

Exeter Conservation Commission

Approved as Amended, December 14, 2010

Nowak Room, Exeter Town Offices

November 9, 2010

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Robert Aldrich called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices. Members present were 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. Commission Membership Update/Recruitment

Robert Aldrich announced that both Michelle Newman and Tom Gregory will be resigning as members of the Conservation Commission. Tom Gregory is expecting a 3rd child and Michelle Newman will be moving, which leaves the Conservation Commission short on members. Mr. Aldrich recommended the Board consider recruiting new members through different methods. Several suggestions included contacting the Raynes Farm volunteers, the Trails Committee, the Open Space Committee, press releases, and advertising during the Town election in March.

2. Brainstorming Educational/Outreach Opportunities

Robert Aldrich began a discussion concerning educational outreach programs and opportunities for the Conservation Commission to interact with the community. The Board agreed that Trails Day was a great example that should be made into an annual event. Virginia Raub suggested partnering with the local schools already using the Morrisette Property as a learning tool and sponsoring a program to expand the Commission's interaction within the community. Each of these events provides opportunities to encourage public interest within the Town.

3. Bylaws Review: Initial Review of Article V and Article VII

Robert Aldrich announced that he sent Articles V and VII to be initially reviewed by the Board. Mr. Aldrich requested that the Board make revisions to these two articles to discuss at a later meeting. There was a discussion concerning the Raynes Farm Stewardship Committee and the process of making amendments to the Farmer Commission Lease Agreement.

The Board began a discussion concerning Article VI, which deals with the various subcommittees of the Conservation Commission. Peter Richardson raised several questions of the feasibility for each subcommittee, and suggested giving those committee objectives back to the Conservation Commission. The Board discussed the need to keep the Raynes Committee, Open Space Committee, and Trails Committee but agreed that the rest could be reconsidered. Additional discussion included the challenge of taking on these new responsibilities and how it would help to connect the Conservation Commission to the needs of the Town. Mr. Richardson explained the importance of community interaction and the challenge of maintaining about 100 properties (2000 acres of conservation land). The budget, which reflects higher spending toward recreation projects over conservation maintenance, needs to be restructured. The Board discussed at length several other issues including the need to set more aggressive goals and writing the Bylaws to reflect the true purpose of the Conservation Commission. It was agreed that sometime in the near future, the Board needs to spend an entire day planning toward these goals. Over a course of eight to ten months, the Board should be able to build a formal plan identifying what the Commission needs to do in order to be effective for the Town.

Mr. Richardson mentioned the need for volunteer events throughout the year, such as the Raynes Farm Volunteer Event completed by the Christ Church of Exeter. With more organization and preparation, as well as creating a plan to maintain the completed work, these volunteer sessions could prove very useful for the Conservation Commission. The Board discussed the countless jobs that need to be completed throughout the Town that could easily be done through volunteer events.

Kristen Murphy pointed out that the Town of Exeter may be unique in its ownership of many various conservation properties. Carlos Guindon suggested contracting someone to inspect property boundaries in order to alleviate some of the difficult work after acquiring a new property.

Mr. Aldrich announced that the Town Highway Department delivered 20 yards of fill for a much needed area on the Jolly Rand Trail and thanked Jay Perkins and DPW for the work.

4. Up North Orienteering/Bike event proposal (Deb Humiston)

The application was presented by Deb Humiston, membership director of Up North Orienteering, and her daughter Elizabeth Bailey. Ms. Humiston requested permission to hold both an orienteering session and bike event on December 4th, 2010 at Fort Rock within the Henderson-Swasey Town Forest. The orienteering event would be targeted for both novices and experienced orienteers, mainly consisting of families. The event will be advertised in schools and through the orienteering community. There would be from ten to twenty people for the first event running from 10:00 A.M. to 1 P.M. while the bike event would bring another ten to twenty people and would run from 12:00 P.M. to 1:00 P.M. Ms. Humiston has held orienteering events in the past and explained that she helped Tony Federer to map the Town of Exeter forests thirteen years ago which has been used for national orienteering events. Ms. Humiston presented the Board with a map of the two courses, explaining that the bike and the orienteering trails

would not interfere with each other. There will be several controls for more experienced orienteers located off the trail away from any portions of conservation land the Board wishes to protect.

The Board began a conversation concerning the impact of this event on the land and how to best protect the wetlands within the area. Carlos Guindon agreed to work with Ms. Humiston and identify areas where the orienteer would need to stay on the trails. Ms. Humiston agreed to send Mr. Guindon a map of the final courses. The only reason to cancel the event would be for weather or excessive mud conditions.

Ms. Humiston also offered to provide orienteering and GPS training workshops for the Board in the future. A conversation ensued about the use of geocaching and how the Board could utilize the GPS treasure hunting game toward informing the public about conservation land.

Peter Richardson moved to approve both events on December 4th, Virginia Raub seconded: Vote unanimous.

The Board agreed the event would be a great use of the Town Forest and suggested to advertise on Exeter TV, Channel 22 as well as through the Parks and Recreation Department.

Follow-Up Items

1. Morrisette Property – Early Successional Habitat Potential

Kristen Murphy and Peter Richardson met with UNH Cooperative Extension to obtain suggestions on management of an early successional habitat for the Morrisette Property. A report will be completed by the end of the week. The property naturally lends itself to the early successional habitat due to periodic flooding. It was recommended to mark the boundaries, remove the invasive species, and assess the potential for forestry harvesting, which would help to offset some of the maintenance costs. Mr. Richardson also mentioned the need to monitor and possibly fill the unused drain on the property as it could be a hazard. Virginia Raub suggested creating a photo journal of the process from start to finish.

2. Jolly Rand trail work

There was a discussion about the recent trail work completed at the Jolly Rand Trail. The estimated budget for the project was \$600.00 and the final expense came out to \$614.20. The Board discussed the need for a supervisor to oversee conservation projects like this one in order to maintain consistency.

3. Natural Resources Inventory RFP review process

Robert Aldrich announced that the RFP for the Natural Resources Inventory was sent out with a November 19 return date. As responses come in, the Board will review each one, and then follow up with a Review Recommendation. The Board hopes to have a contract before the end of the year.

4. Beech Hill Conservation Deed

The Board discussed the revised Beech Hill Conservation Deed with the amendments provided by the Town Council. There were several concerns regarding protective covenants that may require future revision as well as the various easements and encumbrances on the property. Carlos Guindon made a motion to accept the Beech Hill Conservation Deed with the amended changes, Peter Richardson seconded: Vote unanimous. The accepted deed will be passed on to the other party's legal council via Town Council.

5. Route 111 Bridge Repairs

Robert Aldrich began a conversation concerning the Route 111 Bridge repairs which was discussed during the October Meeting. Since the application for a dredge-and-fill permit was submitted after the deadline, the Board was unable to review the project and did not request a time extension. After fourteen days, the project moved forward without the Conservation Commission's Review. Since then, there have been concerns and questions about the project including a letter sent by the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee to the State. The bridge has experienced heavy erosion on both sides and excess drainage along the south end of the bridge. It was agreed that after this application, as a standard procedure, the Conservation Commission would request a time extension on applications requiring a response within fourteen days. The Board will draft a standard letter to send out for each of these applications in order to prevent problems in the future.

6. 2011 Budget Review/Presentation

The Conservation Commission Budget Review Presentation will be on the agenda for the following Budget Advisory Meeting held at 7:00 p.m. on November 10, 2010. Currently, it is listed as last behind Police, Fire, and Public Works. Robert Aldrich plans to send an e-mail to the Police Chief and Fire Chief to request to go first. Kristen Murphy has put together a PowerPoint presentation which includes future plans and projects for the following year.

Regular Business

1. Natural Resources Planner's Report

Kristen Murphy stated that Phyllis Duffy, Public Works, publishes a biannual newsletter on the subject of water management for the public. Ms. Murphy agreed to author several articles for the newsletter and requested suggestions on topics from the Board. Peter Richardson suggested the topics of prime wetlands and the Conservation Commission's intentions for the Morrisette Property. Other ideas included River's

Management Protection Nomination, as well as the protection of wetlands and water supply within the Ryder Property.

2. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Raub reported a balance of \$4,450.96 for the month ending October 31, 2010. The amount is determined by the amounts in the actual 2010 budget subaccounts plus encumbered funds from 2009 and then subtracting those items approved for expenditure thus giving the available funds remaining in ECC budget.

As to the over expenditure in the Legal Notices subaccount, a voucher for \$128.00 for the legal filing fee for the Morrisette deed was placed into this account (as we had no subaccount for this type of expenditure) thus placing the subaccount into a deficit. Peter Richardson suggested that the fee should be the Selectmen's responsibility instead of the Conservation Commission. Robert Aldrich agreed to speak with the Selectmen about the issue. Ms. Raub also received a donation of \$100 from Sarah Silverberg by means of the Exeter Trail Race who requested the money go toward trail maintenance.

The Board discussed potential expenditures for the remainder of the year. Included in the discussion was the Spring Tree Program. The Board agreed that it was a viable program and would like to include it in the 2011 budget.

Peter Richardson moved to accept the treasurer's report, Carlos Guindon seconded: Vote unanimous.

3. Approval of Minutes: August 10, September 14, and October 12

Peter Richardson moved to accept the September 14, 2010 Draft Minutes, Carlos Guindon seconded: Vote unanimous. Virginia Raub abstained due to absence.

Carlos Guindon moved to accept the October 12, 2010 Draft Minutes, Peter Richardson seconded: Vote unanimous.

Virginia Raub moved to accept the August 10, 2010 Draft Minutes, Peter Richardson seconded: Vote unanimous. Carlos Guindon abstained due to absence.

4. Other Business

Don Briseldon's wife is currently recovering from surgery.

The Board discussed several training programs for the Conservation Commission to utilize in the future.

Robert Aldrich received a photograph of the completed project at the Raynes Farm Bridge and thanked Pete Richardson, Alan Corey and the Christ Church of Exeter Volunteers for their hard work.

Peter Richardson stated that after working on the property, some supplies left behind went missing.

Virginia Raub began a discussion about the Plan New Hampshire event regarding the Train Station Design Charette. Plan NH is proposing an informal dinner/community event to present their report in mid to late January.

Carlos Guindon attended the NH Association of Conservation Commission annual meeting including a training session regarding general monitoring procedures and GPS use.

5. Next Meeting: Date and Agenda Items

The next Conservation Commission meeting will be on December 14. Peter Richardson restated the Conservation Commission's need for new members. Virginia Raub moved to adjourn the meeting, Peter Richardson seconded.

Chairman Robert Aldrich adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gillian Baresich
Recording Secretary