

**Town of Chester**  
**Conservation Commission – Business Meeting**  
**May 17, 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

**Members absent:**

Rick Sibley  
Kathleen Neff Ragsdale  
Eric McGowan, Alternate  
Selectwoman Dana Theokas

**Guests present:**

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. Lot 008-016 / 005-097 Update**

Chairman Chouinard updated the Commission regarding the question of ownership of the North Woods lot (008-016). He explained this issue was discovered by accident; it was not the Commission’s intent to bring up this issue at this time. It has caused delay on the developer’s part (regarding lot 005-097) and needs to be resolved as soon as possible.

The legal firm that worked on this deed in the past has done a title search and does not believe the title to 005-097 is clouded by the Town’s deed to 008-016. They have not issued a definitive answer yet.

Chairman Chouinard noted this is a confusing situation. There is a conservation easement on 008-016. There is concern regarding the legality of an open space subdivision, if someone else owns the open space.

Chairman Chouinard proposed that when a final decision is reached, if the Commission is not satisfied with the results, they should do their own validation of the deed.

*Mr. Tranquillo moved that should it be necessary, the Conservation Commission will contract for an independent title search to investigate this mystery. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **B. PREP NRI Grant Update**

Mr. Tranquillo submitted a grant application on April 28<sup>th</sup> for the Piscataqua Region Environmental Planning Assessment (PREP) grant for \$25,000 to fund the production of a natural resources inventory (NRI). However, the Commission was not awarded the grant. There was no explanation of this decision. Chairman Chouinard commended Mr. Tranquillo on the job he did on the application.

Mr. Tranquillo investigated the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources \$20,000 Conservation License Plate Grant Program (the Moose Plate Grant). He discovered that the criteria focus on cultural resources and the restoration of buildings, not conservation. Chairman Chouinard noted this program is weighted heavily on the heritage side of conservation and heritage. So, this is not an appropriate grant for the Commission to apply for.

#### **C. Open Space and Master Plan**

Mr. Tranquillo led a discussion of the Town open space and master plan process. A survey sent to residents as part of the 2015 Master Plan revealed that 77.5% of respondents feel that preservation of open space is important. He spoke with Town Planner Hadik, who shared the Planning Board's timeline for the next Master Plan. The final plan will be ready for a Public Hearing in July 2025, with final publication in August 2025.

The NRI is an essential tool to inform the future development and progress of the Town and should be part of the Master Plan. Chairman Chouinard noted that the Town is required by law to complete a town-wide NRI. Mr. Tranquillo will solicit competitive bids to have the NRI completed and find out if there are Town funds available to pay for it as part of the cost of the Master Plan. If not, the Commission will fund it.

#### **D. Mikael Cejtin Appointment**

Mr. Mikael Cejtin was appointed as an alternate member to the Chester Conservation Commission. He introduced himself and said he moved to Chester a year ago, and both studied and works in conservation.

88 The Commission noted that they appreciate his enthusiasm and feel that his input is  
90 critical. He will be appointed by the Board of Selectmen as a new member in the coming  
92 weeks. He is very excited to be a part of the Commission.

92 ***Ms. Munson moved to add Mr. Mikael Cejtin to the Chester Conservation Commission***  
94 ***as an alternate member. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in***  
***favor. The motion passed unanimously.***

#### E. Conservation Easement(s) Approval

- 96 1. Mr. Tranquillo explained that an easement has been created that covers four parcels  
98 (the Perkins-Illig property). For ease of record-keeping and reference, four adjacent  
parcels have been added to this easement (the Hatton property).

100 ***Mr. Broadwater moved to amend the Perkins-Illig easement deed to include the***  
102 ***Hatton lot. Mr. Tranquillo seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in***  
***favor. The motion passed unanimously.***

- 104 2. Mr. Tranquillo explained that the Finney parcel is located on Lane Road. It was  
106 donated to the Town for back taxes owed. It is proposed that the normal forestry  
easement be placed on it.

108 ***Mr. Broadwater moved to proceed in placing a conservation easement as drafted on***  
110 ***the Finney property. Ms. Munson seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were***  
***in favor. The motion passed unanimously.***

- 112 3. Mr. Tranquillo reported that a separate easement document has been created for the  
114 Jenkins Farm deed. Chairman Chouinard reported the Jenkins Farm Homeowners  
Association seems to understand that the conservation easement needs to be abided  
116 by.

118 ***Mr. Broadwater moved to put a conservation easement on the Jenkins Farm open***  
***subdivision land. Mr. Tranquillo seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in***  
***favor. The motion passed unanimously.***

- 120 4. Chairman Chouinard described the 41-acre Exeter River lot, which is located where  
122 Fremont Road crosses the river to Hanson Road. It is mostly floodplain and river. It  
was approved for a conservation easement in the 1990s by Warrant Article, but hasn't  
124 been done. Due to the nature of the property, it does not require a forestry easement,  
so this will be a protection easement. It will include a provision that if alternation is  
126 needed for wildlife habitat improvement, this could occur.

128 ***Mr. Tranquillo proposed to accept the conservation easement for the Exeter River***  
130 ***parcel. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor.***  
***The motion passed unanimously.***

**III. Regular Business**

**A. Review Minutes – May 9, 2023**

*Ms. Munson moved to approve the minutes from the May 9, 2023 meeting as written. Mr. Broadwater seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Mr. Tranquillo, who abstained. The motion passed 4-0-1.*

**B. Subcommittee reports**

**1. Treasurer's Report**

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

*Regular Conservation account:*

\$ 596.33 starting balance  
0.00 expenses  
\$ 596.33 ending balance

*Savings account:*

\$ 89,808.48 starting balance  
218.75 interest  
\$ 90,027.23 ending balance

*Conservation Forestry account:*

\$ 1,485.40 starting balance  
3.62 interest  
\$ 1,489.02 ending balance

*Lincoln Lane account:*

\$ 390.37 starting balance  
0.95 interest  
\$ 391.32 ending balance

*Emerson Conservation Easement:*

\$ 288.49 starting balance  
00.70 interest  
\$ 289.19 ending balance

*Conservation Forestry CD: (jumbo CD earning 3.75%)*

\$ 40,591.12 starting balance  
125.11 interest  
\$ 40,716.23 ending balance

*Regular Conservation account CD: (jumbo CD earning 3.75%)*

178           \$ 558,127.93 starting balance  
              1,720.25 interest  
180           \$ 559,848.18 ending balance

182           *Emerson Conservation Easement CD: (CD earning 3.75%)*  
              \$ 10,147.80 starting balance  
184               31.28 interest  
              \$ 10,179.08 ending balance

186  
188           *Mr. Broadwater moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented by*  
              *Chairman Chouinard. Mr. Tranquillo the motion. A vote was taken, all were in*  
190           *favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

**V. Non-Public Meeting: Strategic Land Protection**

192           *Chairman Chouinard asked for a motion to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,*  
194           *II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of*  
              *any person, other than a member of this board, unless such person requests an open*  
196           *meeting. This exemption shall extend to include any application for assistance or tax*  
              *abatement or waiver of a fee, fine or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of*  
198           *the applicant. Mr. Broadwater made the motion and Mr. Tranquillo seconded the*  
              *motion. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

              The cameras were turned off at 7:18 PM.  
200           The meeting room was reopened.

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

**204 VII. Return to Regular Meeting**

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

**208 VI. Next meeting: June 13, 2023**

**210 VII. Adjourn**

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

214           The meeting was adjourned.

216           Respectfully submitted,  
              Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary