

**Minutes of Conservation Commission Meeting**  
**Chester Town Hall and via Microsoft Teams**  
4:30 PM December 14, 2023

Members: Lisa Wahle, Rick Holloway, Sandy Prisloe, Ted Taigen\*, Kate Hair, Lisa Hayward (\* = not in attendance)

Meeting called to order at 4:32 pm.

**1. Minutes:** The minutes of the October 5th meeting were approved unanimously.

**2. Audience of citizens:** Bill Myers, President, Chester Land Trust  
Bill Cowan, President, Haddam Land Trust

Bill Cowan presented a situation in which the owner of a parcel of land on Old County Road in Chester near Haddam border has applied for a wetlands permit for a residence and septic system despite wording in the deed that the land be used for agricultural and conservation. The former owner, now deceased, had been a Haddam LT Board Member. Mr. Cowan noted that the permitting processes of municipal land use agencies generally have no provisions for considering deed restrictions. To avoid such predicaments, outright ownership of a parcel by a Land Trust is the most secure means of ensuring preservation. Still, Mr. Cowan and Mr. Myers advocate that the deed and wishes of the previous owner be respected, and requested the support of the Conservation Commission. The Commission discussed what was within their purview; **Lisa W.** will consult with the other land use agencies and ask the BOS if it is ok to consult with the Town Atty.

**3. Correspondence:** None

**4. Old Business**

a. **Envirotips.** Input and suggestions are always welcome.

b. **Sustainable Chester Updates**

- (1) The waste electronics collection on October 28<sup>th</sup> was very successful; approximately 3000 pounds were collected. Another collection will be scheduled as part of Earth Day in 2024.
- (2) Food Scrap Collection at Chester elementary school is going well. The amount of uneaten food being discarded is of concern. The success of the program will not be in the quantity of compostable material collected, rather in the reduction of food waste. Rob Bibbiani is looking for volunteers to help launch the program at the high school.
- (3) **Rick** will include, in his discussion with the Selectmen in January, the possible formation of a special task force to address Waste Management concerns and provide coordination.

- (4) Textile recycling is available at the Haddam transfer station, and in front of the Annex Building on Jail Hill Road. It would be good to have a collection site here in Chester.

**c. Open Space mapping.** Still need to confirm that the free version of ArcGIS online allows for data to be exported, or explore another means of mapping.

**d. CACIWC Conference (Nov 2023).** Excellent. Stressed conservation at the town level, and use of the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) as input to PoCD and land use agencies to guard sensitive areas. CCC to work on NRI to make maps and information more available to planners and the public. Plan to send Kate and Lisa H to CACIWC in 2024.

**e. Invasive/Native plant education/action** – The Commission will resume planning for the Earth Day pollinator event in January.

**f. Cedar Lake Committee (CLWC)** – Nothing new to report

## **New Business**

a. **Old County Road parcel conservation easement.** See 2 above.

b. **Chester Events.** Article on garlic mustard submitted for winter issue.

c. **Goals / projects / thoughts for 2024**

(1) Open Space map and inventory

(2) Natural Resources inventory

(3) Inclusion of Low Impact Design and energy conservation considerations into Zoning and building regulations.

(4) Laurel Hill Cemetery landscape design.

d. ***Kate*** will attend the Information Session on Regional Climate Action Plans being hosted by RiverCog on December 20.

Meeting adjourned 5:45.

**Next meeting January 4, 2024**

Respectfully submitted by Richard Holloway & Lisa Wahle

### **Carry overs:**

***Ted*** will investigate purchasing some of the aluminum frame recycling collectors which proved effective at the Chester Fair. Although primarily for use at the Lobster Fest next year, these might be available for other town events.