

**As Approved at April 13, 2010 meeting**

**Exeter Conservation Commission  
March 9, 2010**

**Introduction:** *Kevin Keaveney, Carlos Guindon, Jay Sullivan, Sean Lyons, Ginny Raub, Kristen Murphy, Town Natural Resource Planner and Pete Richardson, Chairman*

**New Business:**

1. The Chairman offered the Forestry Work Agreement to the members for their approval and permission to be signed. The plan outlines work to be performed by Charles Moreno, Town Forester, in logging and associated work in the Henderson Swasey Forest commencing in the summer of 2010 and extending into the winter of 2010-2011. Revenue is anticipated from the sale of the harvest.

Mr. Sullivan stated he had been out on the trails after this recent storm and reported there was significant damage in the proposed logging area as well as along and on the trails. He felt the damage was serious and in some instances needs to be addressed now and not wait until the dates on the Work Agreement. It was suggested the members schedule a site walk to view damage and then consider notifying Mr. Moreno and determine what steps were needed to make the trails safe. The site walk was set for Saturday, March 13, 2010 at 8 AM at the entrance to Henderson-Swasey.

2. Mr. Richardson with drawn maps oriented the members to the Powder Mill Road trail area off of Route 111. The approximate four acre site is scheduled for trail work on March 24, 2010 with members from the Teen Outlook Center. On the map, Mr. Richardson outlined the proposed area of activity and referenced some of Exeter's history that had occurred in this area.

On the opposite side of Powder Mill Road off Route 111 is Juniper Ridge Road. Mr. Richardson read from a memorandum of agreement drawn in 1977 between the developer and the Planning Board conveying a right of passage along the river over specific lots named. It appears as if this could be a site for future definition of a trail but will have consul review document to affirm.

Mr. Richardson also provided an update on proposed trail activity in the area of the newly constructed Boulders site in the RiverWoods community. Mr. Richardson did acknowledge consents from an easement holder in that area did need to be obtained before any actual work could be initiated. He noted this new trail could be the beginning of a network of trails that would include the existing Jolly Rand trail.

3. Members have been notified of their term expiration dates on the Commission and have been asked if their term expires this year and they wish to be re-nominated please contact Ms. Murphy.

4. Boundary monitoring continues to be an ongoing task. The interns and Ms. Murphy in summer of 2009 did start the process but much remains to be accomplished. The Chair asked for members to be thinking of the task and how to continue. A discussion for a later time should consider how much we wish to be completed and in what time period. (Ms. Murphy will send electronically the map noting the areas completed.)

Discussion focused on prioritizing areas and means of addressing infractions with the property owner when found. It was generally agreed to prioritize the areas possibly focusing on areas of on-going development activity that might be opened to boundary infractions. It was stressed quite often it means several visits to a site before one can actually obtain an assessment of the boundaries. The idea of notifying property owners in the area of an upcoming site visit and a follow up after the visit was discussed. Mr. Lyons suggested when a report is completed and filed a copy be sent to landowners.

5. Ms. Murphy asked for guidelines/parameters in seeking grant funds for the development of a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) of Conservation managed lands. It is an important aspect in managing current holdings and valuable in validating or seeking future acquisitions. A consultant would most likely prepare the report with the Commission as the overseer. But to apply for grant funds Ms. Murphy would like a list of components the Commission feels should be included for evaluation. Discussion focused on the study using existing data, pulled together and summarized or a combination of new data combined with existing materials. Mr. Lyons expressed an interest in learning more about the wetland buffers in the Town: quantitatively and quality. Mr. Richardson stated if the Article 9 on the Town warrant passed the Planning Board will have more input into the importance and role of the Town's buffers.

The Chairman then asked members to be looking ahead for topics to appear on the ECC agenda over the upcoming months; to focus on where the Commission wishes to put their time and energies.

6. Ms. Raub gave a brief summary of the Backyard Wildlife Workshop she attended sponsored by the Southeast Land Trust and conducted by a wildlife biologist from the UNH Cooperative Extension. She had samples of the literature made available and offered websites for more information.

7. Ms. Murphy and Mr. Richardson attended an Invasive Plant workshop concentrating on the prevalent species in NH. The workshop focused on ID, control and caution of using cultivars of the invasive plantings. Members were asked to observe and note locations where invasive planting are present around the Town.

8. Trail blazing in the Town Forests will commence as soon as the condition of the Forests are deemed safe from the storm debris.

9. Members had electronically received a preliminary deed of conveyance for the tract of land known as the Morrisette property (including the old High School playing fields) running between Court Street and Linden Street. The property currently is in the ownership of the Exeter Region Cooperative School District but is to be transferred to the Town of Exeter through the Conservation Commission as part of the wetlands mitigation plan approved in the construction of the new Exeter High School. The final wording and acceptance is subject to the approval of DES. The language of the deed was reviewed by the Chairman and listed the manner in which the land would be managed. No action was taken as there other principals involved in the review process.

10. The need for conservation awareness was raised by the Chairman. Ms. Murphy reported in spite of postings on Channel 22, website notices the recent Animal Tracks Walk with local naturalist David O'Hearn had disappointing attendance. She continued by commenting the resources in the Town are available but making the residents aware and willing to take advantage of the knowledge and interests presents a challenge. Discussion followed on possible group involvements, making connections and developing awareness of the Town's resources. Mr. Lyons agreed to work with Ms. Murphy on enhancing the Town's Conservation website. Others agreed to consider other avenues of connection.

11. As a result of the recent storm, the roof at the Raynes barn lost a significant portion of shingles. An estimated cost for staging, repair etc is ten thousand (\$10,000) dollars. Ms. Murphy is researching possible grant funding to aid in the repairs. One such grant, with a deadline of March 31, does have monies available with a no matching fund clause. However, if the grant is received there may be the provision that 50% of the funds be initially provided by the recipient and the balance received when project completed. There are ECC funds available in the Raynes account remaining from the initial warrant article that could be used if necessary. In anticipation of the grant award and to facilitate the project to move ahead a motion was made to allow the expenditure of up to \$4000 from the Raynes account be used if needed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Other sources of funding will be researched as well.

12. The Exeter Train Station development group notified the ECC of their intent to request Plan NH to hold a charette\* to assist in the development in a Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan for the Surrounding Neighborhood of the Train Station. Ms. Walker of the Rockingham Planning Commission drafted a letter and is seeking the approval of various committees. A motion was made for the Chairman to sign the letter of support. Motion passed unanimously.

13. A letter from DES was received stating the wetlands permit for the Gallant property at 46 Brentwood Road property stands. Ms. Murphy read the letter written by the ECC of non-support after the January public hearing on the wetlands application for the construction of a garage whose access would impact existing wetlands and from the letter of reply from DES. The Chair stated the Commission has thirty (30) days from the date of the DES letter to file an appeal. At this time Mr. Richardson is unsure of the exact procedure but asked the Commission if they felt it was in the interest of the Town to pursue. Mr. Lyons felt an appeal was worth pursuing and made the motion for the Chairman to research and carry out the appropriate recourse after conferring with Town officials. Motion seconded by Mr. Sullivan and passed unanimously.

#### **Old Business:**

14. The minutes of the February 9, 2010 meeting were approved as amended.

15. The Treasurer's report was approved as presented.

16. OutGrowing in Exeter, the community garden project had a meeting on February 10 and was pleased to have additional interested townspeople present. The actual site has not been officially declared as new developments at the proposed Raynes site location have put a hold on the project until they are resolved

#### **Natural Resource Planner's Report:**

17. Ms. Murphy reminded the members they wished to view the proposed trail work project in the Oaklands before the work day scheduled for April 22 with the Timberland group. Discussion of times convenient for most ensued and an email will be sent to members for a choice of dates and time.

17. A request from an ECC member to attend the Saving Special Places conference on April 10 in Weare, NH was read by Ms. Murphy. He was seeking the possibility of re-imbursement for the program before committing to the registration. Ms. Murphy reminded the Commission funds were available in the budget for training and programs and not to hesitate if you wish to participate in such

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\* charette; group of people who are all involved in a specific project where they discuss goals of project and how they expect to go about meeting those goals: visual brainstorming; mostly used in architectural design projects.

events. For this particular conference, a motion was made and passed to support up to three people to attend the event.

18. Vernal pool documentation is a project Ms. Murphy wishes to pursue in hopes of identifying and documenting such activity on all Conservation land. She will be going out and welcomes the company of other interested members. Notices will be sent out when the outings will take place.

**Other Business:**

19. In spite of the Trail Closed signs, Mr. Sullivan stated bikers were still using the Town Forests. Not only using the area, but doing unauthorized trail work; in one instance a re-route was created around a wet area. That area will be dry in several weeks but the braid will remain. Mr. Sullivan also felt larger and more prominent signs stating Trail Closed (with biker symbol) should be purchased and placed at the trail heads at H-S and the Oaklands. Mr. Richardson asked to allow him to do some research before expending any funds. It was agreed a site visit should be scheduled to view the storm damaged trees and to evaluate the trails leaf blown this past fall vs. those trails left untouched for evidence of erosion. March 13 at 8:00 AM was chosen and all members will be notified.

**Motion to Adjourn:**

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raub, Secretary