

**WASON POND CONSERVATION & RECREATION COMMISSION**

**December 5, 2022**

**Approved Minutes**

**7:00 PM**

*Broadcast on Channel 20 and streamed on Government (cablecast.tv) – click “Watch Now”*

**Members present:**

Chris Hadik, Chairman

David Webster, Vice Chairman

Kathleen Neff Ragsdale, Treasurer

Kristina Snyder

Sandy Wright

Kathy Dircks

Darrell Quinn, Alternate

John Dalrymple, Alternate

**Members absent:**

Chuck Myette, Selectmen's Liaison

**Guests:**

Andrew Hadik, Chester Town Planner

Rebekah Gaudreau, DuBois & King

Tucker Raney, DuBois & King

Mike Oleson, Chester Road Agent

Victor Chouinard, Chester Conservation Commission Chairman

Corinna Reishus, Chester Recreation Director

Ranger Wright

PACT

**1. Open Meeting – New Business**

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

*Chairman Hadik moved to table the Treasurer's report and approval of minutes to later in the meeting and move the bridge design discussion to the top of the agenda. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

**a. Bridge design discussion with DuBois & King**

Ms. Becky Gaudreau, senior bridge engineer, and Mr. Tucker Raney, bridge engineer, with DuBois & King, met with the Commission to discuss the design of the causeway bridge. The requirements for the bridge were reviewed, including weight limit.

Town Planner Hadik clarified that if additional costs are involved in specific bridge designs, the Board of Selectmen will need to know. Chairman Hadik asked if any of the designs were less intrusive environmentally and Ms. Gaudreau said the impact is the same for each of the proposed designs. She warned the Commission that the quotes are subject to change, due to the

fluctuating cost of materials, but they will do their best to keep costs low.

The Commission discussed which designs would be better in terms of the impact of beaver dams. The width of the bridge will depend on a hydraulic analysis, a wider bridge being better for restricting dam-building. Mr. Chouinard from the Chester Conservation Commission suggested allowing kayakers and canoers to pass under the bridge to access both sides of the pond, increasing the recreational value of the property. Ms. Gaudreau explained the entire causeway would need to be raised to accommodate boaters passing under the bridge.

Town Planner Hadik reminded the Commission that wants versus needs should be identified, and maintenance requirements should be considered as well. Ms. Gaudreau pointed out the three things to consider are the look of the bridge, the required maintenance, and how much it will cost now. Railings were also discussed.

Ms. Neff Ragsdale pointed out that the Commission would like to have a bridge that looks park-like. Ms. Gaudreau reviewed the available options to achieve this but said they will increase the cost.

The WPC agreed to move forward with a three-sided box bridge with galvanized railings.

**b. Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported \$36.13 in electricity expense for the caretaker's cottage and \$16.40 in electricity expense for the bathhouse for the month of November, for a total of \$52.53. This leaves an available balance of \$2,558.53, or 88.93% of the annual budget. Chairman Hadik pointed out that the \$1,650 for beach maintenance now appears on the report.

*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.*

**c. Approval of Minutes – November 7, 2022**

*Ms. Neff Ragsdale moved to approve the November 7, 2022 minutes as written. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

**d. Formal policy regarding use impact of conservation area**

Chairman Hadik explained there is no formal policy regarding what happens on the conservation side of the property when there are major events. New trails were cut for the last 5K run and they did not obtain permission. Director Reishus monitors this activity, but a written policy is needed. The Commission (and Ranger Wright) need to be aware of events occurring on the property.

Director Reishus reviewed the existing Town facility usage policy and usage application. Events are reviewed by the Technical Review Committee. She noted that a representative from the Conservation Commission is invited to attend these meetings but has not done so. She also noted that Ms. Dircks is the representative for Recreation on the WPC and is notified of events occurring on the property, and brings them to the Commission. She suggested Ranger Wright contact Town Administrator Doda for a copy of the monthly calendar of events.

Ms. Neff Ragsdale suggested including a sentence in the existing policy prohibiting altering the

vegetation at Wason Pond. Chairman Hadik said they could ask the Board of Selectmen to add a provision to the existing policy stating that anyone planning an event at Wason Pond that may have an impact on the conservation area and involves modifying the property in any way should appear before the Chester Conservation Commission and the Wason Pond Commission. Director Reishus suggested adding these restrictions to the Wason Pond rules.

Ms. Neff Ragsdale asked who has the ultimate jurisdiction over Wason Pond. The WPC act as caretakers; they cannot create policy. However, they can bring issues to the attention of the selectmen and request them to take action, if they feel it is necessary. Chairman Hadik asked if WPC could sit on the TRC when events are being reviewed that will take place at Wason Pond. Director Reishus will present this to the chair of the TRC.

Chairman Hadik will write something to be included in the existing policy regarding use of conservation portions of Town property. It will need to be reviewed by the Conservation Commission as well.

**e. Habitat restoration (treatment of invasives)**

Ms. Neff Ragsdale said members of the Conservation Commission toured the property with representatives from the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD), who presented a proposal for the treatment of invasives at Wason Pond and Spring Hill Farm. She expressed her concern regarding their proposed use of Roundup. Conservation Commission Chairman Chouinard has pointed out that the invasives are killing trees, so this method might be necessary. The areas at Wason Pond that could be treated include areas near the ballfields, the portapotties, the playground, and the Community Center.

Ms. Snyder said the Conservation Commission will be paying for this, but they have not voted on having this work done. It would not occur until next fall. Chairman Hadik suggested not spraying near the playground, but removing the invasives by hand instead. The WPC agreed they are lukewarm regarding the use of Roundup.

**2. Selectmen's Liaison - update**

Selectman Myette was not present, but sent an email saying there was no report from the Board of Selectmen.

**3. Recreation Commission**

Director Reishus reported the portables have been removed. She has a request from the PTA for a 5K fun run and pig roast at Wason Pond on June 10, 2023. They will need to meet with the TRC.

Mr. Webster reported numbers were sprayed on trees for the Pounder and they cannot be removed. The WPC discussed where the Pounder materials will be stored in the future and obstacles being left in the woods.

**4. Conservation Commission**

**a. Beaver update**

Mr. Webster reported the beavers are cutting down big trees by the covered bridge. He said the WPC might need to consider starting a fund to remove trees before the beavers fell them and cause damage.

**5. Ranger John Wright**

Ranger Wright reported it is very quiet at Wason Pond.

**6. Master Plan - Projects**

**a. Pavilion**

Chairman Hadik said this project is still on hold.

**7. Miscellaneous - Old Business**

**a. Beach sand replenishment**

Director Reishus shared information regarding beach sand permits. Chairman Hadik will research this and send information to Mr. Dalrymple, as the Town might be able to get sand for a better price.

**b. Ben Wallin - Eagle Scout project**

Chairman Hadik said the project appears to be complete. Ranger Wright agreed it has been finished. Mr. Webster said it is stable and secure, but the signs need to be rearranged. Mr. Wallin needs to notify the WPC that the project is finished and the Board of Selectmen will need to sign off on it.

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

*Ms. Neff Ragsdale moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Webster seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary