

Draft Minutes

Exeter Conservation Commission April 13, 2010

Introduction: Carlos Guindon, Michelle Newman, Sean Lyons, Ginny Raub, Bobby Aldrich, Selectmen's representative, Kristen Murphy, Town Natural Resource Planner and Peter Richardson, Chairman

New Business:

1. Mr. Richardson recognized Selectman Don Clement and past member of Conservation Commission who wished to advise the Commission of the passing of Mr. William "Willie" White and the contributions he had made to the Town. Mr. White who lived along the Exeter River was an ardent conservationist, a historian, an agriculturist and a naturalist. Mr. Clement requested a sign noting the William White Conservation Area be placed along Linden St. opposite the McDonnell Conservation area as a tribute to this benefactor to the Town or perhaps a smaller sign further down in what is known as Willie's Meadow. Mr. Richardson stated it would be taken up under Other Business.
2. Mr. Matt Caron, a member of the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) reported his plan to work with thirty-two (32) students and four (4) instructors from the Academy on April 21 in the Henderson Swasey Town Forest. It was to be a 3-hour work session of general trail maintenance. Mr. Caron asked if the Commission had any other projects they would liked accomplished. Mr. Guindon spoke of drainage issues, downed trees on the trails and expressed concern on how they would be treated. Mr. Bob Kelly, accompanying Mr. Caron and also a NEMBA member, discussed with Mr. Guindon on the location of trees and suggested a site visit for more detailed information.
Mr. Richardson stated he felt it was important to arrange a site visit before the work group came onto the trails. They agreed to seek a mutual time for a visit.
3. Sarah Silverberg and Ri Fahnestock appeared seeking the approval of the Commission for the Exeter Trail Race to be held June 13 (rain date June 20). Permission has been received from a private landowner on Continental Drive to use his parking lot for parking and the race would begin and end at this entrance to Henderson Swasey. The race is a 10 mile loop extending into both HS and the Oaklands and returning to the starting point. Again as in their sponsored race last year, 10% of the profits will be donated to the ECC for continuing trail maintenance projects and signage. The race organizers will be responsible for removal of any residual debris.
Mr. Lyons made the motion to approve the race as submitted. With a second by Mr. Aldrich motion passed.
4. Ms. Murphy provided an update on the drainage plans for the Raynes Farm. Mr. Merrill is submitting a proposal to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for funds. EQIP is

administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NCRS) to whom Mr. Richardson sent a letter a letter of support. The drainage issue at the Raynes has been long standing and listed in the development plan and approved to be addressed by the Commission some years ago. There are no matching funds required. Mr. Merrill would receive the funds but the work would be done on Town property.

The Raynes Stewardship Committee is holding a meeting on May 5 to weigh on the drainage issue, a request for a long-term lease for storing parts of carriages and other items from an Exeter farm, a response to Mr. Merrill on the OutGrowingInExeter, the subcommittee for Community Gardens, request to locate a CG on a portion of the Raynes field and language for the long term lease set to be renewed in September. Questions were asked as to the membership on the committee and Mr. Richardson replied there definitely was some ambiguity as to the status and members of the committee. Mr. Aldrich stated if it was a sub-committee of the ECC it needed at least 3 members of Commission to maintain a quorum. It was agreed there was an organizational issue that needed clarification.

Old Business:

1. The minutes of the March 9, 2010 were approved as amended.
2. Following a review of the financial sheet, the Treasurer's report was approved as submitted.
3. When asked for an update on the Community Garden program, Ms. Raub replied she was very disappointed and chagrined to report it did not appear there would be any ground breaking this spring or summer because of unanticipated issues. Ms. Newman concurred with the statement. Mr. Richardson said perhaps we would be in a position to break ground in the fall and after letting the ground settle throughout the winter we would be ready to go in spring of 2011.
4. A delay in signing the work agreement with Mr. Moreno for work on the west side of HS Town forest until the site visit made to view the storm damaged trees found no evidence that would change the terms of the agreement. With that a motion was made to sign an agreement between Mr. Charles Moreno and the Conservation Commission to go forward with the work as stated in the contract. Motion passed.
5. In a wetlands permit report, Mr. Richardson stated the application for the driveway accessing a buildable lot at 110 Linden St. was approved by DES. The Commission had sent a letter of objection and testified as such at the hearing. The ECC had also requested compensatory flood storage be created on site and that was also waived from the project design.
6. The application for the driveway at 46 Brentwood Road (the Gallant property) was also granted by DES. After much discussion including Town Consul the Chair ruled out filing an appeal. Factoring into that decision were the time and costs involved to do so.
7. The deed for the Little River/Morrisette property previously reviewed by the Commission is now in the hands of Town Consul for her review and is in discussion with DES on certain language. The property is 36 acres and runs between Court St. and Linden St. with the Little River snaking

through the property. This parcel is designated as a mitigation site for the wetlands filling done during the construction of the new Exeter Area High School in the mid 2000's.

8. Ms. Murphy reported she and several members of the Commission were able to visit the Oaklands site with Timberland Co. representatives to review the plans set for their work day on April 22. She felt it was very productive as all were able to communicate and express their ideas for what needed to be done and how to best accomplish the task with the number of workers (estimated to be about 35) expected to participate. Mr. Richardson stressed meeting and communicating with trail members/workers on work to be done and conveying that the ultimate responsibility for the use and stewardship of the parcel lies with the CC. He hoped this would continue.

9. Mr. Richardson, also a member of the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee (ERLAC), stated the remaining portion of Exeter River not currently in the Rivers Protection and Management Program (RPMP) and the Squamscott River have been submitted for inclusion in the program. The Exeter Selectboard did approve the nomination and wrote a letter of support. A series of three public meetings are scheduled for landowners whose properties abut the River in those sections to learn more of the program and process. The first meeting is set for May 4 at the Exeter Library and letters of notification have been sent to the property owners.

Natural Resource Planner's Report:

The 2009 PREP (Piscataqua Regional Estuaries Program) report has been received and because Exeter is a tributary-river town within the Great Bay/Little Bay estuarine system a notice was included outlining what measures the Town could and should be considering to adopt that would contribute to the health of the system. Ms. Murphy outlined the items noted and commented some we had talked of undertaking, others were in the works as a result of the wetlands buffer ordinance, vernal pool protection and buffers adopted at the March Town meeting. She was encouraged as it appeared we were moving in the right direction. It will serve as reference as future work plans are formulated.

As part of the Trail Plan a Natural Resource section was to be developed and included. Ms. Murphy did send out a draft prepared for the Henderson-Swasey and Oaklands Town Forest and invited comments from the Commission. She was finding it difficult not to be overly technical but yet reader friendly. She felt the section should serve as a guide for the public in how to use the land and for the Commission in making decision on work/development projects. Mr. Guindon stated the inclusion of visuals might be beneficial to support the dialogue and serve as a reference.

Other Business:

___ On April 29 a public informational meeting is scheduled for the residents to learn more on the scope of the dam removal study and provide input to the items to be addressed in the RFP outline. It is to be conducted by the Rockingham Planning Commission.

___ Mr. Richardson made reference to a brochure prepared by Ms. Murphy for the Volunteer Fair depicting the Conservation Commission as a "tree" and on the "leaves" areas of study and responsibilities of the Commission. He felt the need to find better ways to harness the talents

and interests of the Commission members and to take on one or two of the areas and develop an agenda and timeline as a means of sharing some in the responsibility of the Commission.

___ Mr. Aldrich stated by the end of April the Board of Selectmen would be finalizing the composition of the various boards and commissions. The ECC is composed of 7 voting members (including the Selectmen's representative) and 4 alternates. Several members had expressed their wishes as to their status on the Commission, but a reply is needed by others to complete the process. Mr. Richardson will remain as Chairman up to May 1 as he has chosen not to be considered for the Chair position next year.

___ Action on signage commemorating Mr. White's contributions to the Town will be done at the May meeting.

___ Ms. Raub learned of the National Trails Day set for June 5 and suggested we spotlight one of our own trails within the Town. Ms. Newman offered to make a more formal presentation at the May meeting.

___ Mr. Aldrich speaking on behalf of the Selectboard thanked Mr. Richardson for his time, energy and leadership in serving as Chairman for the past two years. Applause from the members present echoed the sentiments.

Mr. Aldrich made a motion to adjourn. Motion seconded and passed at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub, Secretary