

WASON POND CONSERVATION & RECREATION COMMISSION

November 6, 2023

Approved Minutes

7:00 PM

Broadcast on Channel 6 and streamed on Government (cablecast.tv) – click “Watch Now”

Members present:

Chris Hadik, Chairman

Kathleen Neff Ragsdale, Treasurer

Kristina Snyder

Kathy Dircks

Sandy Wright

Darrell Quinn, Alternate

John Dalrymple, Alternate

Steven O. Landau, Selectboard Liaison

Guests:

Ranger John Wright

Jessica Hatch

Maria Veale

PACT

1. Open Meeting – New Business

Chairman Hadik called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

a. Treasurer’s Report

Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported \$60.79 in total expenses for the month of October, which includes \$44.58 in electricity expense for the caretaker's cottage and \$16.21 for bathhouse electricity.

This leaves an available balance of \$2,349.60, or 89.44% of budget.

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

b. Approval of Minutes – September 11, 2023

Ms. Neff Ragsdale moved to approve the September 11, 2023, minutes as written. Ms. Wright seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Wason Pond Wrangler

Jessica Hatch and Maria Veale appeared before the Commission to discuss the Wason Pond Wrangler. Ms. Hatch clarified that historically, End 68 Hours of Hunger was the recipient of additional fundraising done by teams or individuals. Ms. Veale noted that in the last eight years, net proceeds from the Pounder of approximately \$264,000 were distributed. The first two years' proceeds from the Pounder funded the athletic fields.

There was a discussion about the group's non-profit status. Ms. Veale clarified the governing

organization is the Chester Charitable Foundation, which is registered as a non-profit corporation with the state of New Hampshire. Ms. Hatch and Ms. Veale expressed their disappointment that the Commission didn't approach them with questions regarding where the funds were being donated, which came up in earlier meetings. The Commission clarified they were waiting for the group to meet with the Board of Selectmen to have their questions answered. Ms. Hatch noted they usually meet with the Board in the fall. Selectman Landau verified that the group had provided all the necessary information to the Board throughout the process.

Ms. Hatch said most of the runners this year were from Chester and more than 50% of the funds raised were given to Chester charities. In 2024, a percentage of the proceeds will be donated to the Chester Academy playground committee.

The Commission discussed allowing the Wrangler to continue to store their materials in the barn and agreed to do so, with the understanding notice would be given to make a change.

Ms. Wright moved to allow the Wrangler to continue to use the barn for storage until further notice. Ms. Neff Ragsdale seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission commended Ms. Hatch on how the Wrangler was organized.

3. Selectmen's Liaison Update

Selectman Landau updated the Commission on the status of the Ash Street Bridge. He said they have purchased wreaths for the covered bridge. They will need to discuss whether wreaths are purchased next year, due to increasing costs.

4. Recreation Commission Update

Ms. Dirks reported soccer has ended and the portables have been removed. The walking club has moved indoors for the winter. Over 40 seniors meet on Tuesdays in the MPR for coffee hour. She reviewed the Community Center schedule. The next Recreation Commission meeting will be on November 13, 2023. There is a working meeting on November 20, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. for the Winter Fest at Spring Hill Farm.

4. Conservation Commission Update

Ms. Snyder reported members of the Conservation Commission have reduced the size of the brush pile. Conservation Commission Chairman Chouinard has purchased metal mesh to protect the bigger trees from beaver damage. She noted they tried this method last year and it is working.

Chairman Hadik moved to reimburse Victor Chouinard \$99.99 for metal mesh, based on a receipt received. Ms. Neff Ragsdale seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Snyder reported she and Beth Sautter, chair of the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee, met with the Board of Selectmen to propose a regulation requiring dogs be on leash on the Spring Hill Farm property, on the trails off Towle Road. An ordinance must be approved by the legislative body, so a warrant article will be needed to change the regulation to an ordinance, which is enforceable. Selectman Landau will discuss this with the Board of Selectmen. They clarified that dogs are permitted off leash in the fields off Lane Road. Ms. Snyder noted from a conservation

perspective, dogs off leash can be hazardous to wildlife and habitat.

Ms. Neff Ragsdale reported a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) is being performed by Moosewood Ecological on Town-owned property, including Wason Pond and any privately owned land, if they receive permission from the owners. The field work will begin in March.

5. Ranger John Wright

Ranger Wright reported people are still allowing their dogs to run off leash on the property.

6. Master Plan - Projects

Chairman Hadik said the pavilion project is still on hold. He is still researching soil testing.

7. Miscellaneous - Old Business

a. Ash Street Bridge

Selectman Landau said there is no new information on the bridge. The grant that has been applied for is a matching grant, so the Town will need to raise funds for the match. Selectman Landau said they hope to present a warrant article on this at the Town Meeting in spring 2024. They have not received any information regarding the grant.

b. Wason Pond Wrangler

Chairman Hadik noted the date of the Wrangler is May 11, 2024.

c. Selective Cut - Maintenance

Mr. Dalrymple said the tree removal is still scheduled, but has not yet occurred.

d. Selective Cut - Conservation

Chairman Hadik said he met with Chairman Chouinard, who agreed the trees in question present a danger. Ms. Snyder reported that Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) said if more than three or four trees are involved, a Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) check of the area will be needed. The Commission discussed what to do with the trees that are cut. Ms. Snyder suggested if big trees are cut in Town, they could be used to line the trails at Spring Hill Farm to keep walkers on the trails and protect sensitive habitat.

Ms. Neff Ragsdale moved that the Commission approve spending \$25 for the NHB check. Ms. Dircks seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

e. Barn Storage

Ms. Neff Ragsdale suggested discussing what is stored in the barn at the next meeting. Selectman Landau said he will be visiting the barn with the Town maintenance staff to investigate.

f. Baseball Building

Selectman Landau said another structure is not needed at Wason Pond. He suggested using a trailer instead. Chairman Hadik said per the easement, two structures are permitted. Ms. Snyder noted the pump house is beginning to rot. Mr. Quinn said there are a number of Town buildings that need maintenance.

8. Adjournment and set date for next meeting (Monday, December 4, 2023)

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

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary