

Town of Chester
Conservation Commission – Business Meeting
April 11, 2023
6:00 PM
Approved Minutes

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

Members present:

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

Members absent:

Rick Sibley
Kathleen Neff Ragsdale
Eric McGowan, Alternate

Guests present:

Amanda Stone, UNH Cooperative Extension
Barbara Richter, NHACC
Doug MacGuire, The Dubay Group, Inc.
David Haddad, DJ Development
Ash Draper, public guest
Mikael Cejtin, public guest
Chester PACT

I. Call to Order

Chair Chouinard called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

II. New Business/Updates

A. HACC / UNH Coop Extension in-person discussion

Ms. Stone and Ms. Richter reviewed the checklist of natural resource conservation priorities the Commission has been compiling. They outlined available resources that can be helpful as the Commission finalizes the list. They also discussed how this checklist can be used to evaluate parcels that could potentially be purchased as conservation land and help determine the important conservation aspects of each property.

44 Selectman Myette noted this checklist will help to document why a parcel is desirable,
including the features it offers (i.e. waterfalls, cedar swamps). The Commission discussed
46 the various ways this checklist could be used moving forward.

48 The Commission thanked Ms. Stone and Ms. Richter for their assistance with this
process.

50 The Commission discussed the open space subdivisions and the encroachment issues
involved. As there are few land trusts that will accept this land, the Town has to accept it,
52 along with the associated issues of monitoring and enforcement of the easements, which
is time-consuming and difficult. Even when the Town does not own the land, the issue of
54 enforcement falls to the Conservation Commission, although it has no authority. The
Commission discussed the difficulties involved in enforcement.

56 **B. Public Hearing**

58 **a. 78 Raymond Road Conservation Easement**

60 *Ms. Munson moved to open the Public Hearing for the conservation easement*
62 *at 78 Raymond Road. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A vote was taken,*
all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

64 Mr. MacGuire of The Dubay Group, representing property owner David Haddad
66 of DJ Development, presented plans for a nine-unit single family home
condominium open space development located on the former site of a restaurant
68 and golf driving range. It has been presented to the Planning Board, where
Chairman Chouinard brought up issues that needed to be addressed.

70 The garage of the rear unit was located near the conservation setback; it has been
72 relocated to over 25 feet from the setback line. Another house and proposed septic
area were close to the setback line and have been moved as well. Chairman
74 Chouinard thanked Mr. MacGuire for the alterations, which make the easement
easier to monitor.

76 The project has been conditionally approved by the Planning Board, subject to
78 finalizing items that include ironing out the open space conservation easement,
which the attorneys are working on. Chairman Chouinard noted the Commission
80 does not have a final version of the documentation.

82 *Mr. Broadwater moved to approve the warranty deed, including the*
conservation easement, minus the paragraph under reserved rights to construct
84 *and maintain trails. Mr. Tranquillo seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all*
were in favor except Selectman Myette, who will sign as a Selectman. The
86 *motion passed 5-0-1.*

88 Chairman Chouinard asked for public comment.

Ms. Draper thanked the Commission members for protecting what they can of the local land.

Mr. Tranquillo moved to close the Public Hearing on 78 Raymond Road. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Colby Farm Conservation Easement

Mr. Broadwater moved to open the Public Hearing for the Colby Farm Conservation Easement. Mr. Tranquillo seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Chouinard noted the Commission reviewed the plans many months ago. The open space will be deed to the Town, with no requests for exceptions to the standard conservation easement. The easement will be monumented before any homesites are sold. There was a question as to whether all parties have reviewed the documentation.

The Commission discussed the formatting of the documentation and agreed a consistent format needs to be maintained moving forward. A discussion followed regarding filing conservation easements separate from warranty deeds. It was determined that this issue be tabled until the documentation is correct and contains all of the required information.

Mr. Broadwater moved to continue the Public Hearing until there are two separate documents (warranty deed and conservation easement) in the correct format, with the correct meets and bounds, that has been approved by the developer. Mr. Tranquillo seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Chairman Chouinard, who abstained. The motion passed 5-0-1.

Chairman Chouinard asked for public comment, but there was none.

Mr. Broadwater moved to continue the Public Hearing for the Colby Farm Conservation Easement. Mr. Tranquillo seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Public Outreach Update

Ms. Snyder reported there will be a presentation by the author of a book about engaging children in nature activities at 6:00 p.m. on August 3, 2023 in coordination with the Chester Library's summer reading program.

D. Town Fair Participation

The Chester Town Fair will be held September 9th. The Commission agreed to have a table, as they have done in the past. Mr. Tranquillo suggested creating a flyer to hand out

to participants to inform them about the Conservation Commission's activities, purpose, and accomplishments.

E. Naming the Town Forest

The Commission discussed naming the Town Forest. This area has historically been known as the North Woods.

Mr. Broadwater moved to name the newly formed Town Forest the North Woods Town Forest. Mr. Tranquillo seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Pomp Road Conservation Easement

Chairman Chouinard presented the standard forestry declaration for the Pomp Road Conservation Easement, which is primarily wetlands. If it is approved, it will be taken to the Board of Selectmen for approval.

Mr. Tranquillo moved to accept the Pomp Road Conservation Easement as written. Ms. Munson seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Selectman Myette, who will vote on it as a Selectman. The motion passed 5-0-1.

Ms. Munson moved to move the wording on page 4 of the conservation easement that describes the location of the property to the first page of the document for ease of identification. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Regular Business

A. Review Minutes – March 13, 2023

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the March 13, 2023 meeting as written. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Mr. Broadwater, who abstained. The motion passed 5-0-1.

B. Subcommittee reports

1. Treasurer's Report

Chairman Chouinard offered the Treasurer's Report for February, in Ms. Neff Ragsdale's absence:

Regular Conservation account:

\$ 649.73 starting balance

53.40 printing costs

\$ 596.33 ending balance

Savings account:

\$ 89,615.79 starting balance

192.69 interest
\$ 89,808.48 ending balance

Conservation Forestry account:
\$ 1,482.21 starting balance
3.19 interest
\$ 1,485.40 ending balance

Lincoln Lane account:
\$ 389.53 starting balance
0.84 interest
\$ 390.37 ending balance

Emerson Conservation Easement:
\$ 287.87 starting balance
00.62 interest
\$ 288.49 ending balance

Conservation Forestry CD: (jumbo CD earning 3.75%)
\$ 40,362.25 starting balance
128.87 interest
\$ 40,591.12 ending balance

Regular Conservation account CD: (jumbo CD earning 3.75%)
\$ 556,355.97 starting balance
1,771.96 interest
\$ 558,127.93 ending balance

Emerson Conservation Easement CD: (CD earning 3.75%)
\$ 10,115.56 starting balance
32.22 interest
\$ 10,147.78 ending balance

For the third quarter, Town Treasurer Rhonda Lamphere reported there was a transfer from the General Fund to the Conservation Account for \$15,272.50, which is derived from Conservation revenues of \$25,100.00 (\$25,000 check from the David Hardy estate and \$100 from Eversource) minus \$9,827.50 (mainly baseline monitoring expenses).

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

2. Spring Hill Farm Update

Ms. Snyder reported the company performing the detailed wildlife and plant inventory is scheduled to begin April 12th. She looked for additional funding to track

specific species and found possibilities for next year, but nothing available for this year.

A grant application has been submitted to AARP.

A member of the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee (SHFAC) has created a brochure that describes the history and the current activities of Spring Hill Farm, which will be available at locations around town.

The SHFAC discussed asking visitors to keep dogs on leashes at specific times of the year. Rather than posting signs, this request will be included in the newsletter. When the kiosk is erected, this request and information can be posted there. If an ordinance is needed in the future, this can be addressed at that point.

Selectman Myette noted the cattlemen signed a new lease as of April 1. The Ortins signed a new lease for the High Tunnel as of January 1. The Ortins are still looking for people to sign up for their CSA.

3. Wason Pond Conservation Area

Ms. Snyder reported the ranger has begun to patrol the property. The trails were muddy last week. Selectman Myette said the trails are in better shape now, although there are trees that need to be removed on the garage and on some of the trails. There is a contract to remove the tree from the garage and the Town Maintenance Department will work on the trees on the trails.

The Wason Wrangler is being held on May 20th (the former Pounder).

The date for treating the invasive plants is tentatively June or July. The Maintenance Department will contact the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) to discuss brush-hogging foliage along the field before the treatment.

4. Easements, Monitoring, and Stewardship

Mr. Tranquillo updated the Commission on the status of baseline and monitoring reports. Violations were discovered and the Building Inspector has been notified. He has sent George Abdallah Jr. the Emerson Road easement documentation for signature.

Chairman Chouinard sent a letter to the owners on Penacook, informing them that the Conservation Commission would be out there sometime in April setting some boundary stakes as the conservation easement is not marked. He and Mr. Broadwater will survey and stake the property this month so that RCCD can complete a baseline.

5. Strategic Land Protection

Chairman Chouinard had nothing to report.

V. Next meeting: May 9, 2023

274 **VI. Adjourn**

276 *Mr. Tranquillo moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A*
278 *vote was taken and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

278 The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

280

280 Respectfully submitted,
282 Beth Haggeli, Recording Secretary