

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

**Members present:**

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

**Members absent:**

Eric McGowan, Alternate

**Guests present:**

Chester PACT

**I. Call to Order**

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

**II. New Business**

**A. David Hardy's Will**

Chairman Chouinard reported that David Hardy was active with conservation efforts during his lifetime. In his will, he bequeathed \$25,000 to the Chester Conservation Fund to be used for land purchase, conservation easements, and/or acquisitions. The funds will go into the General Fund but specifically targeted as requested. The Commission discussed designating a trail or an area in his name.

**B. NHACC Conference Summary/Reimbursements**

*Mr. Broadwater moved to reimburse Ms. Snyder and Ms. Munson for the \$60 entry fee they each paid for the conference. Ms. Neff Ragsdale seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Ms. Snyder and Ms. Munson, who abstained. The motion passed 6-0-2.*

Ms. Munson shared highlights from the presentations she attended at the conference, including the effects of climate change on New Hampshire, using wildlife cameras for

46 conservation, and new national wetlands inventory maps. She described a presentation by  
48 Jack Dalton, a conservation-minded young man who has written a book on orangutangs.

Ms. Snyder shared highlights from the presentations she attended, which included how  
50 common wildlife connects people to place. Ms. Snyder suggested inviting the presenter to  
52 make a similar presentation for the Town, which could engage younger audiences.  
54 Selectman Myette suggested working with Chester Academy to arrange this presentation.  
She also attended presentations on anticipating climate change in conservation strategies  
and managing increased use of conservation land.

56 Selectman Myette noted that climate change has existed for centuries and is accelerating.  
58 He suggested the Commission look to the future and work with Planning, Recreation, and  
the Town to determine how to lessen the blow of increased usage of the land and the  
60 impact of climate change. The Commission should also consider the potential future uses  
of properties with conservation easements as the Town deals with demographic issues  
and climate change.

62

**C. Bat Barn Update**

64 Chairman Chouinard updated the Commission on the status of the Eagle Scout bat barn  
project. He has been working with the Eagle Scout candidate to find a suitable location  
66 for the bat barn. The barn has been reduced in size to a two-pole structure. The Natural  
Heritage Bureau (NHB) has approved locating the barn on the Loranger property.  
68 Selectman Myette noted there is a seldom-used airstrip on the property and Chairman  
Chouinard will mention this to the Scout candidate.

70

**D. Conservation Easements – Town-Owned Parcels**

72 Chairman Chouinard reported that he and Mr. Tranquillo met with the Board of  
Selectmen and the Planning Board regarding putting conservation easements on Town-  
74 owned parcels. PACT recorded the sessions and he invited the Commission members to  
watch the videotapes.

76

**E. Easement Monitoring Estimate**

78 Mr. Tranquillo is submitting nine parcels to the Rockingham County Conservation  
District (RCCD) for annual conservation easement monitoring, which will not begin until  
80 next year. There are baselines on most of the properties on the list, with the exception of  
those that need surveying and/or marking. He proposed that moving forward, members of  
82 the Commission could learn to monitor the easements. The Commission discussed the  
need to hire a surveyor to survey the properties that have not been surveyed. Selectman  
84 Myette suggested utilizing information from Google Maps to help with the monitoring  
process.

86

88 Selectman Myette suggested considering the intervals and frequency on monitoring  
conservation easements moving forward. Chairman Chouinard said they have reviewed  
the list and attempted to determine priorities.

90

92 *Mr. Broadwater moved to approve the easement monitoring estimate from RCCD for*  
93 *\$3,409. Ms. Munson seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The*  
94 *motion passed unanimously.*

94 **F. Public Outreach**

96 Ms. Munson attended a presentation by the East Kingston Conservation Commission on  
97 "Conserving Your Land." They have produced a brochure and have resources on their  
98 website on land protection.

100 Ms. Snyder said she and Ms. Munson would like to send out a mailer or postcard to  
101 Chester residents to educate them on the existence of and work done by the Conservation  
102 Commission. She invited any other members interested in this process to contact her.

104 The Commission discussed conducting a survey to obtain feedback from the public about  
105 their vision for the future of Chester. Selectman Myette suggested working with the  
106 Chester Planning Board and the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission, as the  
107 Master Plan will be updated in the next year or so and this information would be helpful.  
108

108 **G. Invasive Species**

110 Mr. Tranquillo reported that members of the Commission toured Spring Hill Farm and  
111 Wason Pond with representatives from RCCD to investigate the status of invasive  
112 species. RCCD submitted a estimate of \$4,830 to treat specific areas with low-impact  
113 herbicides. They explained their use of glyphosate and the characteristics of this  
114 herbicide. Ms. Neff Ragsdale expressed her concern about the use of Roundup on the  
115 property. Ms. Munson suggested asking the RCCD about the other herbicides they plan  
116 to use. The Commission discussed the dilemma of using chemicals to kill the invasives  
117 versus the damage the invasives cause, and the need to educate the public about  
118 invasives.

120 The Commission discussed how to dispose of the invasive plant debris once they are cut.  
121 Selectman Myette noted there will need to be restriction of the treated areas for public  
122 safety. The treatment would occur in the fall of 2023.

124 RCCD is unable to produce a proposal for Spring Hill Farm as they require GPS  
125 topographical raw data that is not in the Town's possession. They will also need a map  
126 where spraying should not take place. They can submit a proposal once they have this  
127 information. Ms. Snyder will share this information with the Spring Hill Farm Advisory  
128 Committee at their next meeting and find out if they are interested in these services. She  
129 will also send the information to the Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation  
130 Commission to address at their next meeting. Selectman Myette said the Board of  
131 Selectmen will need to approve this project as well.  
132

134 RCCD recommended having the area along the western edge of the fence mowed this  
135 year in preparation for treatment next year. Selectman Myette said the Town  
136 Maintenance Department is discussing brush hogging the invasives around the ballfields.

**III. Regular Business**

138 **A. Review Minutes – October 11, 2022**

140 On line 43, "National" should be "Natural."

142 *Ms. Snyder moved to approve the minutes from the October 11, 2022 meeting as*  
144 *amended. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor*  
*except Mr. Broadwater, who abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.*

146 **B. Subcommittee reports**

**1. Treasurer’s Report**

148 Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported the following:

*Savings account:*

\$ 592,600.33 starting balance  
765.17 interest  
\$ 593,365.50 ending balance

*Conservation Forestry account:*

\$ 41,390.27 starting balance  
53.44 interest  
\$ 41,443.71 ending balance

*Lincoln Lane account:*

\$ 385.97 starting balance  
0.50 interest  
\$ 386.47 ending balance

*Emerson Conservation Easement:*

\$ 10,265.64 starting balance  
13.26 interest  
\$ 10,278.90 ending balance

Selectman Myette explained that the Emerson Conservation Easement fund is monies set aside by the developer to pay for baseline and annual monitoring.

*Regular account:*

\$ 1,137.87 starting balance  
0.00 expenditures  
1,137.87 ending balance, or 94.82% of budget

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

182 Chairman Chouinard reported that Ms. Rhonda Lamphere, Town Treasurer, asked if  
184 the Commission anticipates any large purchases in the near future. As purchases are  
not predictable, he suggested she invest some of the Commission funds in short-term  
186 CDs, as interest rates are increasing.

## 2. Spring Hill Farm

188 Ms. Snyder reported that the Winter Festival will be held on February 18, 2023.  
There is a planning meeting on November 14 for any interested parties.

190  
192 She and Ms. Munson cut back some of the bittersweet on the property and reported  
the pond water level is very low.

194 She is having difficulties getting responses regarding the proposed Scout projects  
from RCCD due to New Hampshire Fish & Game not responding to requests,  
196 possibly due to understaffing issues. She has contacted other organizations with  
naturalist/ecologist staff that do wetland surveys. She will find out if Fish & Game  
198 will approve one of these services, if they are unable to conduct the surveys  
themselves. The Commission agreed that Boy Scout projects need to be restricted to  
200 projects that need to be done as opposed to projects the candidates propose, due to  
the amount of hurdles involved in getting them approved.

202  
204 Ms. Snyder clarified that her role on the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee is as  
a liaison to the Conservation Commission, as conservation needs a voice on this  
committee.

206

## 3. Wason Pond Conservation Area

208 Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported the fields are no longer being used this year. The  
engineer will meet with the Wason Pond committee regarding the design of the Ash  
210 Street Bridge on November 21 or 22. There are concerns that the sign being  
constructed by the Eagle Scout candidate is unstable, so Wason Pond Commission  
212 Chairman Chris Hadik will contact the candidate. The forest is encroaching on some  
of the fields and John Dalrymple is following up on this. Mr. Hadik is investigating  
214 what permits are needed to replace beach sand.

216 Ms. Snyder said the committee is excited about the bridge discussion. She and  
Chairman Chouinard will clear out under the bridge, after the recent rains. Ms. Neff  
218 Ragsdale commended Ms. Snyder on speaking out regarding wildlife and the  
beavers at the Wason Pond meeting. Ms. Snyder said she is on this committee to  
220 ensure that conservation has a voice.

222 Selectman Myette reviewed the history of Wason Pond and that it was purchased  
with conservation funds, but they negotiated to allow recreation and conservation  
224 activities on the property. The nature of the property is changing and there is  
pushback as a result, which is frustrating. Adaptations are being made, such as the  
226 new bridge, but the sides need to work together to come up with solutions that meet  
all interests.

228 Ms. Munson noted it is easy to get lost on the trails at Wason Pond. Selectman  
230 Myette said many of the signs have disappeared. Ms. Neff Ragsdale suggested  
blazing the trails.

232 **4. Easements, Monitoring, and Stewardship**  
234 Mr. Tranquillo said he contacted one of George Abdallah's sons regarding the  
Emerson property and the unsigned deed. He said he will have his brother, George  
236 Jr., who is the executor of the estate, contact Mr. Tranquillo to discuss and hopefully  
resolve this issue. Apparently, the estate is still in probate.

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

240 *Chairman Chouinard asked for a motion to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,*  
242 *II(d). Consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property which, if*  
244 *discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to*  
*those of the general community. Ms. Munson made the motion and Mr. Broadwater*  
*seconded it. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

The cameras were turned off at 9:10 PM.  
246 The meeting room was reopened.

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

250 **V. Return to Regular Meeting**

252 *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.*

254 **VI. Adjourn**

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

258 The meeting was adjourned.

260 Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary