

**Town of Chester
Wason Pond Commission Meeting
Monday, February 6th, 2017
PACT Studio Meeting Room
Approved Minutes**

I. Call to Order – Open Meeting

As Acting Chairman, Mr. Myette called this meeting of the Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Commission to order at 7:00pm.

Members Present:

Chris Hadik, Member at Large
Kevin Kistler, Recreation Commission
Stephen O. Landau, Selectman Liaison
Chuck Myette, Acting Chair; Treasurer / Conservation Commission
Darrell Quinn, Alternate
Corinna Reishus, Recreation Commission
Herb Rowell, Alternate / Chester Seniors

Members Absent:

Patrick Connelly
Tom Edwards, Member at Large

Members of the Public Present at Various Times:

Lisa Hiscox
Melinda Mafera
Maria Oakley
Jay Rowden
Jason Sharp
Beth Swanson
Michelle Trask
David Veale
Maria Veale

II. Treasurer's Report & Budget

Mr. Myette appeared before the Selectmen last Thursday to discuss the Wason Pond budget; which the Selectmen accepted to move forward with no issues.

Mr. Landau mentioned that Police Chief Berube plans to train the recently-hired Auxiliary Police Officer to cover Wason Pond security this Summer. Mr. Landau has also engaged in discussion of the Barn repair project with many different individuals and encouraged the Commission to determine how best to promote the project. Roof estimates have been obtained by Mr. Amato of Maintenance, it is uncertain whether this needs to be done this year; consideration of alternate sources of funding was suggested. A feasibility study would enable long-term planning for historical, in-kind restoration. Also mentioned was the proposal to bring the position of Recreation Director from Part-Time to Full-Time. Although in its very preliminary stages, the Town's 2017/2018 Budget is already up about twelve percent (12%).

Mr. Myette encouraged Commission members to consider stepping up to fulfill the position of Treasurer.

The Selectmen determined that Security Services rendered by Securitas last summer should be placed in the Wason Pond budget; therefore an expense of three thousand three hundred and sixty dollars (\$3,360) had been placed in the Miscellaneous line. Mr. Hadik was concerned that this could be an issue and Mr. Landau assured that it would not be a problem. Placing a "Security" or "Public Safety" line in the Budget was suggested. A negative balance of two thousand four hundred and six dollars (\$2,406) remains in the Wason Pond budget, as no monies have been spent otherwise from the preexisting balance of nine hundred and fifty-four dollars (\$954.00).

Ms. Reishus moved to accept the Treasurer's Report; Mr. Quinn seconded the motion. The vote was seven in favor with Messrs. Connelly and Edwards absent; so moved.

III. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 9th, 2017 meeting were reviewed. Mr. Landau moved to accept the minutes; Ms. Reishus seconded the motion. The vote was six in favor with Messrs. Connelly and Edwards absent and with Mr. Kistler abstaining due to absence from said meeting; so moved.

IV. Recreation Commission

Ms. Reishus submitted a Maintenance Request for removal of the non-functioning refrigerators in the old store which had been used for storage. Ms. Reishus will email photos of the units to Commission members.

Ms. Reishus asked the Commission whether they wished to be informed each time an in-Town organization submits a Field Use Request Form with deposit waived; the Commission authorized the Recreation Department to handle Field Use applications. Chester Academy is holding a Full Moon hike and Ms. Reishus has informed Mr. Amato of trees in need of attention, especially one notched by a Beaver.

V. Conservation Commission

Mr. Myette mentioned that Deb Munson of the Conservation Commission had recently attended a workshop on Trail Mapping. Communities are encouraged to connect with one another to form a network of trails, particularly with points of interest (i.e. old Class VI & logging roads, waterfalls, cellar holes, rare old trees, etc.). The majority of trails are quite short and no negative aspects were identified. Aaron Hume has been enlisted to perform Trail Mapping on a Part-Time basis. Once the mapping has been completed, Mr. Myette feels it would be appropriate to compose a brochure for in-Town distribution.

VI. Master Plan & Ball Fields

Mr. Myette explained that the primary document governing the use of Wason Pond was the Conservation Easement, followed by the Master Plan and then the Management Plan. The Easement is certified and cannot be changed; it covers the footprint of the Area with the exception of the actual buildings. The Master Plan outlines uses for the Area; while the Management Plan describes policies and items such as colors and materials which may be used, etc.

The term “low-impact” was mentioned; Ms. Reishus confirmed that this was defined on page 22 of the Master Plan. Full-color conceptual plans drawn by Bill Gregsak were displayed, and members of the public in attendance engaged in the discussion relative to placement of Little League and Softball diamonds. Ms. Reishus noted that Recreation Commission has not deviated from its goals as in the Master Plan; Mr. Myette wondered what degree of flexibility may exist in achieving a balance between the Conservation and Recreation aspects of the Area. Some felt that inclusion of such ball fields had been implicit in selling the idea of acquiring the Area to the Town; others noted that many residents are concerned with how much money would be invested in the Area, which was initially believed to bring little to no cost to taxpayers.

Mr. Myette felt it would be wise for the interested parties not to depend on Wason Pond to fulfill their athletic pursuits and reminded of the existence of the Strategic Land Protection Committee for long-term planning. David Veale of Chester Field of Dreams noted that over a hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000+) and several years of volunteerism had already been invested to get this far at Wason and that it would take at least that much to start from scratch elsewhere. Jay Rowden and Jason Sharp of Chester Baseball & Softball noted that scheduling games was challenging due to lack of diamonds; and lack of players’ access to practice areas was a serious issue.

Irrigation and chemical treatment of turf has been a bone of contention; use of pond water could mean drying out Wason Pond while fertilizer runoff could cause algae blooms and more. Mr. Landau noted that some in Town disagree with the idea of “digging out what we’ve put a fortune into.” It was agreed that the representatives from Chester Fields of Dreams and Chester Baseball & Softball, etc., would return to next month’s meeting with detailed plans, specifying layout, materials, and their goals. This will allow all parties involved to understand what is being requested so that a compromise may be reached.

VII. Miscellaneous

The overgrowth of brush and loss of sand on the beach was discussed; Ms. Reishus will gather information on whether sand may be placed and Mr. Veale offered to York-rake the beach on May 6th.

No new Scout Projects were discussed, but it was agreed that Scout Caelan Dunwoody should return to the Commission to proceed with his Flora & Fauna kiosk Eagle Scout Project.

Spring Soccer is coming up and Ms. Reishus confirmed that the field had been seeded in the Fall. The TruGreen contract is effective through 2017.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting of the Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Commission will take place Monday, March 6th, 2017 at 7:00pm at the Municipal Complex.

Mr. Quinn moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Rowell seconded the motion. The vote was seven in favor with Messrs. Connelly and Edwards absent; so moved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caroline Rose Wilson
Recording Secretary