

Exeter Conservation Commission
Approved with correction at July 10, 2012 meeting
Nowak Room, Exeter Town Offices
June 12, 2012

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairwoman Virginia Raub called the meeting to order at 7:00pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices. Members present were Carlos Guindon, Margaret Matick, Michael Field, Peter Richardson, Alyson Eberhardt, and Jason Gregoire. Mr. Steve Walker, Conservation Land Stewardship Specialist with the LCIP, and Dr. Steve Jones, UNH, were introduced.

2. Public Comment

Action Items:

1. Conservation Land Stewardship Specialist - LCIP Property Monitoring (*Steve Walker*)
 Mr. Walker distinguished the LCIP from the LCHIP program. The LCIP areas were protected by the Town, and this program has a lifespan of 5 years. There are 78 towns protecting land in the State of New Hampshire. The State has invested in 240 properties in municipalities, and has the deed to 45 others. As agreed upon by the BOS, Mr. Walker checks annually with Ms. Murphy to ensure the monitoring reports are turned in to the LCIP; Exeter is up to date on reporting. Most properties of the LCIP provide 1 report per property, but Exeter's Oaklands Town Forest provides 1 large report due to its variety of smaller properties. Exeter has 6 of the 90 fee-owned properties in the state. Mr. Walker and Ms. Tracey Boisvert, the director of the LCIP, monitor non-LCIP lands which belong to the Fish and Game department. LCIP provides training for municipalities on reporting, GPS and map and compass techniques. Mr. Walker stated that the LCIP encourages Conservation Committees to support good reporting and protect their own interests through training. This process aims to ensure that violations and issues with land protection are resolved before they grow, protecting the State's investment. Mr. Walker believes that Exeter's filing system for conservation lands is good, and applauded the Town's database – an advantage that not all smaller towns have. He encourages towns to create stewardship plans for the fee-owned properties in their care, which are important when wetlands and road frontage are involved. Management plans are key in communication with residents and abutters of these properties. Mr. Walker also suggested that the Town take full advantage of the proximity of the University of New Hampshire for research and monitoring, as senior students are often required to complete a project which can be used to benefit the town. Mr. Walker recently met with the manager of the Country Club and Irvine properties, as well as the recently acquired Morgan Ryan property. He noted that the markers at the property are durable and useful for community outreach. He will soon be doing a field report on the Morgan Ryan property, and visiting the OTF. There are new monitoring reports now available online about the properties, as well as boundary tracks/shape files and KML files for GIS and Google Earth respectively. UNH also has the Granite Data Mapper, which is a tool powered by *Esri*.
 . Mr. Walker inquired whether the Town has easements which are not LCIP; Ms. Murphy confirmed that there are. He stressed the fact that towns need to know their land and boundaries well, because online reports or map files may not reflect the actual conservation status of land, and possibly mislead by showing land which is vulnerable to improvement as protected. Ms. Raub inquired whether the LCIP has any funding for acquiring more land; Mr. Walker stated that there is none, explaining that the LCHIP program has funding for future acquisitions, while the

LCIP program is more oriented toward stewardship and monitoring of current properties. Acquisition is dealt with if DFG has any questions. Mr. Guindon asked whether there are tags available for Easements, as well as the current Conservation Property tags. Mr. Walker noted that there are many distinctions between fee-owned properties and other easements, so the current term of Conservation Property is more accurate and useful to public understanding. He noted that the protocol for marking boundaries can be made available to the committee, and that it is online already. Marking corners is one priority, as are trailheads and areas where abutters could be a problem; aluminum nails are used for consistency. Beside property markers, there are a variety of public venues for information on these areas: Granite Data Mapper, the list of easements and properties, etc. Easements are not always open to the public, so it is important to label them carefully and respect the landowners' rights. Fish and Game provides tags with the text 'Conservation Easement: Public Welcome'. Finally, Mr. Walker extended an invitation to the committee to edit and reuse any forms available to them through the LCIP, as dissemination of information to the public is key to the LCIP's mission. Mr. Walker thanked the Committee for their time.

2. Stormwater Outfall Monitoring Report (Dr. Steve Jones)

Dr. Steve Jones from the Exeter Storm Drain Monitoring Project was introduced. Dr. Jones explained that the Great Bay Coast Watch, a Sea Grant project, ended when the previous director retired. This project was succeeded by the Coastal Research Volunteer Program, which is a citizen science program where volunteers learn about local conservation issues, and assist scientists to collect data. The Storm Drain project has focused on storm drains in Exeter and Greenland, NH. Dr. Jones is the principal investigator, and CRV Program Coordinator until the new director is hired. CRV also deals with sea level rise in salt marshes, and oyster restoration work. The project deals with non-point source pollution, and nitrogen pollution. The new EPA requirements are due out soon, and were first scheduled for October 2009. These new regulations are known as MS4: Municipal separate storm sewer systems. Issues at hand include creating and maintaining a management plan, and monitoring discharge. There is a variety of water quality problems: shellfish, a recent oil spill at Dover Point, contamination of mussels, and especially the nitrogen load in the estuary. 1/3 of this load is discharged to the estuary from waste water treatment plants; this is largely a non-point source problem. Storm drain discharges are also key to pollution. Dr. Jones showed the committee a map of all the known storm drain discharge points. These were mapped by Rob Livingstone.

The Storm Drain Monitoring Project involves organizing volunteers and local partners. The project reports results relevant to estuarine water quality. There were 16 volunteers in Exeter, mostly varying from date to date, though Ms. Matick was a constant worker. Dr. Jones also showed the committee a map of surface water quality status. The Town of Exeter, Phyllis Duffy, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Field, Ms. Raub, Ms. Murphy, the Exeter/Squamscott River local advisory committee, and PEA have all been partners of this project. The project chose 12 storm drains to monitor in Exeter and Greenland, visiting sites in Exeter every other Wednesday and every Tuesday in Greenland. Volunteers were trained at Jackson Laboratory in March. This project sent volunteers into the field more frequently than required by the EPA regulations, which solely require a visit every 5 years. CRV held monthly meetings. Not all of the drains are easily accessible, or draining during the dry season, so the drains chosen were the most significant, and chosen to yield the best data. Mr. Field did sampling, despite the logistical challenge of sampling when discharge is low; Mr. Field and Dr. Jones were able to get quality samples and also some flow rates. The volunteers have learned a lot about sampling and how to get quality data due to

their field training. The parameters measured were: Chloride (not on the EPA list), temperature, turbidity, pH conductivity, *E. coli*, ammonia, chlorine, salinity, and productivity. The project did not measure surfactants or potassium. Sample analysis took place on site. The costs for the project will be in the forthcoming final report; the monitoring and the detection kit cost approximately \$2200 for 3 meters. Water quality testing was done in small groups. Further analysis took place in the lab. Site #5 had no flow; site #11 showed no impact from dissolved oxygen. 1 sample was below 75% saturation, and 2 were moderately impacted by pH (5-5.9). 5 sites exceeded the State's chloride standard (related to salt in fresh water); 4 sites exceeded the *E. coli* standards. Site #9 exceeded the chloride standard consistently. Sites #10 and 2 well exceeded the *E. coli* standard; this is an example of how the participants were educated in the importance of contamination from dog feces. Certain sites like #7 exceed several parameters. Each site was tested 3 times, visiting 5 sites per visit.

Monitoring costs include detection meters, kits, lab analysis, and the organizer/coordinator salary. There are shared resources and support from other groups (CRV=NHSG, VRAP, NHDES, UNH). The report will include data from both communities, and a manual will be developed on how to harness volunteer power to give the Towns important data. There is a potential for future collaboration; Dr. Jones would like the Seacoast Storm Water Coalition to be an umbrella organization for harmonized procedures and approaches, and a support structure. Mr. Gregoire inquired as to whether the MS4 regulations will require each municipality to monitor their sites: Dr. Jones stated that this would start with the large towns and eventually include smaller ones as well. The MS4 expect every known drain in urbanized areas to be monitored. Mr. Gregoire also asked whether the regulations would prescribe remedial steps? Dr. Jones noted that there will be information on best management practices, follow-up procedures, and outreach. He also noted that not much monitoring has been done on specific conductivity, as this was not an intense winter when road salt and residual draining of salt through soil becomes a problem. Bacteria, however, from human or dog sources, is an issue. Ms. Raub noted that different groups are tackling different parts of the MS4, and the committee is doing public outreach, so that the MS4 will not come as a complete surprise to the Town. Dr. Jones was asked as to the standards on pesticides, and noted that the list of parameters could be quite long. Heavy metals could be included on the list, as might total petroleum hydrocarbons. Ms. Raub thanked Dr. Jones for his presentation; he mentioned that the database will be made available to the Committee.

Public Comment:

Frank Patterson appeared with a presentation on the Fisherman's Path preservation. This site is located near the Exeter River, between Rt. 111 and the Pickpocket Dam. Recently a proposal came to the attention of the abutters, neighbors and land owners, outlining a streamside construction project for a new path at the above location. This would entail path building and widening, clearing, cutting, log removal, and placement of railings and concrete benches. The residents rejected this project because the current path is now passable and the 'unimproved' condition is already adequate. The land is a mix of state, private, and conservation ownership, and the path has been in use for over 30 years, to his knowledge without request for improvement. There is regrowth, recovery, and self-repair on the path, which is mostly used lightly and seasonally. Mr. Patterson argues that the existing path has already reached and probably exceeded its limits of sustainable traffic. There is documented misuse of the existing path (with litter and use by humans and domestic animals). Mr. Patterson felt that this project was not the most pressing about the riparian buffer zone. The proposal was withdrawn. Mr.

Patterson thanked the DPW for stabilizing the bank near Pickpocket Dam, and for work done near Rt. 111 and the Norris Brook buffer zone. He thanked the Committee on behalf of a few of the neighbors that contributed to this effort. He stated that he and his wife have had nearly no complaints about the use of their land, and that their preference is to leave the trail in a primitive state. Ms. Raub thanked Mr. Patterson for his time, and for making a part of Exeter become clearer for the Committee.

Regular Business:

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Raub stated that she had given copies of the Treasurer's report to the Committee. A print out of the expenditures is not yet available. The conservation funds – 3 bank accounts – are unrestricted and restricted. Some were given by private donors to the Committee for specific use, such as trail management and land purchase. The account ending in 9235 is the Raynes account, which is remaining from the purchase of the Raynes property, and designated for use related to this property only. \$1100 needs to come out of this account to repay the Conservation Committee, as the Town paid the invoices with deficient funds when there was a lot of ongoing construction at the Raynes property. This must be done by the Treasurer, and cannot be done by the Finance Dept. The Conservation Committee used to write its own checks, but now everything goes through the Finance Dept. **Mr. Richardson moved to accept. Mr. Guindon seconds.**

Vote: Unanimous; motion accepted as is.

Approval of Minutes: May 8, 2012

Ms. Raub stated that the minutes were sent to the Committee electronically, and that everyone has a copy. Spelling errors on the names of Ms. Matick and Mr. Guindon were noted. **Mr.**

Guindon moves to approve as noted. Seconded by Mr. Richardson; Vote: Unanimous.

Accepted with notations/edits.

Natural Resources Planner's Report and Correspondence

Ms. Murphy noted that there are not too many projects coming forward at this time. There is a preliminary site plan review for the Exeter Hospital Synergy building, noting changes to how parking is accessed. There was a small section where the Hospital is trying to tie the existing roof drains to the wetland. These changes will be developed at the initial review stage. Ms. Murphy has some general concepts and the layout; no technical review committee involvement yet as this is still in the preliminary stages. In the past, Ms. Murphy noted that she brought projects to the Committee, and she would forward the response to the Planning Board; she asked the members whether there should be any changes to that process, and whether they would like to have representation at the technical review committee meetings, which generally take place during business hours. Mr. Richardson inquired as to whether Ms. Murphy is on the technical review committee and whether she needs support; she stated that she is on the committee and believes that her voice is heard. Ms. Murphy said that she would email a notice about these meetings, and keep information at her desk so members of the Committee can get involved if they are interested. She noted that the Planning Board, DPW, the Fire Department, and engineering firms are represented.

Ms. Murphy stated that she had a few requests for funding from the last meeting, which got tabled. There was a question about brochure funds. In July 2010, trail brochures were initially developed. These are printed on waterproof paper, available for \$1, or available to print online for free. This price does not reflect a profit concern but rather ease of pricing. Since then, 116 have been sold, which has yielded a profit of \$97.44. The charge for making copies goes to the General Fund and gets reallocated, not to the Planning Dept. for toner, etc. The funding process

for further printing supplies is not simple, at present, but will be refined. At present, Ms. Murphy pays personally for the waterproof paper, and has bought enough paper for 50 each of the 4 brochures (\$128.29), for which she hopes to be reimbursed – she had believed that this expenditure was approved and bought and printed them due to this miscommunication. Printing 200 brochures cost \$27.00, and she requests that the funding for the paper and printing costs come out of the 5585 account (trail management and maintenance). Ms. Raub asked to confirm the total as \$155.29; Ms. Murphy confirmed this amount but noted that it goes to different payees. **Mr. Richardson moved to accept; seconded by Ms. Matick. Vote: Unanimous; motion passes.**

Ms. Murphy stated that the funding request - \$510 - for membership in the Conservation Committee Association was tabled at the last meeting. She noted that it is best to spend as much of the Committee's funding before the budget review. Mr. Gregoire asked as to the benefits of membership? Ms. Murphy stated that the Association puts on an annual meeting about properties and monitoring, and serves to support in the background throughout the year. The association also serves as the voice for the Committees regarding the Conservation Shoreland Protection Act. Ms. Murphy has a login for the website, and there is an infrequently updated listserv and an newsletter. This is a way to connect to other Conservation Committees. Mr. Gregoire inquired as to whether the Committee is a current member? Ms. Raub confirmed that they are, and that the annual meeting in Concord is interesting and educational. There is a handbook which explains how the funding system works, and what the regulations are that the Commissions follow. **Mr. Guindon moves to approve the request; seconded by Ms. Raub. Vote: Unanimous: motion passes.**

The Raynes farm well house has been replaced by the construction technologies, and only the amount allocated was charged. The foundation still has gaps to fill in. Ms. Murphy noted that we have a connection with SST, and they like to continue to fill space between large projects. The Raynes Farm has many projects at all times. The doors may be replaced in future.

Parks and Recreation has a community support camp where students sign up to help with community projects; Ms. Murphy has given them a list of trail related projects and invasive plant issues. There are 29 children registered, which is higher than expected. A meeting will take place this week to firm up plans and discuss the use of sharp tools. The students involved are of ages 12 and 13. Ms. Murphy is hoping to start with Little River Trail, where there is a lot of brush down. She asked the Committee members to mention projects they would like to work on.

Ms. Murphy would like an update on the status of the Dutch Elm disease resistant trees of the Liberty Tree project; Ms. Matick expressed interest in checking them, and Ms. Murphy requested that she provide photos.

This Thursday from 7-9pm at the Press Room in Portsmouth, the Clean Water Music Series has a concert. Ms. Raub noted that this may take place at a different venue, and not only the Press Room.

Ms. Murphy and the Volunteer River Assessment Program met with DES on Monday, to do a quality inspection of equipment. She plans to go on Thursday and Friday June 21 and 22 at 8:30am to do sampling. She stated that in future she would like to do sampling every 2 weeks on Wednesday and Friday. Ms. Murphy stated that she planned to meet at the Garrison Lane site at Little River, and then meet by the trailer at the cemetery at the Exeter River site. This is near Squamscott Commons, and the old High School.

Ms. Murphy also expressed interest in discussing committee positions. Ms. Raub said a discussion could take place next month, and that all positions were open. Ms. Murphy noted that

the committee had discussed trying a rotating chair status every 3 months.

Other Business:

Ms. Raub updated the committee on the signs for National Trails Day. The restrictions on sign placement greatly reduced the number of signs to place, as the committee needs owners' permission to use private property. Signs can be placed immediately at the Raynes Farm property. The tenant farmer is doing spring mowing this weekend, and fall mowing will take place in mid-September. Ms. Murphy noted that there are multiple raffle groups for the prizes bought by the committee, such as doggie trail mix. Mr. Richardson asked to see pictures of the prizes. Ms. Raub stated that the Think Blue program, with 1 minute spots on WXEX continues: 3 times a day, 5 times a week. This is funded by DPW educational outreach. Ms. Murphy noted that the Committee paid for 1 ad a day, and the others are donated. Mr. Guindon mentioned that the race did take place this past weekend, but he did not have figures for attendance.

Ms. Matick moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Guindon. Non-debatable.

Next Meeting: Date and Agenda Items:

The second Tuesday of July is July 10, 2012.

Respectfully submitted

Mariel Moyer
Recording secretary