This project is in Recreation's hands.

The Recreation summer program ended August 5.

Ranger Wright said it has been very busy at Wason Pond as a result of the heat. Some vandalism has occurred.

There is no water flow under the bridge, so there has been no beaver activity.

Selectman Myette reported that the water is being tested again.

Chairman Chouinard said the engineering work is starting on the causeway bridge. Drilling will be done towards the end of the month.

#### **4. Easements, Monitoring, and Stewardship**

Chairman Chouinard reported that several baselines are queued up with the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD).

#### **IV. Non-public meeting - Strategic Land Protection**

*Chairman Chouinard asked for a motion to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II(d). Consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property which, if*

230 *discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to*  
232 *those of the general community. Ms. Munson made the motion and Mr. Broadwater*  
234 *seconded it. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

232 The cameras were turned off at 8:00 PM.  
The meeting room was reopened.

234 *A motion was made and seconded that the Commission come out of non-public session.*  
236 *A vote was taken and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

**V. Return to Regular Meeting**

238 *A motion was made and seconded to seal the minutes for the non-public session*  
*indefinitely. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

**VI. Adjourn**

242 *A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. A vote was taken and all were*  
244 *in favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

244 The meeting was adjourned.

246 Respectfully submitted,  
248 Beth Haggeli, Recording Secretary