

Exeter Conservation Commission

Draft Minutes

Wheelwright Room, Exeter Town Offices
September 14, 2010

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Robert Aldrich called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Wheelwright Room of the Exeter Town Offices. Members present were Kevin Keaveney, Peter Richardson, Carlos Guindon, Virginia Raub, Kristen Murphy, Natural Resource Planner, and Robert Aldrich, Chairman.

Robert Aldrich began the Work Session meeting with a discussion of the State Primary Election.

Action Items

1. Budget Review for 2010; Budget Planning for 2011

Robert Aldrich explained that Kristen Murphy and he presented a Level Funded Budget for 2011 to the Town Manager last week with essentially zero percent (0%) increase. Mr. Aldrich also stated that he requested a \$7,000 supplement increase for fire retardant at the Raynes Property as a separate request. If accepted, the Town will decide which budget to add this item to.

Robert Aldrich began a conversation concerning acquisition of the Ryder Property and the low ranking it was given by the CIP subcommittee. The necessary funds for acquiring the property totaled \$85,000. Mr. Aldrich explained to the Town Manager that if the property is not supported by the Budget Committee, the CIP Committee, and the Board of Selectman, and the item does not make the ballot, he should consider the Citizen Petition Warrant Article Four to consider other possibilities. The Board discussed using the funds still available in the Open Space Bond, totaling \$32,000, in combination with a portion of the Conservation Funds. Peter Richardson asked if there was any contact with the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF). Kristen Murphy explained that she contacted Michael Speltz, Land Protection Specialist from SPNHF, and was informed that the Town of Kensington secured their portion for additional funding. Mr. Aldrich explained that the money could be raised with enough additional support.

The Board began a discussion concerning the remaining 2010 Conservation Commission Budget, which is only available to be spent until the end of the year. Peter Richardson suggested spending \$600 on the rental of a machine and transfer of 20 yards of fill dirt to the Jolly Rand Trail for 120 feet of low spot. The Board agreed on the project and explained the work would be listed under Trail Maintenance.

Robert Aldrich suggested using the funds for brush clearing at the Irvine site as well as additional mowing and requested Kristen Murphy to get a quote. Ms. Murphy explained that the three fields, which are usually mowed once a year, cost about \$900.

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Virginia Raub asked if mowing the Irvine Field would eliminate the existing poison ivy problem. Carlos Guindon explained that if the poison ivy was removed, the site would be a good place for a trail, especially for bird watching.

Robert Aldrich suggested using a portion of the remaining funding on new signs. Kristen Murphy explained that Reedy Signs and Designs quoted \$400 for each trailhead sign, which she felt was too expensive for the signs they want. The Board agreed that Peter Richardson's contact would provide a more cost effective solution using a router owned by Virginia Raub.

The Board discussed the possibility of finishing the re-routing of the Oaklands trail, and it was decided that there would not be enough time to complete it this year.

Kristen Murphy suggested spending some of the budget on the Natural Resource Plan, explaining that \$10,000 was the assumed quote.

Ms. Murphy explained that the final quote for the Raynes roof repair, which would be covered under the insurance, totaled \$9,000. Kevin Smart will obtain estimates for the project and will have to negotiate in order to keep the cost within the insurance claim. The work should be finished this fall.

The \$5,000 encumbered from last year's budget was still available for forest work. After a brief discussion, Robert Aldrich suggested that the Board follow through with contacting Charlie Moreno to complete the original work agreement, including an update to the Forest Plan.

The Board began a discussion concerning what projects the Board should organize for the 17 to 20 Christ Church of Exeter volunteers. Kristen Murphy suggested several projects on several properties, explaining a need for additional leaders to help organize the work. Robert Aldrich suggested that in order to keep things organized, all the volunteers should work within the Raynes Property, which offers the most work. Several suggested jobs included clearing the area by the grave site, trimming the parking area and the LCHIP sign, removal of invasive species, weeding, and working on the bridge. The Board agreed to come up with a full list of work for the volunteers.

2. Short and Long term plan for Little River Parcel

The Board began a discussion concerning the Little River Parcel and their goals for future maintenance. The site will not be pursued for use as a community garden at this time. This is due in part because the original supporters intended for the property to remain "au natural." The property boundaries would also need to be marked. Robert Aldrich suggested offering the work to students to establish property boundaries for several properties in Exeter. The Board suggested that a single dollar amount for the project versus a per hour pay would be the best approach. The Conservation Commission would initiate the scope of work and proceed accordingly.

The Little River Deed has not yet been signed by the Board of Selectman, but the item is on the agenda to be addressed.

3. Raynes Farm: Lease Update, Conservation Plan, etc.

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The Raynes Farm Lease is about to expire and will be signed on September 27. Once the Legal Department has given its approval, the Town Manager will execute the Lease.

A discussion ensued about updating the Raynes Farm Conservation Plan. Due to the property being supported under LCHIP, a Conservation Plan is required. It was decided that because the Department of Agriculture has not yet revised agricultural standards, the present 300 foot buffer and current fertilizer application is adequate to protect the estuary from fertilizer runoff.

4. Morgan Ryan Deed Update

Robert Aldrich stated that the Board Selectman signed the Morgan Ryan Deed and suggested to add this property to the list of boundary marking work.

5. Bylaws, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6

Robert Aldrich requested a review of Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 in the Bylaw revisions and that comments be sent to Kristen before the next meeting. His hope was that the Bylaws would clearly define the Conservation Commission process to expedite the transition of new Committee members before the March 2011 Elections.

Other Business

1. Natural Resource Planners Report

A. 46 Brentwood Rd

Kirsten Murphy is writing a letter for the Planning Board concerning 46 Brentwood Road, who has recently submitted a Wetland Conditional Use Permit Application for a garage and in-law apartment. Ms. Murphy will address this issue at the following Planning Board meeting.

B. Eagle Scout

Kristen Murphy was approached by another Eagle Scout, requesting permission to present his intended project to the Conservation Commission. The project included a kiosk for the Oaklands site on Watson Road, as well as some trail clearing and brush trimming along the power lines. A discussion ensued concerning the feasibility of the project and it was decided that the Eagle Scout would outline the project scope for the Conservation Commission's approval.

C. Beech Hill Deed

A conversation ensued concerning the Beech Hill Deed revisions. Kristen Murphy advised that the Deed has been reviewed by Legal Council and that she would forward their comments, including her own, for the Board to review and approve at the next meeting.

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The Board discussed the overall responsibilities of the Conservation Commission relative to small portions of Conservation Land on Deeds. It was recommended that the Board research how other towns monitor and manage these responsibilities through the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions.

2. Wilfred Moreau Nursery

Kristen Murphy began a discussion concerning using the Wilfred Moreau Nursery as a future community garden and trail site. A trip to the site was planned and recommendations on how to proceed are forthcoming. As a side note, after researching the property, she discovered reports on Conservation Commissions activities included sponsoring students for conservation/ecology workshops. Robert Aldrich suggested incorporate several of these ideas in the future.

3. Natural Resource Inventory

The Board discussed financing a Natural Resource Inventory. The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions lists other community Natural Resource Inventory plans and it was decided that the format used by Washington seemed to be the preferable model. The Board is prepared to finalize in October.

For the upcoming October meeting, the Board agreed to meet early for a training session (still to be decided).

The November meeting, which coincides with the General Election, needs to be rescheduled.

Peter Richardson recommended that the Commission consider his approach for the documentation and future control of invasive species within the Town. His hope that training of road crews would allow for identification and documentation that would prove useful for future control efforts.

Chairman Robert Aldrich adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gillian Baresich
Recording Secretary