

**Chester Conservation Commission
October 10, 2017
Approved Minutes**

Attendance

Chairman Chuck Myette
Baron Richardson
Deb Munson
Aaron Hume
Selectman Dick Trask
Ted Broadwater @7:02 pm

Absent

Phil Cassista

Guests:

Kathleen Neff Ragsdale
Selectman Owens
Eric Mitchell at 7: 12 pm

Call to Order

Chairman Myette called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, October 10, 2017.

New Business

1. Appointments

Chairman Myette urged everyone who had been before the BOS on September 28, 2017 to see the town clerk, Erin Newnan to have their oath sworn, except Aaron Hume who had done so previously.

Chairman Myette asked if anyone was interested in serving on Spring Hill Farm.

Chairman Myette reported that Wason Pond Commission needs two reps from Conservation, one Selectman, two from Recreation Commission, two at large and two alternates.

Chairman Myette reported that the Agricultural Committee needed a member.

Chairman Myette reported that Strategic Land Protection Committee has vacancies. So far, it has Chairman Myette, Selectman Owens and Mr. Broadwater. The first Tuesday could be a

working session. Mr. Broadwater recommended an outreach program. Selectman Trask advised that Conservation can have its own subcommittee but you can't have a committee that replaces the one that was set up by the warrant article.

Ms. Ragsdale reported that she was unable to attend the next meeting and Chairman Myette stated that it was ok, they were in no rush to appoint her and would wait for a few meetings first.

Mr. Broadwater will serve as Treasurer. Chairman Myette urged the other members to consider taking his place as Chairman next year, it was a good time to mentor the next chairman.

2. Alex Davis Public Hearing

Chairman Myette reported that there was no public in attendance at this meeting and read the notice of public hearing concerning the 27 acre parcel off Ledge Road, offered by the Alexis Davis Estate, Tax Map 008-016.

Mr. Davis' daughter wanted to see if the town wanted the property.

Chairman Myette reported that they have looked at the tax value, there are a number of factors, an out of state probate, purchase and sales agreement, title searches, etc. All were taken care of with Attorneys in North Carolina and here. P&S was signed October 2, 2017 by Alexis Davis and Selectman Trask signed off on behalf of the BOS. The price is \$45,000 for 27 acres plus expenses and claims which total \$54,184.27. It is free and clear to be sold. Closing date is October 31, 2017. Closing by proxy, the NC Attorneys won't come up for that.

Ms. Ragsdale inquired about the price being lower than market value. Chairman Myette explained that it was landlocked for the most part, \$2,000/acres is fairly reasonable. Ms. Munson remarked that there was a small unnamed body of water on the property as well.

Mr. Broadwater motioned to close the hearing to public session. Mr. Richardson seconded his motion, all in favor, by roll call, none opposed; motion carried. The public session was closed at 7:15 pm.

Mr. Broadwater motioned to accept and move forward with the purchase and sales agreement. Mr. Richardson seconded his motion, all in favor, none opposed; motion carried.

Chairman Myette will draft a letter, make the payment from the Conservation easement fund, upon signing by the Selectmen and the finance department, they will coordinate, receive the deed, file it and decide what conservation language gets associated with that.

Selectman Trask asked if they wanted easements on all the surrounding properties. Chairman Myette agreed.

Old Business

1. Review Minutes – September 12, 2017

Ms. Munson motioned to accept the minutes, amended as follows:

change nd to and and typographical to topographical

Mr. Hume seconded her motion, all in favor, with Mr. Hume abstaining, 4 in favor; motion carried.

2. Subcommittee Reports

A. Strategic Land Protection Committee - SLPC

Hawkins

Alexis Davis property off Ledge Road (27 acres)

Harantis Road 20 some odd acres, Kathy Sullivan drafting first documents

Crowley Road

Wells Village Road (25 acres) being priced out, asking \$120,000 so, not terribly strategic public service right of way, not much buildable, beyond where we want to be with it.

property on 121, reached out to Kevin Hatch left him voicemail, email. Mr. Broadwater reported needed surveying, owner very interested **Chester Turnpike**

B. Treasurer's Report (Ted Broadwater)

Mr. Broadwater reviewed the operating budget which is \$800.00.

Ms. Munson motioned to accept the operating budget. Mr. Hume seconded her motion. With all in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Broadwater reported that he received a bill for dues to NHA for \$330.00 who is meeting on November 4th.

Mr. Richardson motioned to pay the \$330.00 bill to NHH. Mr. Broadwater seconded his motion. With all in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Broadwater reported that he received a bill for SE Land Trust for \$50.00 which is in the operating budget.

Mr. Richardson motioned to pay the \$50.00 bill to SE Land Trust. Ms. Munson seconded his motion. With all in favor; motion carried.

C. Planning Board (Chuck Myette)

Chairman Myette reported that the Planning Board Crowley Woods Subdivision meeting is on October 11, 2017 and he will attend that, if anyone else is interested.

D. Trails (Aaron Hume)

Mr. Hume reported that he had trouble finding consistent access to mapping software in the past but assured there would be no problems going forward due to his new job.

Chairman Myette asked how many trails were mapped out. Mr. Hume reported that just networks of probably five to six spiderwebs in the area, a couple of miles in length, each. Mr. Hume reported that it was subject to change due to downed trees which were not good for the atvs. Chairman Myette inquired as to whether the trails appeared to be actively used. Mr. Hume responded that they were definitely in use. Chairman Myette reported that they had trail markers at Wason that are fading and need to be monumented with standard trail signage throughout all conservation properties. Selectman Owens asked if maps of the trails could be electronically produced. Mr. Hume responded in pdfs online and on the websites. Mr. Hume will get a rough draft of the mapping out before the next meeting.

E. Spring Hill Farm

Chairman Myette reported that there was nothing new at this time.

Mr. Broadwater asked what the maintenance plans were for when the occupants leave. Selectman Trask responded that it would be managed by the town's maintenance plan.

Mr. Broadwater asked what were the plans for the livestock. Chairman Myette responded that there was one cow and someone had stepped up to care for it as the occupants were not inclined to take the cow.

Mr. Broadwater asked what the plans were for equipment maintenance. Selectman Trask responded that it was the trust's responsibility. Chairman Myette advised that most of it is under cover or will be, before Winter.

F. Agricultural Commission (Chuck Myette)

Chairman Myette reported that there would be an Agricultural Commission meeting on the 4th Tuesday, every other month, and they are looking for new members. Chairman Myette reported that they put on a nice display at the town fair.

G. Regulations

H. Grants

I. Wason Pond Conservation Area (Chuck Myette)

Chairman Myette reported that the second bridge by the waterfall had been completed. The covered bridge was repaired, the barn roof was repaired. Dick Lewis cut up logs, almost finished with timbers.

Chairman Myette asked about the plans for the gazebo. Selectman Trask advised that that was up to the RECREATION COMMISSION and about some buy in from the commission to help pay for it. Mr. Broadwater asked about budget restrictions. Chairman Myette reported that they had spent money for the dam and covered bridges and the gazebo would depend on the timbers. Selectman Trask advised that building the gazebo was part of the original plan. Recreation Commission & Conservation could split the cost. Selectman Trask reported that most of its gone and when they have a spot for it they'll put it somewhere, in case they use it for the gazebo but a raised floor would be the way to go. Mr. Richardson would like to see concrete flooring, if timber framers are doing it, than having it up away from soil. Selectman Trask would like to see a ten sided structure.

Mr. Broadwater asked for more money for garbage removal and patrols. Selectman Trask reported that the BOS has arranged for snow removal for Spring Hill Farm and Wason. Selectman Trask reported that he would like to schedule the county workers for the beginning of November, for a week. Mr. Broadwater asked about removing the damaged sand bags.

J. Easements, Monitoring and Stewardship

Chairman Myette would like to work on the list by the next meeting.

Plan Reviews

1. Crowley Woods

Chairman Myette acknowledged Eric Mitchell for Crowley Woods at 7:25 pm.

Mr. Mitchell reported that he had come into the last meeting with a sample conservation easement deed that proposed no hunting (guns, bows or arrows) to discuss how it will be owned. More recently towns have held the land with the restrictions for that. On other occasions it resided with an association of owners with the option to go to SE Land Trust or some other public trust.

Mr. Richardson advised that they had bad experiences with maintaining, encroachments, the town would have better control of. Ms. Munson agreed. Mr. Broadwater asked how the right of way is set up to access.

Selectman Trask opined that he would like hunting allowed. Mr. Mitchell expressed concerns about the closeness to the homes and the Town's right to post. Ms. Munson advised that we would want to know the dimensions, it backs up against conservation on either side, there are laws about discharging firearms within so many feet of homes. Mr. Hume advised that he has been back there, you can walk from Crowley to Gardner, there is a whole lot of woods back there. Mr. Mitchell pointed out the access points on the map, abutting areas that were town owned. Mr. Broadwater asked if there would be room to drive a log truck through, and fire equipment, how much space would Mr. Lewis need? Mr. Mitchell responded that with double or triple width.

Mr. Mitchell emphasized that the easement allows for forest management for the purposes of wildlife improvement. A report of a wildlife biologist and forestry management plan would be required to be no older than ten years or less than 60 days with notice to the grantor.

Mr. Broadwater asked about the invasive species clause and nuisance and diseased or anything leaning into trails that could pose a hazard and Mr. Mitchell advised that those would be permitted removals without forestry management and biology studies.

Mr. Mitchell advised that endangered turtles were a concern and that they would use a Cape Cod berm.

Mr. Mitchell explained the new requirements that prevented seals from failing with additional casing on wells than previously required to get a proper seal.

Mr. Mitchell departed the meeting at 8:22 pm.

Selectman Owens departed the meeting at 8:36 pm.

Miscellaneous Business

1. Web Page update

Selectman Trask reported that Deb Doda was handling the new web page.

2. NHACC Meeting

Chairman Myette reminded everyone that November 4th was the NHACC meeting.

3. October 28, 8:30 – 12:30, Farm Tractors Back to the Basics, Bridgewater, NH

4. Ms. Munson reported that she was attending *Synergy behind Land Conservation* with Sylvia Bates featured speaker.

5. Correspondence

Chairman Myette reported receiving the Crowley woods vernal pool and northern long eared bat study.

Adjournment

Mr. Richardson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Broadwater seconded his motion, all in favor; motion carried. The meeting of the Chester Conservation Commission was adjourned at 8:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Hoijer,
Recording Secretary