

## **Exeter Conservation Commission**

### *Draft Minutes*

Nowak Room, Exeter Town Offices

October 12, 2010

### **Call Meeting to Order**

Chairman Robert Aldrich called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices. Members present were Sean Lyons, Kevin Keaveney, Peter Richardson, Carlos Guindon, Virginia Raub, Kristen Murphy, Natural Resource Planner, and Robert Aldrich, Chairman.

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

### **Action Items**

#### **1. Eagle Scout project proposal – Zachary Stough**

Zachary Stough presented his Eagle Scout project proposal using a PowerPoint presentation. Kristen introduced Mr. Stough, explaining that the project he is proposing is located within the Oaklands Town Forest.

Mr. Stough began his presentation by explaining that he is a life scout in Exeter Troup 323 and since moving to Forest Ridge, has wanted to clear out the trails in the Oaklands Town Forest. His project consists of building a trail kiosk and clearing/blazing the trails within the land. After listing the materials needed, explaining how to raise funds, and providing a timeline with the necessary labor involved, he presented a series of images. The new kiosk would be the same as the Henderson Swasey kiosk design and would be located near Watson Road and the existing gravel parking lot. In order to mark the trails, Mr. Stough explained that he would first flag the trees, and then paint the markers red. The images showed several fallen trees and logs blocking the trail.

The Board discussed the project and the timeline it would need to be completed. Mr. Stough explained that he would want to complete the project sooner rather than later. Kristen Murphy offered to check the location of the proposed kiosk in order to ensure the sign would be within Town Property. The Board requested that Mr. Slough contact Ms. Murphy once he has flagged the trail so the locations would be correct. Sean Lyons made a motion to accept the project proposal, Carlos Guindon seconded: Vote unanimous.

#### **2. Beech Hill Conservation Deed**

Kristen Murphy provided the Board with revisions to the Beech Hill Conservation Deed, explaining that after coming before the Board, there were concerns about the current version resembling a combination between a warranty deed and a conservation easement. After contacting Compadres, LLC, Ms. Murphy received revisions which she

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brought to Legal Council for additional input. Those revisions were provided within the packet. Peter Richardson agreed to read over the revisions and visit the 14.66 acre lot in order to check for boundary markers. The deed will be before the Board during the November meeting and if accepted would continue onto the Board of Selectman for approval.

Due to the lot's small size, Peter Richardson questioned whether the Conservation Commission should continue to take on these small deeds in the future. Many of the smaller plots of land have more complicated property lines and are too small to manage properly. If the Conservation Commission does not accept these properties, they would need to be managed by a Home Owners association or conservation organization in order to gain approval from the Planning Board. It was suggested to research how other Conservation Commissions deal with the expense of maintaining these properties. In some cases, Conservation Commissions may hold authority with executory interest in a property, stepping in when needed, leaving the Home Owners Association responsible for monitoring and maintenance. If these parcels are approved as Open Space, developers can sometimes receive a density bonus, allowing the developer to increase the density of the houses per land area. The Board discussed several methods to marking and maintaining the boundaries within a property.

### **3. Review of Draft Bylaws: Articles I, II, III, IV, and VI**

Robert Aldrich began a discussion concerning revisions to the Draft Bylaws, explaining that Article VI needs comments from the Board. Article VI involves individual committees of the Conservation Commission and therefore has the most potential for revisions. Once Articles I, II, III, IV, and VI are completed, the Board will move on to review Articles V and VII. Mr. Aldrich requested that the Board contact Kristen Murphy or himself with suggestions and comments before the next November meeting.

### **4. Draft Request for Proposals for Natural Resource Inventory**

Kristen Murphy presented the Board with a draft request for the Natural Resource Inventory Proposal, explaining that it is modeled after the Washington, NH Natural Resource Inventory RFP online. The Washington inventory included cultural resources, which may or may not be appropriate for the needs of the Conservation Commission. By using this model, the Natural Resource Inventory would identify significant natural resources in town and produce a development risk scenario, and build out analysis which would help to prioritize which parcels are important. This would update the previous build out analysis, which was completed in 2003.

The Board discussed the budget available for this project, explaining that the Washington Inventory's budget totaled \$10,000. Ms. Murphy mentioned that there is a lot of existing data available, and may allow for a cheaper cost compared to Washington's budget. Robert Aldrich explained that in order to complete the inventory, the Board should use \$5,000 from the 2010 funds and set aside \$5,000 of the following year's funds. In order to utilize the remaining Conservation Commission budget, the RFP would need to be submitted by November 19.

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It was agreed by the Board that cultural resources should not be included. There already exist other Boards within the Town of Exeter that are responsible for completing a cultural resource inventory. Instead, the inventory should focus mainly on conservation land, including only basic cultural data in order to keep from duplicating existing information.

Sean Lyons moved to approve the RFP as amended for not to exceed \$10,000 of funds for a Natural Resource Inventory. Virginia Raub seconded: Vote unanimous.

## **5. Draft Scope of Work for Boundary Monitoring**

Kristen Murphy presented the Board with a drafted scope of work for marking and inspecting conservation lands and easements. The Board is offering a one-time contract, preferably with a student, to mark and inspect the boundaries, report inconsistencies, as well as compile a final report. Some equipment will be provided by the Conservation Commission and Ms. Murphy will check in daily with the person. It would be preferred if one of the local schools could offer this job for course credit. Ms. Murphy agreed to finalize the scope of work and see if there is anyone interested in the job before the November meeting.

## **6. Morrisette Property (aka Little River Parcel) – management goals**

Peter Richardson announced that the project previously referred to as the Little River Parcel is now named the Morrisette Property in order to avoid any further confusion. Kristen Murphy explained that according to the minutes from the September Meeting, the Board agreed to leave the property 'au natural,' thus allowing the property to grow without any maintenance. Ms. Murphy suggested the Board consider the site for an early successional habitat. The property appears to have the necessary qualities needed for this ecosystem and would only require a small management cost. Maintenance would only require a brush hog every five to seven years, allowing the land to regrow at a variety of stages. It was suggested to use the parcel as an education tool, or laboratory for the Board and the public. The Board discussed the need for this ecosystem and the types of species that would benefit. Ms. Murphy explained that if the Board is interested, a member of the UNH Cooperative Extension would be able to review the site and make recommendations to the Board .

## **7. Christ Church Exeter Raynes Service Day Report**

Mr. Aldrich announced that on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 25 volunteers from the Christ Church of Exeter assisted the Conservation Commission with landscaping work at the Raynes Farm under the supervision of Virginia Raub, Peter Richardson, and Kristen Murphy. The day went very smoothly and the outcome was highly successful. Ms. Raub explained that she was pleasantly surprised by the 'can-do' attitude from the volunteers and their willingness to work. Ms. Raub's group helped to clean and clear out invasive species at the Wiggin's Grave Site while Mr. Richardson's group worked on side hilling and moved several logs, and Ms. Murphy's group removed the invasive plant autumn olive from the field edges. Mr. Richardson suggested that if this opportunity arose

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again, there should be more Conservation Commission members to help lead and organize. The project went very well due to the preparation completed by the 3 crew leaders. It was recommended to come up with a plan on maintaining the site by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Raub announced that she was looking for a groundcover that helps to keep future weeding at a minimum. A thank you letter encouraging their future assistance was sent to the Church.

## **Other Business**

### **1. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of the August and September minutes were moved to the November Meeting.

### **2. Additional Suggestions/Announcements**

Sean Lyons made a suggestion to the Board to consider adding more Community Outreach Programs in order to inform the Town of the available resources the Conservation Commission can provide. Mr. Lyons suggested to discuss this topic at a later date

Kristen Murphy provided the Board with copies of The NH Guide to Upland and Invasive Species.

Robert Aldrich announced that he received an e-mail regarding the completion of the Dudley Brook mill site crossing at the Little River Conservation Area. Mr. Aldrich thanked David O'Hearn and Mark Dolloff the son of the original land owner for the work they completed.

The Board discussed the Planning Board Meeting to be held the following Thursday, which will include a discussion about the 46 Brentwood Road Project. Kristen Murphy had written a memo to the Town Planner, summarizing the Conservation Commissions discussion at the wetland hearing and reminding her that the Planning Board may refer the project to the Conservation Commission for input. However, under the Conditional-Use Permit, the Commission is not a part of the process unless input is requested. Virginia Raub mentioned the application by Jonathan Ring at 20 Drinkwater Road to decrease the 75 foot vernal pool setback. The application was approved but the applicant honored the original buffer. Mr. Aldrich volunteered to keep in touch with the Chairman of the Planning Board to stay updated on the issue.

Kristen Murphy passed around information about upcoming events:

- Landscaping at the Water's Edge
- New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions meeting
- Walk through recently harvested forest on the Little River Parcel

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- Rain Garden Training
- Updated Rules on Stream Crossing Presentation

Ms. Murphy explained that the Conservation Commission received a wetland application for the Kingston Road Bridge, which crosses Little River on Route 111. Ms. Murphy also alerted the Commission that there were recent changes in the DES regulations concerning how applications will now be processed electronically. Ms. Murphy recommended the Board read through the changes available on the DES website to understand the implications of how projects will be reviewed.

The next Conservation Commission meeting will be on November 9. Peter Richardson moved to adjourn the meeting, Sean Lyons seconded.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Gillian Baresich  
Recording Secretary