

**WASON POND CONSERVATION & RECREATION COMMISSION**

**April 5, 2021**

**Approved Minutes**

**7:00 PM**

**Members present (remotely):**

Chris Hadik, Chairman  
Corinna Reishus  
Sandy Wright  
Kristina Snyder  
Kathleen Neff Ragsdale  
Chuck Myette, Selectmen's Liaison  
John Dalrymple, Alternate  
Darrell Quinn, Alternate

**Members absent:**

David Webster

**Guest:**

Ranger John Wright

**1. Open Meeting – New Business**

Chairman Hadik called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

**a. Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported expenses for the caretaker's cottage of \$37.31 in electricity usage, and the bathhouse had \$16.21 in electricity usage, for total expenditures of \$53.52. This leaves roughly 68.65% of the \$1,635 budget.

*Ms. Wright moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Ms. Reishus seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.*

**b. Approval of Minutes - March 1, 2021**

Chairman Hadik said line 155 should be "so **they** should have the design."

*Ms. Snyder moved to approve the March 1, 2021 minutes as amended. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Ms. Neff Ragsdale, who abstained. The motion passed.*

**c. Unleashed dogs at Wason Pond**

There was a dogfight last week on the property between leashed and unleashed dogs. The Chester resident/owner of the leashed dog and his dog suffered minor wounds. The Rye resident said she was not aware dogs needed to be leashed. Ranger Wright patrolled the area.

A Facebook post received over 150 comments from Chester residents who fear for their children's/pets' safety at Wason Pond, and from residents who believe the town is not doing enough to patrol and enforce the rules. The most alarming comments referred to people "carrying" at Wason Pond, referring to weapons, pepper spray, mace, etc.

The regulations are posted on the property and an ordinance exists. Regardless of whether there is a leash law or not, owners must maintain control of their dogs. Charges could be brought against the offending dog owner. There is a misconception that if a dog is under "voice control," it does not have to be on a leash.

Selectman Myette said this is a law enforcement issue. Ranger Wright has drafted a report and is meeting with the police chief for direction. He will find out if he has the authority to write citations for unleashed dogs. He will get a copy of the ordinance and Ms. Wright will share it with the Commission members. The members want to make sure there is a penalty for incidents such as this, and find out if Ranger Wright can have the authority to enforce it. They will discuss this at the next meeting.

**d. New sign at beach**

Ms. Reishus reported in Mr. Webster's absence that the sign near the beach is in poor condition. He would like to replace the sign, and will cover the actual replacement and the cost. A picture of a similar sign was sent to the Commission members and they have no problem with Mr. Webster doing this.

**2. Selectmen's Liaison**

**a. Update**

Selectman Myette said there were no relevant issues or discussions.

**3. Recreation Commission**

**a. Firemen's muster August 2022, groundskeeping concerns.**

Chairman Hadik has not spoken with Mr. Costine about the fireman's muster. The Commission will revisit this issue once Chairman Hadik has information from Mr. Costine regarding possible alternatives.

**b. Fields (Open for individual and approved group use)**

Ms. Reishus has received facility use requests for the fields. She will meet with the Board of Selectmen on Thursday to discuss outdoor facility usage, possibly starting mid-April for annual organized sports and May 1<sup>st</sup> for others.

The requests are from Chester Baseball Softball Association (for the town and Wason fields) and Chester Academy (for the town fields). The smaller children and softball are at Wason. The older children are at the Babe Ruth field. The organizations are governed under their own insurance. They will follow the state's guidance on amateur and youth sports, and Universal, as

they did last year. They will be bringing children in from other towns to participate, which is why she has brought this to the Commission.

This is a municipality decision. The Recreation Department follows stricter rules than private organizations and are held to a higher standard, which is why they had an in-house soccer league and didn't allow other towns to come in last year.

The Commission members are fine with this, as long as state guidelines are being followed.

**c. Wedding at the covered bridge**

A Chester resident has asked to hold a wedding at the covered bridge on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The ceremony will be approximately 30-45 minutes. They will follow all protocols, including wearing masks and separating people by 6 feet who are not in the same household. There will be no chairs, just benches for older people. The resident estimates 50 people will attend. They will have their own insurance and understand that it's a public place. The reception will be at a different location. If the weather is bad, they have other arrangements.

The governor has extended the state of emergency through April 16<sup>th</sup> that limits gatherings to 100 people. Once a group reaches 50, the facility requires that a police detail be present to oversee traffic and noise level.

The wedding party will pay a \$250 security deposit, which will be returned if nothing is damaged. They will pay for a police detail if the Commission requires it.

The police chief has no issue with this if the Board of Selectmen allows it. The Commission members have no problems with this.

If the Commission approves this, it will open it up to other similar requests.

A Porta Potty is usually placed at the playground during April school vacation. There will be a sign placed next to it warning that it is not sanitized on a regular basis. For a short event such as this, it's not necessary to require rental of an additional Porta Potty.

**d. Fishing Derby**

The fishing derby is tentatively planned for Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup>. The police chief is okay with moving forward with planning it. Other towns are also doing fishing derbies. Some procedures will have to change to accommodate COVID regulations.

The Commission believes this event can be held safely and supports it.

**e. Girl Scout Project**

A Girl Scout troop would like to construct a free library box as a Bronze Award project to be placed near the playground. It is a structure that will need to be maintained. Projects such as this usually need to be cleared through the Rockingham County Conservation District, which holds the easement. There is a similar structure at the transfer station with the Swap Shop and it requires maintenance.

Commission members felt there are more suitable locations to erect a free library, such as the school. In this location, it might become a dumping ground and a target for vandalism. Other requests for structures, such as a memorial bench, have been turned down.

Ms. Reishus will contact the troop and suggest they consider another location. Selectman Myette suggested they could do a gardening project at Spring Hill Farm.

#### **4. Conservation Commission**

##### **a. Beaver update**

Ms. Snyder said the new beaver sign has been installed. The Commission members agreed it looks good and has already proven useful.

##### **b. Receptacle for fishing line at bridge. Chester R&G sponsor.**

Two receptacles have been constructed by the maintenance department. Signs are being made and will be shipped hopefully by the end of the week. Ms. Snyder will put decals on the receptacles asking for no trash to be deposited and suggested fishing line be recycled.

They will be installed hopefully the weekend after next to leave enough time for any parties that want to be involved to participate, including New Hampshire Fish and Game and the Chester Rod & Gun Club.

The Chester Rod & Gun sent \$500, which was deposited into the Chester Conservation account. It will pay for signs and other expenses. The Commission can decide if any funds remaining will be returned to the Rod & Gun Club. The Commission members discussed other locations where people fish and if a receptacle could be placed there if funds remain. The Rod & Gun Club cannot put a decal on the receptacles due to the ban on advertising sponsorships.

The Commission members discussed where the receptacles should be placed. Suggestions included between the red post and the gate, between the two popular fishing spots where it can easily be seen and accessed. Other possibilities are on the kiosk near the covered bridge and between the covered bridge and the roped area. It will be clamped onto a steel pole with steel straps.

Selectman Myette mentioned the pipes near the causeway that were installed to mitigate the damage caused by the beavers. He asked about the possibility of erecting an educational sign similar to the one near the beaver lodge to explain the reason for the equipment and asking people not to fish on that side of the bridge. The sign could be attached to the railing. Ms. Snyder said the pipes seem to be working, as the water level on both sides of the bridge is the same.

The Commission members said the new "no hunting" signs came out very nicely.

#### **5. Ranger John Wright**

##### **a. Update**

Ranger Wright will be spending more time on the property now that the weather is improving. He will meet with the police chief tomorrow. A needle was found near the road, but he hasn't found any other such items near the pond or on the playground.

## **6. Master Plan – Projects**

### **a. Pavilion – Design received. Footings and timber cut.**

Selectman Myette reviewed the plans for the pavilion, which include the structure and material list. They can be used to figure out costs and begin soliciting donations of materials. He will send the plans to Ms. Reishus, as Recreation impact fees paid for the plans, and she will have Mr. Bunker review them. Eastern White Pine could be obtained from town forest properties and be traded for lumber, as was done for the covered bridge.

## **7. Miscellaneous**

### **a. ADA Compliance ramp status?**

Ms. Reishus spoke with Town Administrator Doda. The contractor was meeting with the architect on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. It would be two to three weeks before he had the documents needed to submit to Mr. Bunker for a permit.

### **c. Alex Brillhart Eagle Scout project.**

Selectman Myette reported that Mr. Brillhart was concerned about his design being passed by the building inspector and DES. The meeting with DES went well. The engineer was an Eagle Scout, so he is willing to help. The location does not need a wetlands permit. The next step is for Mr. Brillhart to bring his design to the Council for approval. As he builds the structure, Mr. Bunker will continue to monitor it.

## **8. Adjournment and set date for next meeting (Monday, May 3, 2021)**

*Ms. Neff Ragsdale moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 PM. A vote was taken, all were in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.*

**Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary**