

**Town of Chester  
Conservation Commission  
December 13, 2022  
7:00 PM  
Approved Minutes**

*Broadcast on Channel 20 and streamed on Government (cablecast.tv) – click “Watch Now”*

**Members present:**

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

**Guests present:**

Kevin Scott  
Chester PACT

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Chouinard called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**II. New Business**

**A. Public Hearing – P&S Agreement**

Chairman Chouinard read the Notice of Public Hearing regarding Map/ Lot 008-018-004 with respect to that certain area of vacant land and improvements thereon, consisting of 10.00 acres more or less, located on Ledge Road in the Town of Chester, County of Rockingham, State of New Hampshire, owned by George W. Noyes and Linda Noyes.

Chairman Chouinard opened the public portion of the meeting.

The property is a 10-acre parcel surrounded by Town-owned land. This purchase will tie the Town-owned properties together. The emphasis of the Conservation Commission is to build continuous tracts of land.

Kevin Scott of 261 Chester Street asked if the property will be protected by a conservation easement. Chairman Chouinard replied that it would and he hopes to have

the easement drafted by next month's meeting. Mr. Scott invited the members of the Commission to cross his property to access the Town-owned land adjacent to his.

Mr. Tranquillo offered a draft of an easement that could be used for this parcel. Chairman Chouinard said there are special requests from the Noyes that will need to be addressed in the easement.

*Ms. Neff Ragsdale moved to accept the purchase and sales agreement as stated. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Selectman Myette, who abstained as the Selectmen liaison, as he will vote at the Board of Selectmen meeting. The motion passed 7-0-1.*

Chairman Chouinard explained the funds for the purchase were obtained through a donation of \$25,000 to the Conservation Commission from Mr. David Hardy, deceased.

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

#### **B. New Conservation Easement Reviews**

Mr. Tranquillo presented draft easements for three parcels (8-13, 7-62, and 7-63, all in the North Woods area) that the Town voted to attach easements to at the 1999 Town Meeting. He commended Nancy Hoijer for the work she did on the documentation. There is an additional parcel on Fremont Road with significant shoreline on the Exeter River that he has not had time to review. Chairman Chouinard volunteered to inspect the Fremont Road property to understand the nature of it.

The Commission thanked Mr. Tranquillo for the work he has done on this project.

Chairman Chouinard suggested changes to the normal easement documentation that include reserving the right for the Commission to have input on logging projects in terms of wildlife management. Selectman Myette noted that the Town is responsible for enforcing the terms of a conservation easement.

Selectman Myette suggested adding wording to give a Town-approved designee authority over easements, in case the Conservation Commission ceases to exist. The Commission agreed that wording should be added that this designee would need to follow best practices in overseeing the easement.

#### **C. RCCD's Invasive Plant Removal Proposal Vote**

The Commission acknowledged they have no jurisdiction over the decisions the Wason Pond Commission (WPC) and the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee (SHFAC) make regarding respective properties.

The Commission discussed the planned use of Roundup by the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) representative to remove invasive plants. Mr. Broadwater shared information obtained from a representative from the state of Vermont that they use

90 this method to deal with invasives and that the chemical becomes relatively inert once it  
92 enters the soil. The danger is to the people applying it or walking through it directly after  
application.

94 Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported that the members of the WPC were divided on the use of  
Roundup. They did stress it should not be used near the playground. The SHFAC will  
96 need to note where spraying would not be favorable at Spring Hill Farm regarding  
farming operations, etc.

98 Ms. Snyder said the public might need to have input moving forward, as they are  
100 stakeholders. Ms. Munson suggested that there should be education for Town residents  
regarding identification and management of invasives.

102 *Mr. Broadwater moved to approve the RCCD's plan, with the caveat that they do not*  
104 *use chemicals around the playground area at Wason Pond. Mr. Tranquillo seconded*  
106 *the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Ms. Neff Ragsdale. Selectman*  
*Myette abstained as the Selectmen liaison, as he will vote at the Board of Selectmen*  
*meeting. The motion passed 6-1-1.*

#### 108 **D. Conservation Commission Open Space Plan**

110 Mr. Tranquillo asked what role the Conservation Commission plays in creating the  
Chester Master Plan, which will be addressed next year. This is a document produced by  
112 the Chester Planning Board. He suggested the Commission should have a voice in  
creating this plan, to represent concerns about the preservation of agricultural lands and  
114 the rural nature of the town. He referenced a document from the Town of Raymond that  
could be used as a guide. The Commission agreed they should have an active role in  
116 creating the next Master Plan.

#### 118 **E. Prime Wetlands**

Mr. Tranquillo asked why a prime wetland survey was performed but nothing was done  
120 with it. Selectman Myette explained the topic was taken to the Town at a public hearing,  
but many people were opposed to it. The lands were not owned by the Town, so it  
122 potentially could devalue their land for future development.

#### 124 **F. Public Outreach Update**

The Commission agreed to send out a mailing that highlights what the Commission does  
126 as part of their regular activities, including easements and land protection. They feel the  
Town residents should be aware of what the Commission does and how it benefits them.

#### 128 **G. New start time**

130 Starting in January 2023, the start time for the Conservation Commission meetings will  
be moved to 6:00 p.m.

#### 132 **H. Town Report**

134 Chairman Chouinard noted that the Commission's contribution to the annual Town  
Report is due on January 27, 2023.

136 **III. Regular Business**

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

140 On line 212, Ms. Neff Ragsdale asked for clarification as to whether Chairman Hadik or  
142 Chairman Chouinard was being referenced. On line 67, the Natural Heritage Bureau was  
incorrectly named.

144 *Mr. Tranquillo moved to approve the minutes from the November 11, 2022 meeting as*  
146 *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.*

148 **B. Subcommittee reports**

150 **1. Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported the following:

152 *Regular account:*

154 \$ 1,137.87 starting balance  
120.00 expense (seminars)  
1,017.87 ending balance, or 84.82% of budget

156 *Savings account:*

158 \$ 593,365.50 starting balance  
550,000.00 moved to a jumbo CD  
440.10 interest earned  
\$ 43,805.60 ending balance

162 (The CD earned \$1,243.15 in interest and has a current balance of \$551,243.15.)

164 Chairman Chouinard noted that are enough funds in the savings account to pay for  
166 the Noyes property purchase. The \$25,000 donation has not yet been received.

168 *Conservation Forestry account:*

170 \$ 41,443.71 starting balance  
40,000.00 moved to a Jumbo CD  
29.23 interest before funds were moved over  
172 \$ 1,472.94 ending balance

174 (The CD earned \$90.41 in interest and has a current balance of \$40,090.41.)

176 *Lincoln Lane account:*

178 \$ 386.47 starting balance  
0.62 interest  
\$ 387.09 ending balance

180 *Emerson Conservation Easement:*

\$ 10,278.90 starting balance  
10,000.00 taken out  
7.17 credit  
\$ 286.07 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.

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

## **2. Spring Hill Farm**

Ms. Snyder reported the Winter Festival is planned for Feb 18<sup>th</sup>, from 12-5 p.m. They are looking for volunteers. The next working group meeting is on January 9 at 6:30 pm.

Regarding the Eagle Scout kiosks, the final decision from the RCCD is that one can be placed near the high tunnel, but approval was not obtained to place one near the pond. It was suggested that it could be placed by the farmhouse instead and display information on the history of the farm. RCCD is still waiting for approval from New Hampshire Fish & Game regarding placement of the kiosk by the pond. If they obtain this, the kiosk could be moved from the farmhouse to the pond.

The Commission has requested a proposal for a survey of the area by the pond to determine what types of wildlife are present.

## **3. Wason Pond Conservation Area**

Ms. Snyder reported DuBois & King gave a presentation on the causeway bridge. Ms. Neff Ragsdale said the design selected (a three-sided box with railings) is reported to be the best option in terms of dealing with beavers.

The Commission discussed the use of the Wason Pond conservation area, as it experiences a great deal of activity. At the WPC meeting, Recreation Director Reishus explained that the Conservation Commission is invited to the TRC meetings, where activities are discussed, but no one is able to attend. WPC Chairman Chris Hadik is going to add a section to the TRC form noting the proper use of the conservation area. Chairman Chouinard said the RCCD needs to know what is going on in the conservation area as well.

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

Mr. Tranquillo said in recent weeks, the annual monitoring on 6 of 12 easements has been completed. Six more easements will be monitored in the coming weeks. Four baselines have been completed and four more are pending.

Chairman Chouinard noted that the Conservation Commission will bring two Warrant Articles to the Town Meeting to obtain conservation easements on two Town-owned parcels, one in the South Woods and the other is the Pomp Road wetland property.

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

The cameras were turned off at 8:45 PM.  
The meeting room was reopened.

*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.*

**V. Return to Regular Meeting**

*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**

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

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary