

Exeter Conservation Commission

Draft Minutes

Nowak Room, Exeter Town Offices

February 8, 2011

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Robert Aldrich called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices. Members present were Maggie Matick, Jay Sullivan, Peter Richardson, Don Briselden, Virginia Raub, Kristen Murphy, Natural Resource Planner, and Robert Aldrich, Chairman. John Merkle, Chairman of the Heritage Commission and Don Clement, member of the Heritage Commission were also in attendance.

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

Presentation

1. Exeter Natural Resource Inventory Overview

Anne Deely, President of Neatline Associates presented the Exeter Natural Resource Inventory and Conservation Strategy to be completed by Neatline Associates and West Environmental. The plan of work was outlined as follows:

1. Natural Resources Review and General Mapping

The first objective would be to organize a series of existing maps to describe the existing town resource value. Some maps include existing buffers along rivers, habitat and wildlife mapping, existing Natural Heritage Bureau and Fish and Game mappings, agricultural and forest resources, and current and past listings of conservation lands.

2. Identification of Natural Resource Rich Areas

After organizing the base mapping layers, the Project Team would decide on the importance of weighting each resource type, if necessary. These maps would then help to create a series of sub-composite, co-occurrence maps which will be combined into one final co-occurrence map consisting of each overlaying map with or without the priority weighting of specific areas.

3. Identification of Prime Development Lands

Parcel zoning and utilities data from the town is required to help to review parcels that have been developed over the past 5 years. This would result in the evaluation of trends, which would lead to the identification of constraints on developments to figure out what areas cannot be developed. Subtracting those areas from the total land would result in potential developable lands.

4. Identification of Prime Natural Resource Properties at Risk.

The prime development lands would be compared with the co-occurrence analysis to find areas that are both high natural resource priority areas and are also at high risk of development.

5. Identify Core Conservation Lands and Strategies

To help protect conservation lands at risk, the final objective would be to identify future protection areas and make site specific recommendations using a summary of all information collected. Additional studies would be utilized, such as the New Hampshire Fish and Game's Wildlife Connectivity Model in order to pay attention to existing wildlife corridors.

The Board began a discussion on selecting around six team members to help assist Neatline Associates throughout the project. Robert Aldrich stated that he has provided the offer to other Boards and Committees that would benefit from the information and has received some interest. Don Clement, member of the Heritage Commission recommended the ECC not to allow other Commissions too much say throughout the project in order to ensure a pure Natural Resource Inventory. Members of the Conservation Commission showed interest in allowing for a balance between outside Boards and the ECC. Members interested in joining the team included Don Briselden, Carlos Guindon, Maggie Matick, and Peter Richardson. Team members involved would participate in e-mail discussions and meet near the end of February and occasionally throughout the project.

Kristen Murphy opened the conversation to decide whether or not each resource mapping layer should be weighed. It was decided to proceed without weighing layers in order to allow for non-opinion based data. John Merkle and Don Clement, members of the Heritage Commission, stated their plans to complete a Town-Wide Mapping Survey in the near future for historical and cultural resources and showed interest in coordinating with the Natural Resource Inventory to allow for an overlap between the two. Robert Aldrich stated that he is excited to get the project started and hopes to see it completed sometime during May or April.

Action Items

1. Review of the final draft Conservation Easement associated with the Linden Commons subdivision at Tax Map 93 Lot 79, 78, 67

Kristen Murphy presented the Board with comments from the Town Legal Council, DES, and the Conservation Commission on the draft Easement and began a discussion regarding these comments. The open space portion of the property will be owned and managed by the HOA while the easement will go to the Conservation Commission. There is an approved 2,500 square foot area delegated to be used as a lawn clipping area which is currently defined as a detention pond and will eventually fill

over time. Peter Richardson and Kristen Murphy visited the site with DES to ensure the correct placement of wetland and conservation boundary markers.

Ms. Murphy explained that the DES requires a management plan to be developed, including a growth and age class vegetation map if the ECC intends to harvest timber from the property. The Board began a discussion on their plans for the easement but felt the language within the easement should not specify a required management plan. It was agreed to strike the section discussing a management plan and to retain the portion discussing timber activity.

The Easement also included a section worded as follows: "... the Grantee has to comply with the alteration of terrain permit, the wetlands permit, and the shoreland permit as amended, and as may further be amended." Ms. Murphy explained that by keeping this statement intact, it requires the ECC to comply with amendments that have yet to be submitted. Robert Aldrich recommended striking the "... and as may further be amended," and explained that prior to acceptance of the deed, the Grantor shall abide by all permits that have been issued and/or amended. This was agreed upon by the ECC.

Another section was worded as follows: "... in accordance with RSA 36-A, the Commission can accept this after a public hearing." Ms. Murphy stated that the statement is not true and has spoken with the Town Legal Council to confirm that a public hearing is not required unless money is exchanged. The Board agreed to remove this language from the easement.

Peter Richardson suggested to reword the following language used throughout the easement: "non-commercial, outdoor recreation, non-motorized pedestrian." The Board began to discuss their intentions for protecting the river and wildlife from damaging uses such as dogs, bikes, and other vehicles. It was agreed to change the language to read as "only public, pedestrian access," in order to prevent damage and future complications. Mr. Richardson suggested to hear feedback from the Town Legal Council regarding this language to ensure the Board's intentions.

It was suggested to add language regarding the grantor's right to drain storm water on the easement. Due to the previous approval of the drainage plan, Don Briselden suggested adding "subject to town approval," to the language.

Mr. Richardson noted that the easement contains conflicting statements regarding the location of the property boundary along the Little River. Currently, there are some locations that are missing boundary monuments but will be replaced in the near future.

The Board discussed the suggested changes and agreed that in the future the Board should consider the necessary funding required to maintain lands before acquisition occurs. The easement requires the approval and signatures of the Board of Selectmen along with the approval of the Conservation Commission. Don Briselden moved to approve the easement subject to the changes discussed; Peter Richardson seconded: Vote unanimous.

Mr. Briselden thanked Kristen Murphy for all the hard work she has completed in finalizing this easement draft.

Regular Business

1. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was tabled to the following ECC meeting.

2. Other Business

Robert Aldrich posed two questions to the Board:

1. How can the Conservation Commission effectively recruit new members?
2. What will the leadership structure of the Conservation Commission become?

The first question the Board agreed is an ongoing issue and should be discussed at the upcoming visioning session. For the second question, Mr. Aldrich explained that after inspecting the laws from the NHECC, he discovered that there is a law stating that a sitting member of the Board of Selectman cannot serve as a representative to the Conservation Commission. The law does not prohibit a member of the Board of Selectman also being appointed to the ECC but they cannot be named as a representative. Mr. Aldrich expressed his interest in staying with the ECC and will find out in March when the representative assignments are decided if he can remain a member of the ECC.

Mr. Aldrich announced that during the deliberative session, the budget for the ECC was not amended and is safe from additional cuts. If the public votes no for the budget, a piece of the budget allocated for Water and Sewer will be directed to the ECC's budget. Both Raynes Farm and the Ryder properties were not amended.

Kristen Murphy stated that the application for the Trails Day has yet to be opened and will apply as soon as it is available. The Board discussed the need to encourage additional support for the conservation lands and agree that Trails Day provides that opportunity. Ms. Murphy also recently spoke with an Eagle Scout who has requested to build a kiosk for the Rayne's Farm. It was recommended that the Scout should consider a smaller kiosk to allow for easier maintenance, and present it to the Raynes Farm Committee as well as the ECC.

3. Next Meeting: Date and Agenda Items

The Conservation Commission will be holding a visioning/work session led by Carole Andrews from the NHACC on Saturday, February 19, 2011. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss priorities for short and long term goals for the Board. The meeting will take place at the Ridge at Riverwoods, starting at 9:00 a.m. and ending around 12:00 p.m.

Robert Aldrich stated that the Town has scheduled March 8 as Election Day and proposed a change in the March Conservation Commission meeting. The Board

These minutes are subject to possible corrections/revisions at a subsequent Exeter Conservation Commission meeting.

agreed to cancel the March meeting and move the April meeting to the first Tuesday on April 5.

Don Briselden moved to adjourn the meeting, Maggie Matick seconded.

Chairman Robert Aldrich adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gillian Baresich
Recording Secretary