

Draft of Minutes

**Exeter Conservation Commission
June 8, 2010**

Introduction: *Carlos Guindon, Pete Richardson, Michelle Newman, Ginny Raub, Kristen Murphy, Natural Resource Planner and Bobby Aldrich, Chairman*

Call to Order:

Following introduction of members, the Chairman asked for Public Comment. There were no comments at this time.

Action Items:

1. Ms. Murphy reported on an 'After the Fact' wetland permit for Emergency Authorization for repairs to an existing retaining wall at 1 High St. as a result of the damage incurred during the past flooding rains. No changes were made; now following through with required Wetlands Permit. No action is required by the Commission.

2. In discussion of the Draft of the Raynes Farm lease, the Chairman stated this is the first opportunity the Commission has had to review the draft prepared by the Stewardship Committee. The current lease with the additional provisions noted was sent electronically to the members for their review. The current lease does expire in September 2010 and it was hoped in discussion with all parties a mutual agreement will be in place at that time. Asked for comments, Ms. Raub referenced the section addressing Management of Crops. It states the tenant *may apply the nutrient management, chemical fertilizers, compost and/or manure using the best agricultural management practices*. A more detailed clause stating the frequency, the amounts and materials applied would be desired. As a property owner and abutter to Squamscott River we have a responsibility to know what was being applied to the land. The present lease does reference *in accordance with the Conservation Plan* but the Commission does not have said plan at this time. Ms. Murphy said she will pursue obtaining the document. Also, the Raynes Farm Long Range Development Plan states *the Stewardship Committee should meet at least annually to review the monitoring report, the farmer-Commission lease agreement and the Management Plan etc.* That too should be referenced in the lease and that would alter the automatic 5-year renewal clause stated in the draft lease document. Mr. Aldrich did say the Town requires all parties presently in lease agreements with Town owned property make an annual report to the Board of Selectmen. As to the automatic renewal at the end of the 5 year period, Mr. Aldrich concurred stating in present form, the lease allowed the tenant to dissolve the agreement but not the lessor. He also felt a monetary figure needs to be stated in the lease and would examine the language of other Town leases and also determine what is expected in the annual report. An additional

concern of Mr. Aldrich was the “value” of the lease. At this time it wasn’t known but felt it should be determined before lease is signed. In summarizing his comments, Mr. Aldrich felt the Long Range Development Plan be reviewed in more detail and any applicable references be included in renewal lease. The parking (expansion/improvement) and Community Gardens (language) also needed to be addressed. In discussing the Raynes items submitted to the CIP Committee for approval the Committee posed the question of what was the goal (of the Raynes property) for future community use. There is the need to have the ability and flexibility to do something out there not necessarily at present but within the next 5-10 year period.

As to the next step in the approval of the draft lease, the Chair felt the Stewardship Committee, Conservation Committee and lessee be in agreement before going to the Board for their approval. The comments would be passed on to the Chairman of the Stewardship Committee for determination on how best to continue the discussion on the draft lease.

3. Working with the 2010 operating budget, Ms. Murphy prepared a list of anticipated and/or potential expenses for the remainder of the budget year for members’ review and comments. A Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) was listed but no dollar amount supplied. When queried Ms. Murphy stated she did not have a figure as it would be based on the information requested. After discussion of what an Inventory might include it was suggested to put together various plans and the RFP’s be put-forward: when returned a more accurate dollar amount may be obtained. After discussion of the other items, there was a motion to allow the Planner to pursue their acquisition as this would expedite using the tools and materials for ongoing projects without delays. Motion passed. All purchases will go through the regular finance procedures.

Follow-Up Items:

1. Ms. Newman spoke on the success of the Trails Day event held out at the Henderson Swasey Town Forest on Saturday June 5. Visitors had an opportunity to enter their names in a raffle for items purchased as promotional materials for the day from the American Hiking Society. She brought the entries and Don Woodward, present in the audience drew the winning name. It was suggested it be an annual event and perhaps spotlight a different trail each year. The Chair thanked Ms. Newman for taking the lead and seeing the project to its completion.

2. Four projects were submitted to the CIP committee for an initial review. Mr. Aldrich accompanied the projects and gave background on each. The Raynes Farm submission grouped items in need of attention at the property: drainage, sill replacement, cleaning and application of a fire retardant (No-Char) and roof repairs. The Committee was understanding of the need to maintain a Town asset but wished more information as to the long term use of the property and its value to the community. In keeping with items to be repaired it was learned at the June 1 Raynes Stewardship Committee, there is a connection from silo to barn which should be removed to “seal up” the barn.

Ms. Murphy reported the grant applied for roof repairs was not approved so that cost was placed into the CIP request. Now aware of the outcome of the grant request, the Town insurance agency will be contacted to determine if there is any cost recovery from their plan. Mr. Richardson felt very strongly the roof needed some attention this year whether by patch/roofing or a tarp covering the damaged section.

Continuing, he added the start of a trail was in place but a trail crossing was needed at one location. Of equal importance at present is removing foliage to make the entrance to parking lot more visible and safe for entering and exiting.

The acquisition of the Rider property was again submitted to the CIP Committee. Kensington has secured funding for their portion and Exeter is seeking funds to support 1/8 the cost (\$85,000) of acquiring the 50 acres of open space south of Powder Mill Road straddling the Towns of Exeter and Kensington. From the CIP initial response there appears a need to strengthen the request.

The request for adding \$50,000 annually for the acquisition of open spaces was not looked on favorably at this time as it was stressed payments are still being made on the 3million 15 year bond designated for Open Space: will keep the request in the CIP project file.

Replacement of the Little River walking bridge that was washed twice in the recent storms was also submitted for consideration. At this time it is identified for the fiscal year 2014. There will be some re-working to move it up in the priority list.

3a. At the May meeting, work training sessions to be held prior to the general monthly meeting were discussed. Several topics were identified including but not limited to invasive plant ID and means of control, the how-to of boundary markings, and a plan-reading workshop lead by the Town Planner.

b. Review of Article VI in the Bylaws. In proposing revisions to Article VI, the Committees listed were reviewed and discussed for their applicability to our present Committee. What standing Committees did we wish to retain or add. It was the Chairman's goal to create something realistic and a working document of what we do. The Raynes Farm Stewardship Committee, Community Gardens, a Trails sub-committee in some form, and keep the Outreach and Education Committee were recommended to be outlined. Language will be developed and be brought back at a later meeting.

Regular Business:

1. Ms Murphy reviewed the 2010 Work plan update focusing on the status of Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 projects. Discussion focused on means to address the ongoing projects.

An update of the activities at 46 Brentwood Road was noted: a cease and desist order has been issued to the owner for violation of the wetland buffer ordinance.

2. The Treasurer distributed the report and noted \$320.00 had been received from the sale of the used farm equipment that had been out in the field at the Raynes Farm. It will be deposited in the Citizens account (designated for Raynes activities). Also a check for \$99.00 was received from the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program. A portion of the interest of the Community Conservation Easement is given to participating members to assist in the continuation of good stewardship. The funds will be deposited in the Ocean Bank account. A motion was made to accept the Treasurer's report as presented and passed unanimously.

3. The Minutes of March 13, were to be approved. Following a site walk at Henderson Swasey to view storm damaged trees, the group was able to compare leaf-blown and undisturbed trails for erosion noting such on the leaf blown trails. Ms. Murphy asked if photos were taken to provide documentation of such observation. Mr. Guindon stated he believed photos were taken... Such a notation was added to the minutes. With that addition, minutes were approved as amended.

4. Minutes of March 26 site visit to the Oaklands for the upcoming Timberland work project were approved.

5. Secretary noted the correct relationship of Bruce White to William White as was stated in the minutes. The correction was noted and minutes were approved as amended.

6. In other business Mr. Guindon spoke of his encounter with a surveyor on the trails who advised him of the intent to do some cutting in the Little River area. Ms. Murphy stated the cut plans were to be given to the Planning Department in the coming week.

Mr. Richardson asked if we are responsible for Jolly Rand trail. It is a Town trail but who are the stewards?

7. Next meeting will be July 13 with a start time of one hour earlier (6:00 pm) to allow for a training workshop.

Motion to adjourn:

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub

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