

WASON POND CONSERVATION & RECREATION COMMISSION

November 1, 2021

Approved Minutes

7:00 PM

Members present:

Chris Hadik, Chairman
Sandy Wright
David Webster
Kristina Snyder
Kathy Dircks
Chuck Myette, Selectmen's Liaison
Darrell Quinn, Alternate
John Dalrymple, Alternate

Members absent:

Kathleen Neff Ragsdale, Treasurer

Guests:

Ranger John Wright
Mark Desiderio
Chester PACT

1. Open Meeting – New Business

Chairman Hadik called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

a. Treasurer's Report

Chairman Hadik reported \$59.37 in electricity use for the caretaker's cottage and \$16.37 for the bathhouse for a total of \$75.74. This leaves a balance of (\$3,792), as \$5,118 was charged to the WPC for the barriers on the causeway bridge.

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

b. Approval of Minutes – October 4, 2021

Ms. Wright moved to approve the October 4, 2021 minutes as written. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Mr. Quinn and Ms. Wright, who abstained. The motion passed.

c. Alex Brillhart

Mr. Brillhart reported that the boardwalk project is complete and shared pictures of it. The total cost was \$3,000-4,000, which was lower than expected. Mr. Dick Lewis donated materials, which lowered the cost. The Commission thanked Mr. Brillhart for his hard work. He will contact his Eagle board as soon as the project is accepted. The Commission will submit a letter approving the project. The excess funds will be given to a local charitable organization or Mr. Brillhart will approach the Board of Selectmen to ask if he can return the funds to the Commission for maintenance of the boardwalk.

d. Dog Leash Ordinance

The public hearing was opened on October 7th, but continued until November 4. The Board of Selectmen requested that the WPC review the ordinance. There were two changes made: the title of the Commission was wrong and there was a change to the wording. It needs to be signed by the WPC and returned to the Board of Selectmen for approval.

Mark Desiderio suggested creating a dog beach on the pond, where dogs could be let off-leash in the water. It is dangerous for dogs to be swimming with leashes. Selectman Myette said this could set a precedent and there are too many people in the area to have dogs off-leash. Mr. Quinn recommended an area on the outlet side of the pond instead, near the covered bridge, that was a beach many years ago.

Selectman Myette said the ordinance states that dogs cannot be off-leash anywhere on the property. The ordinance would have to go through the approval process again, if any changes are made. It will be difficult to enforce. It is the owners' responsibility to maintain control of their dogs.

Mr. Desiderio said the current recommendation for dogs to swim at Spring Hill Farm instead is not viable as there isn't good access to the pond. Ms. Snyder said it moves the problem to a new location and endangers sensitive habitat.

The Commission understood Mr. Desiderio's point, but feels it would be problematic to allow dogs off-leash on the property.

Ms. Dircks moved to approve the dog leash ordinance and forward it to the Board of Selectmen for approval. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Mr. Quinn and Selectman Myette, who abstained. The motion passed 5-0-2.

2. Selectmen's Liaison

a. Update on Ash St. Bridge

Selectman Myette reported the dog leash ordinance will be considered on November 4 at the Board of Selectmen meeting.

A conceptual meeting was held to discuss how to approach the causeway bridge. Chairman Hadik, Ms. Snyder, Mr. Victor Chouinard (Chairman of the Conservation Commission), Recreation Director Corinna Reishus, and Town Administrator Debra Doda attended. The consensus was to replace the current bridge with a one-lane structure, with the minimum opening as required by the engineer.

The Fire Department has requested the bridge be able to permit access by a rescue vehicle 8' wide and weighing 20,000 pounds. Town Planner Andrew Hadik sent a letter to Dubois & King requesting they refine their current estimate to incorporate building a bridge 12' wide and as long as necessary to handle the stormwater aspect. He will find out an engineering cost for the CIP and come up with a ballpark cost for construction.

Selectmen Myette said other assignments came out of the meeting, including researching funding sources. They hope to have estimates by November 3, as the Planning Board CIP will be reviewed at that time. Stormwater is one of the key funding areas for the new infrastructure

bills currently in Congress, but projects need to be permitted and have engineering designs to qualify. He estimated construction of the bridge will take three to five years, with obtaining permits, bids from contractors, and construction.

3. Recreation Commission

a. Update

Ms. Dircks reported that soccer will be ending on November 6th on all fields. Ranger Wright and Ms. Wright helped Ms. Reishus set up the scavenger hunt. It will be left up for an additional week, due to the recent rain. There will be another one set up this winter as well. All portable toilets will be removed next week.

4. Conservation Commission

a. Beaver update

Ms. Snyder reported in the last few weeks, beavers have been seen but there is no evidence of a dam being built. There was 4" of rain last week, which caused the water to increase at the causeway bridge.

b. Milkweed and pollinator project

Ms. Snyder said she and Deb Munson from the Conservation Commission are looking for a new site for the pollinator project. She suggested an area on a slope near the covered bridge, but Selectman Myette said the State requires the area near the basin be kept clear of growth. Ms. Snyder suggested a strip of land near the horseshoe pits and that is acceptable. They will continue to protect any areas where milkweed is already established and remove invasive species. They hope the seniors will help maintain the plants, as the area is near the Community Center.

5. Ranger John Wright

b. Update

Mr. Wright asked to be informed as to what the Board of Selectmen decides regarding the dog leash ordinance. It will be enforced up to a \$1,000 fine. It is up to the Chief of Police to create the fine schedule.

6. Master Plan – Projects

a. Pavilion

Selectman Myette said the project is on hold as the site cannot be accessed via the causeway bridge. Selectman Myette, Mr. Webster, and Mr. Quinn will meet to discuss the project next week.

7. Miscellaneous

a. Firemen's Muster in 2022

Chairman Hadik will find out if the muster is going to occur. There does not seem to be much interest. There will be a 2K road race that morning.

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

Chairman Hadik reported the counts were approximately four times higher than the original counts, which were done in November. This one occurred in August, so that could be a reason for the increased numbers. The results could also have been impacted by the increased number of people visiting the property during COVID. The Commission will ask them to do a count again next year.

150 **c. ADA Compliance ramp status**

152 Chairman Hadik received an update from the contractor. They plan to schedule installation this
154 month, once the new ramp is in hand. The ramp is supposed to be delivered November 8-12.
154 There will be access to the building throughout construction. Ms. Dircks will inform the seniors
154 that the project is moving forward.

156 **8. Adjournment and set date for next meeting (Monday, December 6, 2021)**

158 *Mr. Webster moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 PM. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A*
160 *vote was taken, all were in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.*

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