

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

Exeter Conservation Commission

Draft Minutes

Nowak Room, Exeter Town Offices

June 14, 2011

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Robert Aldrich called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices. Members present were Margaret Matick, Peter Richardson, Virginia Raub, Russell Kaphan, 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. Rollinsford Associates

The subject properties are located near the McDonalds property along Portsmouth Avenue and Stoney Brook Lane. Attorney Michael Donahue from DTC Associates introduced the application by Rollinsford Associates, stating that although no action is required tonight, the applicant is looking to discuss the application for a Conditional Use Permit with the Exeter Conservation Commission (ECC). Rick McCoy, principle of Rollinsford Associates and original franchisee of McDonalds, introduced himself to the Board and explained the history of the McDonalds property as well as the areas around it. When the highway was constructed, Mr. McCoy purchased the adjacent lands and moved the McDonalds to its current location, closer to the highway. Several catch basins have been constructed since then to help manage the storm water runoff from the highway.

There are four adjacent properties under discussion today, two of which have street access and another which connects to conservation lands. Mr. Donahue explained that Rollinsford Associates is looking to receive input from the ECC on the development potential of one of the properties currently located in a wetland buffer and whether the Board sees value in expanding the conservation uses already existing on the property and connect to Elm Street with a potential trailhead to existing conservation lands. Rollinsford Associates is willing to deed a significant area along the back of the property to the Conservation Commission and would also consider discussing the construction of trailhead parking. Addressing the other lot, Rollinsford Associates has designed a concept plan showing what could be constructed and includes an increased lot size of 1.14 acres. Due to the restrictions placed by McDonalds, another fast food franchise is not permitted on these lands. Although the design has not been finalized, the concept plan shows an example of a drive-thru financial institution as well as other uses. Currently, there are adjacent wetlands creating a buffer around the land,

rendering the lot unbuildable. Mr. Donahue suggested taking a site walk with the ECC when possible to discuss this issue.

The McDonald's property consists of .72 acres that would be reconfigured to 1.16 acres. The remaining parcel adjacent to the water treatment facility would be developed as potential office use. After discussing the property with the Planning Board, several suggestions were made and are currently being considered for the next proposed design.

Jim Gove from Gove Environmental Services, Inc. spoke next about the nature of the properties and the surrounding environment. Mr. Gove explained that he has flagged the property in 2001, 2008, and again in the spring of 2011, noticing a change. Due to the unique water flow and soil conditions of the land an eroded gully was formed behind the McDonald's property, creating drainage problems throughout the other properties. Mr. Gove spoke in more detail concerning the details of the lots, explaining the types of vegetation, wildlife, and changes in soil conditions throughout. In order to combat the drainage issues, Rollinsford Associates is proposing the following changes: construct several gravel wetlands throughout and slope 600-700 square feet of land to allow for natural storm water management. The gravel wetlands work similarly to a porous pavement but also help to cleanse the nitrogen from the water and works throughout the year.

The Board asked several questions concerning the lot line changes, future development of the lots, percentage of sealed surfaces, soil conditions driving the water flow, and several other issues. It was agreed to schedule a site walk during July in order to avoid any delay in the project and discuss issues in more detail. At the end of the discussion, Mr. McCoy stated that after being a working resident in the Town of Exeter for 40 years, he is interested in improving the appearance of the highway entrance.

2. Tracking Volunteer Hours

Kristen Murphy stated that the Board can better leverage funds for grants by recording volunteer hours. Ms. Murphy drafted a form to help track the following information: project name, total work and travel hours, and total mileage. July 1st will be the first day to begin tracking volunteer hours.

3. Conditional Use Permit or Technical Review Committee plan review process

Kristen Murphy explained the process currently used when the ECC receives a Conditional Use Permit or Technical Review Committee plan review: Ms. Murphy reviews the application involving a natural resource impact and attends the Technical Review Meeting, speaking on behalf of the ECC. In addition to this, Ms. Murphy reports on the Conditional Use Permit applications during ECC meetings and if there are any concerns, they are forwarded to the Planning Board. However, some applications may not allow appropriate timing for review by the ECC prior to the meeting. Robert Aldrich stated that the only way to allow the Commission the ability to review each application is to require each item come before the ECC as an agenda item. It was suggested to forward the application and written material to the ECC members once they are

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received, along with notes from the Planning Board Meeting. Mr. Aldrich stated that a more suitable process will be decided in the future.

Follow-Up Items

1. Raynes Boundary Work

Peter Richardson stated that after visiting the property several times with Virginia Raub, Maggie Matick, Kristen Murphy, and a high school student, Matt Wallace, there has been significant activity completed in remarking the boundaries of the Raynes Farm. The Board thanked Mr. Wallace for his time volunteering. Around 50% of the work has been completed and Mr. Richardson invited anyone to join him on June 15th to continue working on the project.

2. National Trails Day update

Robert Aldrich thanked Virginia Raub for organizing the National Trails Day, stating that it was a success and will be repeated the following year. Ms. Raub stated that the people in attendance were grateful for the work completed by the Board on the Oaklands Property.

Regular Business

1. Treasurer's Report

After discussing the current status of the Natural Resource Inventory as well as the purchase of boundary markers, the Board accepted the Treasurer's Report as presented by Virginia Raub.

2. Approval of Minutes: May 10, 2011

Robert Aldrich stated that there were no minutes to approve.

3. Natural Resources Planner's Report

Kristen Murphy thanked Zach Stough for completing the construction of the kiosk at the Oaklands Trail on Watson Road for his Eagle Scout project. In addition to the kiosk, Mr. Stough has also cleared the trail and repainted the trail markers. Ms. Murphy stated that he was very easy to work with and constructed an impressive kiosk for the Town.

A vernal pool workshop was held on May 21 and included a site visit and a formal presentation. Ms. Murphy stated that the tour went very well with 15 to 20

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people in attendance. In order to record activities and events, Ms. Murphy stated that she plans to start a scrapbook on events held by the Conservation Commission.

The Exeter River Local Advisory Committee (ERLAC) held the NH Fish and Game fish ladder tour in May. There were a total of 30 to 40 people in attendance.

The Volunteer River's Assessment Program (VRAP) is starting on June 23 and 24 at 8:30 in the morning and will be continued every two weeks by Ms. Murphy.

Ms. Murphy stated that the latest current conditions report for the Birch Road Trust property has been sent by Southeast Land Trust and needs to be signed by the members of the Board. This document acknowledges the land monitoring completed by Southeast Land Trust for the Town of Exeter. They are looking for a signature of acknowledgement by the Conservation Commission.

4. Other Business

Peter Richardson stated that on June 9th there was an EPA meeting in Exeter, regarding the future of the sewage treatment within the Town. Currently, there is a major problem with water quality in the Great Bay and action needs to be taken immediately. Scientists have designated the problem as being an overabundance of both soluble nitrogen released by wastewater treatment facilities (WWTF), which is caused when stormwater systems are connected to these WWTF and release more water than the WWTF can handle during storms causing a Combined Sewer Overflow condition where untreated wastewater is released directly into the Squamscott River and it is impacting the eel grass in the water. The EPA is requiring the Town to build a sewage treatment plant to replace the old one, which currently cannot handle the sewer overflow and water amounts. The cost for replacing the existing treatment facility is \$30 million. However, the EPA recommends the Town to build a more technologically advanced facility, which would cost around \$50 - \$60 million. Mr. Richardson suggested that the Conservation Commission pursue this important issue and work to help the Board of Selectman as they struggle through this financial hardship. Additional information will be available at future meetings.

5. Next Meeting: Date and Agenda Items

Robert Aldrich announced that the next meeting will be August 9th and there will be a site walk in July. The Board welcomed Russell Kaphan as its newest member and thanked him for joining. Mr. Kaphan introduced himself as a professional physician and will be interested in being involved whenever his schedule allows it.

Peter Richardson moved to adjourn the meeting, Virginia Raub seconded.

Chairman Robert Aldrich adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Gillian Baresich
Recording Secretary