

WASON POND CONSERVATION & RECREATION COMMISSION

September 13, 2021

Approved Minutes

7:00 PM

Members present:

Chris Hadik, Chairman
Corinna Reishus, Vice Chairman
Kathleen Neff Ragsdale, Treasurer
Sandy Wright
David Webster
Kristina Snyder
Chuck Myette, Selectmen's Liaison
John Dalrymple, Alternate

Members absent:

Darrell Quinn, Alternate

Guests:

Ranger John Wright
Deb Munson

1. Open Meeting – New Business

Chairman Hadik called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

a. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported \$78.65 in electricity usage for the caretaker's cottage for the month of August. The electricity usage at the bathhouse was \$16.21. Total expenses were \$94.86. This leaves an available balance of \$1,520.74 or 93% of the budget.

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

b. Approval of Minutes – August 2, 2021

On line 62, add, "the **Fire Department and Police Department** Gators and the **Recreation** golf cart." On line 70, change **moves** to **warns**.

Ms. Reishus moved to approve the August 2, 2021 minutes as amended. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed.

c. Update on Ash St. bridge (the causeway bridge)

This has always been a Town road as part of the easement, although it is a paper road and has not been built to Town standards. Per the Town Engineer, the bridge should be closed to pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The Commission discussed discontinuing the road and making it into a walkway to the beach. The Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) would have to approve such a move. The current structure will limit the ability to place portable toilets

at the beach, as well as limiting the use of buildings. The location of the Pavilion might need to be changed, which might require returning to RCCD for approval. The Pavilion is in Recreation's 2022 CIP.

The Conservation Commission has discussed long-term solutions. The current structure meets the Board of Selectmen's short-term goals. A long-term solution will take years. Ms. Snyder reported the Conservation Commission would like a permanent solution to serve both aquatic life and recreational use. She is researching grants and funding for the design process as well as the structure itself, as well as requesting that representatives from interested organizations visit the site and offer suggestions. Selectman Myette said FEMA was onsite last month and expressed interest in helping find a solution and had funding, so that would be a good group to contact.

The Conservation Commission is committed to keeping the opening clean by hand, but this is not a long-term solution. Selectman Myette said the beavers have been removed before, but they return. Removing the dam by hand creates a safety issue. It is difficult for the Road Department to clear the opening with machinery now due to the height of the railing. A structure with a larger opening will cause issues with permitting from the DES, as a greater percentage of wetlands would be disturbed. The EPA would also become involved.

Selectman Myette said a coming up with plan and a design are the first steps, then looking for funding, which sets the timeline. A warrant article might be an option to fund the design process, but it would have to be submitted by November 1, 2021. The Commission agreed there isn't enough time for a warrant article this year.

He recommended establishing a subcommittee to develop a plan, then research existing funding options. The subcommittee should include a work group and any stakeholders, including the RCCD. The design could resemble a feasibility study, including the type of structure desired. Town budget and available grants will also help set the timeline.

Ms. Reishus said Recreation can discuss using Recreation impact fees for the study with the Planning Board, although the fees wouldn't be available until July 1, 2022. She will discuss this issue with the Recreation Commission at their next meeting.

Ms. Snyder will speak to the Conservation Commission at the September 14th meeting and discuss forming a subcommittee. Ms. Reishus will do the same with the Recreation Commission. Selectman Myette said Conservation funds can be used for this project as it is a Conservation easement.

The Commission will put together a subcommittee at the October meeting.

d. FY 2022-23 Budget

Chairman Hadik reviewed the 2022-23 proposed budget. Ms. Reishus said last year, the bathroom expenditures exceeded the budgeted amount. The bathhouse electricity line will be raised to \$220. Selectman Myette recommended using the 2019-20 budget as a comparison, since the 2020-221 budget is not representative of normal spending due to the impact of COVID. The caretaker's cottage electricity line will be increased to \$1,200. The bathhouse repair and maintenance line will be reduced to \$1, as any maintenance is covered by the Town maintenance budget.

The Commission discussed decommissioning the utilities at the former campsites. They agreed that could be done on a workday, as nature is removing much of the evidence. The beach needs sand and for the grass to be removed, so a line was added to the budget of \$1,650 for waterfront/beach maintenance. They discussed purchasing an aquatic pond rake for beach maintenance. Sand can only be added once every three years.

Selectman Myette noted that specific details should be included to explain the increased and new line items.

Ms. Neff Ragsdale moved to approve the proposed budget, including the updated line items. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Selectman Myette, who abstained. The motion passed.

2. Selectmen's Liaison

a. Update

Selectman Myette said there were no updates.

b. Ordinances – dog leash?

Selectman Myette will look into the status of the Commission's recommendation to establish a leash ordinance for the property.

3. Recreation Commission

a. Update

Ms. Reishus said soccer is going on, as well as Chester Academy cross-country meets. She asked if there were any additions to the Recreation CIP. She suggested continuing to add metal picnic tables to replace the wooden ones.

4. Conservation Commission

a. Milkweed and a possible project

Deb Munson explained that Rockingham County Conservation Commissions are trying to promote pollinator gardens and increase wild native plants in the area. The Conservation Commission would like to plant a demonstration/beautification garden on the property. The Commission discussed possible locations for the garden. Ms. Neff Ragsdale suggested approaching the senior groups that use the community center to obtain buy-in but also seeking volunteers.

The Commission is in support of this project, pending a decision as to where to locate it. Ms. Snyder will put together a visit to the property to research potential sites and invite the Commission members.

Ms. Snyder, Mr. Victor Chouinard, and Ms. Munson removed invasive plants from the pond area where milkweed is currently growing. They hope to continue to maintain that area next year to attract pollinators. It is educational, as well as attracts people, who are taking pictures.

5. Ranger John Wright

a. Update

Mr. Wright reported that the property is quiet.

6. Master Plan – Projects

a. Pavilion

The Commission discussed cutting the wood for the project this year and locations where it could be stacked until it is needed.

7. Miscellaneous

a. Firemen's Muster in 2022

Ms. Reishus reported a location has been established for the muster, off the soccer field. The poles would be set two weeks before the muster and flagged for safety. The muster is scheduled for August 2022.

b. Pedestrian traffic count 7/29-8/16 (Cameron Prolman – July 2021)

The counter has been removed, but they do not have the results yet.

c. ADA Compliance ramp status?

Selectman Myette said the project has been approved. The contract has been let, but there is no schedule yet.

d. Alex Brillhart Eagle Scout project

The Commission commended Mr. Brillhart on the excellent job he did on the project. The Commission will send him a letter recognizing his hard work. The project should be completed this weekend.

8. Adjournment and set date for next meeting (Monday, October 4, 2021)

Ms. Reishus moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 PM. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary