

These minutes are subject to possible correction/revision at a subsequent Exeter Conservation Commission meeting

Exeter Conservation Commission
DRAFT MINUTES
February 2, 2016

Call to Order

Mr. Gregoire called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices on the above date.

1. MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Belanger (BOS Rep), Alyson Eberhardt, Jay Gregoire (Chair), Ginny Raub, Andrew Koff,

Staff Present: Kristen Murphy (Natural Resource Planner), Sarah McGraw (Recording Secretary)

2. Public Comment: None

Action Items

1. **Request for Conducting Tours/Rentals in Town Forest – Cecil Ables not present**
2. **Event Agreement – Orienteering Program February 13th**

Adam Mangan spoke about the organization that provides volunteers for disaster relief efforts. The event is an orienteering workshop on February 13th at 9:00 am along the Red Loop of the Town Forest. The group is part of a national organization.

BOARD COMMENT:

Mr. Richardson was concerned about the early spring thaw and impacts to the trails. Mr. Mangan said he understood the concern and will keep an eye on the weather. Mr. Gregoire said that the CC will keep an eye on the weather as well.

Mr. Gregoire motioned to allow orienteering event, second by Mr. Richardson.

VOTE: *Unanimous*

3. **Expedited Minimum Impact Dredge and Fill Application for the Construction of a Concrete Pad and Enclosure for a New Cooling Tower at 10 Chestnut Street, Tax Map 64/ Lot 51**

Mike Wynkoop introduced the project as a concrete pad to replace and secure the current cooling tower for apartment buildings owned by Chinberg Properties. There is 238 square feet of impact. Other locations have been considered but the final

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version was decided on after considering comments by abutting neighbors and Town staff.

BOARD COMMENT

Ms. Eberhardt inquired to how a cooling tower works. Jim Gove of Gove Environmental Services spoke about the mechanics of the cooling tower. The old cooling tower used to pump water from the river to cool the air conditioning system but Town water will be used in the new unit. Some objections to the tower is the possible noise made from the motor running. The Applicant is applying for an expedited application. The coastal tidal area is known to be a disturbed site before construction. Mr. Gove said that an assessment was conducted by the Natural Heritage Bureau in 2012 and no endangered species were found.

Ms. Murphy commented that there is impact to the existing buffer, and the original application did not have permanent impacts. Mr. Gove said that the plan now contains erosion and sediment control.

Mr. Koff asked if the water for the new system will be supplied from the river. Mr. Gove said it would be a closed system.

Discussion ensued about photos of the site. There was discussion about sea level rise and potential future impacts to the pad. Ms. Eberhardt commented about the Climate Adaptation Study and its use for projects such as this. There was some concern about the height of the tower. Mr. Gove said that the tower will not stick above the buildings located behind the towers.

Ms. Murphy explained that because it is an expedited permit the CC needs to sign the Application. Ms. Belanger commented that it is also contingent upon Planning Board approval.

Mr. Gove replied that the application relies on local, state and federal approvals. If the Planning Board disapproves, the application returns to the beginning.

*Ms. Raub motioned to approve the expedited application and send a memo to the Planning Board highlighting concerns, second by Mr. Richardson. **VOTE:**
Unanimous*

Comments for Memo

1. Application did not discuss temporary impacts
2. NHB review is three years old and derived from a different project

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- 3. Suggestions to plan native species
- 4. Height of base and flooding

4. Rehabilitation of the String Bridge on both sides of Kimball Island

Jennifer Mates, Assistant Town Engineer, stated that String Bridge is out of compliance with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation. The bridge can be rehabilitated instead of reconstructed. Work will not be done “in-water” prior to July. The project will take 3 to 4 weeks with a 2-3-month buffer and is due to be completed by August 2016.

BOARD COMMENT:

Ms. Eberhardt asked how the water will be diverted to work in the river. Ms. Mates said that there are large bags blown up to create a small dam.

Mr. Koff asked if the work will be done in conjunction with the Great Dam removal. Ms. Mates said that HTA will be working the dam engineers and coordinating diversions.

Mr. Gregoire motioned to approve the String Bridge Rehabilitation project, second by Mr. Richardson. VOTE: Unanimous

5. Committee Reports

a) Property Management

i) Timber Harvest Update

Ms. Murphy stated that the timber harvest had begun at two sites. Mr. Briselden, Mr. Campbell and Mr. Richardson had volunteered to close trails with signs and ribbons. Ms. Murphy said the loggers had reported rocky terrain making it harder to navigate. A skid road was created as a landing for downed trees. Mr. Briselden had met with the contracted forester, Charlie Moreno, to ensure Fort Rock is retained. Some trail work will have to be done after the logging operation. Ms. Murphy suggested that the Commission consider long term goals for trails. Ms. Murphy said that the logging company is currently holding equipment in the Henderson-Swasey trail parking lot to wait out the warm weather.

Mr. Gregoire had witnessed kids playing on equipment and in closed trails. Ms. Murphy said that the logger is about half way through and is waiting for the ground to harden. The backup plan is to continue logging

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in the dryer summer months. She noted that while observing the process firsthand the equipment and operation is bigger than she had envisioned. Discussion continued about educating citizens on trail safety, forestry and possible harvest tours. Mud season may come early and produce more trail closures. Ms. Murphy read a trail closure notice drafted by Mr. Briselden. Ms. Belanger said she can read the notice at the next BOS meeting. Ms. Murphy suggested posting the notice on Facebook, the Town newsletter, Town Website and Visit NH web page.

ii) Raynes Farm Signage

Ms. Murphy said that there was a concern about people shooting guns around Raynes Farm property. Ms. Murphy said that hunting is permitted during certain seasons. Ms. Murphy said that a sign would state what is permitted, active crop management areas and no driving in the fields.

Ms. Eberhardt motioned to approve an expenditure up to \$ 38 plus shipping and handling for a Raynes Farm sign, second by Mr. Gregoire. VOTE: Unanimous

iii) Trails Sign Estimate

Ms. Murphy said that they have found a person to router a sign as requested by the White Family for the Macdonald Conservation easement. Ms. Murphy met with the family to discuss the language of the sign. Ms. Raub suggested checking with other places for an estimate. Ms. Murphy said that junction signs are also on the list. The Commission decided to table spending funds on signs due to a tight 2016 budget.

b) Outreach

Ms. Eberhardt said that there is a Phillips Exeter Academy Climate Action Day where she has volunteered. The students requested more hands on projects and Ms. Eberhardt suggested including PEA students in Commission projects. Mr. Richardson said that they could find projects for PEA students.

Mr. Richardson suggested creating a timeline of projects 6 months in advance to prepare for the year.

Ms. Murphy said that February 20th is the date of the Raynes Farm Full

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Moon Snowshoe event contingent upon the presence of snow. Ms. Murphy made a list of support tasks. Last year's event brought an abundance of attendees. The Commission decided to keep an eye on the weather and track down Don Briselden and Bill Campbell as they volunteered the past year.

6. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Raub reported the new budget for the year 2016 as \$10,057. At the end of 2015 there was \$650.49 left that was given back to the Town. There is currently 3,012.35 of cash on hand.

Mr. Gregoire motioned to approve the budget, second by Mr. Richardson. VOTE: Unanimous

7. Approval of Minutes: January 12, 2015

Tabled to the next meeting

8. Correspondence

a. Request to Oppose Bobcat Legislation

Ms. Eberhardt explained the letter from the Stoddard Conservation Commission opposing the proposed New Hampshire Fish and Wildlife ruling to allow Bobcat hunting. Ms. Eberhardt said she was willing to support the opposition letter. Ms. Belanger stated that it was allowed in 38 other states by permit.

Mr. Gregoire motioned to approve signing and submitting a letter to NH Fish and Wildlife, opposing the proposed Bobcat Hunting legislation, second by Ms. Eberhardt. VOTE: Unanimous

9. Next Meeting: March 8, 2016

Mr. Gregoire motioned to adjourn, second by Mr. Richardson. VOTE: Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

The meeting moved into a short work session.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Sarah McGraw