

WASON POND CONSERVATION & RECREATION COMMISSION

February 6, 2023

Approved Minutes

7:00 PM

Members present:

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

Members absent:

Kathleen Neff Ragsdale, Treasurer

Guests:

Nick Tranquillo, Chester Conservation Commission
Ranger John Wright
PACT

1. Open Meeting – New Business

Chairman Hadik called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

a. Treasurer's Report

In Ms. Neff Ragsdale's absence, Chairman Hadik reported that expenditures for January were \$55.02 in electricity expense for the caretaker's cottage and \$16.21 in electricity expense for the bathhouse. Total expenditures were \$71.23. The balance in the account is \$2,454.26. There is \$1,650 in the beach maintenance fund.

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

b. Approval of Minutes – December 5, 2022

Ms. Dircks moved to approve the December 5, 2022 minutes as written. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Habitat Restoration (treatment of invasives)

Mr. Tranquillo reported that in October 2022, representatives from the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) visited the property to assess the level of infestation by invasive plants. They submitted a proposal to treat approximately five acres that does not include the playground and not using Roundup. This will occur this spring. The treated areas are safe to access the next day. The RCCD will work with the Town to develop a management plan to keep the invasives in check moving forward.

The Commission noted that the ball fields are used in the spring, so treatment would have to be scheduled when the fields are not in use. The cost of the treatment is \$4,240, which will be paid by the Chester Conservation Commission. The Recreation Commission will need to be consulted to gain their approval for this process as well as determine a time when the ball fields are not in use. Ms. Dircks will contact the other members of the Recreation Commission for their input.

Chairman Hadik moved that the Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Commission approve the spraying of invasive plants at Wason Pond, provided the Recreation Commission has no objections and provided RCCD coordinates this process with the Recreation Commission regarding treatment of the fields. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Selectman Couture, who abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

2. Selectmen's Liaison - update

Selectman Couture introduced himself to the Commission and shared his background in conservation. He might be filling the role of liaison on a permanent basis due to a conflict in Selectman Myette's schedule.

3. Tree Removal

Mr. Dalrymple obtained a quote for \$4,700 to remove the trees that fell on the garage and power lines during the Christmas storm. Mr. Webster noted there are also trees down by the waterfall. Mr. Dalrymple also noted that the dead hemlock trees along Route 102 from the playground to the Community Center need to be removed as well. Chairman Hadik suggested planning a work party to take care of this. Mr. Dalrymple will speak to the Highway Department about using their chipper.

4. Recreation Commission

There is a 5K race and luau planned by the PTA on June 5th to raise funds for the Chester Academy playground. The Wrangler is tentatively scheduled for May, but there is no further information.

4. Conservation Commission

Ms. Snyder reported specific trees near the pond are being protected with mesh to deter the beavers cutting them down.

5. Ranger John Wright

a. Update

Ranger Wright reported he will spend more time on the property as the weather improves. He was notified that there are no handicapped parking signs at the playground. Chairman Hadik will take care of this.

6. Master Plan - Projects

Chairman Hadik reported the pavilion is still on hold.

7. Miscellaneous - Old Business

a. Ash Street bridge engineering update

Mr. Webster asked if there was a requirement to replace the bridge. Selectman Couture explained it was a policy decision to protect public safety, so emergency vehicles can access the beach area when necessary. Ms. Snyder clarified the current bridge is temporary and will need to be replaced. Chairman Hadik suggested letting the process move ahead to determine the actual cost of the new bridge and how much grant money might be available to help pay for it.

The Commission discussed the need to have an AED machine near the beach. Selectman Couture suggested asking the fire chief to speak with the Commission for more accurate information regarding public safety and replacing the bridge. He also suggested the Commission make a recommendation to the Selectmen regarding their opinion on replacing the bridge.

b. Beach sand replenishment

Chairman Hadik will submit the necessary permit to the DES.

c. Forest encroachment on field

Mr. Dalrymple obtained a quote of \$3,000 to bush hog 600' of the tree line between the infields. Ms. Snyder will ask Mr. Tranquillo to ask RCCD if it is preferable to remove the foliage before or after it is treated.

d. Formal policy regarding use impact of conservation area

Chairman Hadik reported he is working on verbiage to ask the Board of Selectmen to add to the rules regarding activities that could potentially impact the conservation aspect of the property, i.e. cutting new trails or patterns of operation, needing to be approved by the Conservation Commission.

8. Adjournment and set date for next meeting (Monday, March 6, 2023)

Ms. Wright moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary