

1 **Town of Chester**
2 **Conservation Commission Meeting**
3 **April 9, 2024**
4 **6:00 p.m.**
5 **Draft Minutes**
6

7 *Broadcast on Channel 6 and streamed on Government (cablecast.tv) – click “Watch Now”*
8

9 **Members present:**

10 Chair Victor Chouinard
11 Kristina Snyder
12 Deb Munson
13 Kathleen Neff Ragsdale
14 Rick Sibley
15 Nick Tranquillo
16 Mikael Cejtin, Alternate
17

18 **Members absent:**

19 Ted Broadwater
20 Eric McGowan, Alternate
21 Selectwoman Dana Theokas, Liaison
22

23 **Guests present:**

24 Chester PACT
25
26

27 **I. Call to Order**
28

29 Chair Chouinard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
30

31 **II. New Business/Updates**
32

33 **A. Reschedule May ConsCom Meeting**
34

35 The Commission discussed rescheduling the May meeting, due to a conflict with the
36 Town Elections, and changed it to May 13th.
37

38 **B. Beaver Dams and Pond Levelers**
39

40 Chair Chouinard spoke with Supervisor of Roads Piper about two roads of concern due to
41 the presence of beaver impoundments, one of which is Candia Road. Chuck Crowe of
42 BestWay Wildlife Control provided an estimate to the Town to install pond levelers.
43 Chair Chouinard noted that Conservation funds cannot be used on non-Conservation
44 land. If the Warrant Article passes regarding establishing a conservation easement on the
45 Candia Road parcel, Conservation funds could pay for installing the levelers.
46

47 Mr. Cejtin said he spoke with Moosewood Ecological, who expressed a desire to factor
48 installing pond levelers into the work they are doing and asked to be kept updated.

49
50 Ms. Snyder noted there are nonprofit organizations that will fund work like this on
51 private land and Chair Chouinard will notify Mr. Piper.

52

53 **C. North Woods Survey Work: Update and Payment Approval**

54

55 Chair Chouinard said Eric Mitchell reported that research and survey recon has begun.
56 Mr. Mitchell submitted an invoice for \$4,830 for survey work done up to this point at the
57 North Woods.

58

59 *Mr. Tranquillo moved to approve payment to Eric C. Mitchell & Associates of*
60 *\$4,830.00 for North Woods survey work. Ms. Neff Ragsdale seconded the motion. A*
61 *vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.*

62

63 **D. NRI, North Woods Ecological Survey and Open Space Master Plan: Update, Status**
64 **of Permission Requests, and Recon Parcels for Moosewood**

65

66 Mr. Tranquillo reported Moosewood is about to begin their fieldwork for the NRI. He
67 shared information regarding the number of parcels they have received permission to
68 access, including both private and Town-owned acreage. The Commission discussed
69 members learning what Moosewood wants to identify, then conducting surveys to ensure
70 all available land is surveyed and also save Commission funds. This would also be an
71 opportunity for Commission members to meet private landowners. Chair Chouinard
72 shared a spreadsheet of the properties involved. The members agreed to review the list
73 and consider this proposal.

74

75 **E. Business Cards**

76

77 Town Administrator Doda informed Chair Chouinard that the Town voted to establish a
78 Conservation Commission in 1971. This will be reflected on the business cards.

79

80 **F. Easement Language Update Workshop**

81

82 Mr. Tranquillo said due to personal commitments, and hence having lack of time to
83 prepare, he asked to reschedule the workshop to May 2024. The Commission agreed.
84 Chair Chouinard noted the Commission does not intend to record any new easements
85 without the new language, unless it is an emergency. He urged the members to prepare
86 before the workshop. Draft language will be composed at the workshop and then
87 reviewed by counsel.

88

89 **III. Regular Business**

90

91 **A. Minutes Approval**

92

93 **March 12, 2024**

94
95 On line 248, change \$4,025 to \$3,025. On line 293, change IV to VI.
96

97 ***Mr. Tranquillo moved to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2024, meeting as***
98 ***amended. Ms. Neff Ragsdale seconded the motion. A vote was taken. The motion***
99 ***passed unanimously.***

100
101 **B. Treasurer's Report**

102
103 Ms. Neff Ragsdale presented the Treasurer's Report for March:

104
105 *Conservation account:*

106 \$ 84.93 starting balance
107 24.60 expenditures
108 \$ 60.33 closing balance (6% of budget)

109
110 *Savings account:*

111 \$ 54,778.53 starting balance
112 135.12 interest
113 \$ 54,913.65 closing balance

114
115 *Conservation Forestry account:*

116 \$ 1,528.69 starting balance
117 3.88 interest
118 \$ 1,532.57 ending balance

119
120 *Emerson Conservation Easement:*

121 \$ 296.90 starting balance
122 00.75 interest
123 \$ 297.65 ending balance

124
125 *Conservation Forestry CD: (5.35%)*

126 \$ 42,427.46 starting balance
127 179.68 interest
128 \$ 42,607.14 ending balance

129
130 *Emerson Conservation Easement CD: (5.35%)*

131 \$ 10,606.86 starting balance
132 44.92 interest
133 \$ 10,651.78 ending balance

134
135 *Regular Conservation account CD: (5.35%)*

136 \$ 561,888.21 starting balance
137 2,379.58 interest
138 \$ 564,267.79 ending balance

139
140 *Conservation account CD:*
141 \$ 183,091.84 starting balance
142 776.94 interest
143 \$ 183,868.78 ending balance
144

145 *Ms. Munson moved to accept the March Treasurer's Report as presented. Mr.*
146 *Tranquillo seconded the motion. A vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.*
147

148 **C. Spring Hill Farm**
149

150 Ms. Snyder has been elected chair of the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee
151 (SHFAC). She said Winter Fest was very successful and the Nature Walk was well
152 attended. She hopes more children and families will attend in the future. Mr. Tranquillo
153 suggested having Moosewood regularly conduct a nature walk at this event and at the
154 Fall Fest.
155

156 One of the main goals of the SHFAC this year is to create a trail up the hill behind the
157 farmhouse. The Commission discussed the benefits of such a trail.
158

159 Ms. Snyder said they discussed doing a survey to inform the public about Spring Hill
160 Farm and to get them involved.
161

162 The SHFAC should receive two final versions of the NRI report from Moosewood, one
163 redacted to eliminate endangered species, in the next week.
164

165 Chair Chouinard reported there will be a fundraising event involving metal detection at
166 Spring Hill Farm. This is a joint venture between the Historical Society and the SHFAC.
167

168 **D. Wason Pond Conservation Area**
169

170 Ms. Neff Ragsdale said there have been requests to use the fields and portables have
171 been delivered. Some hazardous trees have been removed; however, there is still
172 selective cutting that needs to be done, once permission is obtained. There will be a
173 nature walk at Wason Pond on April 22nd. The Wason Wrangler is May 11th and
174 volunteers are needed.
175

176 **E. Easements, Monitoring, and Stewardship**
177

178 Chair Chouinard reported that the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD)
179 will be doing on-the-ground monitoring of Herrick Woods and the Natural Area (Gladys
180 Nichols). He and Mr. Sibley walked and installed placards on the Penacook
181 Conservation Easement area and he said the survey work looks good.
182

183 The Commission reviewed the recent monitoring of Mr. Myette's property. Mr.
184 Tranquillo will create a schedule of properties that need to be monitored by the
185 Commission and they discussed this.

186

187 **F. Strategic Land Protection**

188

189 Chair Chouinard provided an update on Parcel 8-16. He said the Superior Court agreed
190 to let correspondence between attorneys and the parties happen via certified mail. They
191 are waiting to hear from the attorney in South Carolina. He said it is a straightforward
192 process and everyone has been properly compensated.

193

194 **IV. Plan Reviews**

195

196 None

197

198 **V. Miscellaneous Business**

199

200 Ms. Munson ordered 50 pollinator shrubs from the State Forest Nursery and offered them to
201 members. The Commission discussed offering them to participants in the April 22nd nature
202 walk.

203

204 **VI. Non-Public Session: Strategic Land Protection**

205

206 *Chairman Chouinard asked for a motion to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,*
207 *II(d), Consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property which, if*
208 *discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to*
209 *those of the general community; and (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would*
210 *likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board,*
211 *unless such person requests an open meeting. The motion was made and seconded. A*
212 *vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.*

213 The cameras were turned off at 7:18 PM.

214 The meeting room was reopened.

215 *A motion was made and seconded that the Commission come out of non-public session.*
216 *A vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.*

217

218 **VII. Return to Regular Meeting**

219 *A motion was made and seconded to seal the minutes for the non-public session*
220 *indefinitely. A vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.*

221 **VIII. Adjourn**

222

223 *A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. A vote was taken. The motion*
224 *passed unanimously.*

225

226 The meeting was adjourned.

227
228 Respectfully submitted,
229 Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary