

DRAFT MINUTES  
EXETER CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
6/14/16

Call to Order:

The session was called to order at 7 pm by Chair Carlos Guindon.

1. Introduction of Members Present:

Alyson Eberhardt [7:10 pm], Virginia Raub, Bill Campbell (Vice Chair), Carlos Guindon (Chair), Andrew Koff (Treasurer), Cynthia Field, Anne Surman (Selectmen's Representative), Todd Piscovitz, and Don Bristeldon [7:02 pm].

Staff present were Kristen Murphy (Natural Resources Planner), and David Pancoast (Recording Secretary). Members of the public were present too.

2. Public Comment:

Kathy Norton, 74 Newfields Road, said she wanted to thank the commission for the new barn doors at Raynes Farm. The Chair said he appreciated her looking after the property-it's very important.

3. Action Items:

1. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

i. Allen Street Property Inspection Report

Ms. Murphy reported that they went out to the property on May 26, 2016. Kids had been dumping the trail maps into the river. They were very pleased to see many of the encroachments removed, including sheds and such. The pins in the back were found in all but one case, the pin between Lots #5 and #4 (on the plan). At the front, along

Allen St, none were found. The pins are important for establishing the Rights of Way ("ROW"). Three sections connect to back conservation land-those are deeded ROWs. There are two or three encroachments still there. One is a shed, owned by Lot #12. Front edge of ROW, can't find pins for it. It was obvious that the shed crossed into the ROW, due to proximity to the pin they did find. At the other ROW between Lots #9 and 10, there were two issues: one is a large LP tank, connected underground, and also there is a trailer. Only other encroachment is at Lot #11, a woodpile. He is not burning wood anymore, wants to get rid of it if anyone wants it. The last encroachment is between Lots #8 and 9, there is a playhouse there. Some cleared areas beyond property and a mowed lawn on one property. But nevertheless she is pleased with the progress. ROW's on plans do not correspond to actual ROWs on ground.

Next steps are up to Commission. Only thing permanent is the LP tank. Rest are not and anyone can still access the land.

Mr. Campbell asked if one entered the ROW between Lots #12/13, can you access the area and the response was yes. He then asked about between Lots #4/5 and the response was that one can't get by that one. Mr. Bristeldon asked about access between Lots #4/5. Ms. Murphy said there is mowed lawn but it's all wet behind it, so have to clear and do some more trail work. Mr. Campbell said the wood pile will disintegrate in time. Mr. Bristeldon asked what the proposed action should be regarding Lots #4/5? Ms. Murphy said there are complications there, first, they can't find the front pin, need a surveyor for that; and second, the only designation of ROW there is on plans referenced in deed, it's not actually described in the deed. Doesn't say what can and can't be located within the ROW. The encroachment appears to have been there quite awhile. Mr. Campbell said maybe it was done by a preceding owner.

[Much discussion on adverse possession in ROW on this property and how to proceed under that concern.]

Mr. Guindon added that public interests may overrule the private interest. Mr. Bristeldon said that they need lawyers to look into it.

Mr. Guindon said that the structure doesn't interfere with someone going in to the property. Mr. Bristeldon said since this is the only access, it's important to reestablish the legal rights. Mr. Campbell suggested that they look into it and report back later.

Ms. Murphy said some neighbors walked it, but not all, and they want to know the future steps/status of encroachments. Mr. Bristeldon suggested the Commission put the owners of Lots #9/10 on notice that it "appears to us that you have two items in the ROW." to at least establish a timeframe. And the Commission should do the same for the shed. Mr. Guindon said that lawns going into the woods while they are encroachments to the ROWs, there are more pressing and important issues. Things like garlic mustard are establishing as invasives species there, due to edge. Need to remove that lawn to avoid that edge there, which is more of a priority than the other things to him.

Ms. Murphy suggested doing a letter to lawn folks, saying nicely to let it return to natural, and to stop mowing it. Ms. Murphy then said the illicit playhouse is the only thing left to consider.

Mr. Bristeldon suggested they do an update letter on the overall improvements, send it to all owners as a positive. Ms. Murphy said that is an important point, as one owner asked about the shed and said it should be removed. The owners are best stewards of the property. Have to be consistent and attentive to issues.

[There was discussion on re-establishing ROWs].

ii. McDonnell Conservation Area Update:

Ms. Murphy explained that this property is off Court St, but not up to the other bridge. It looked good where she was viewing it. More recently, on river itself, very little trash

problems, etc. Ms. Raub said that she has seen it a lot worse. The signs are could be straightened out. Mr. Campbell said that he and Kristen were out there with the police on an illicit 'campsite' issue. Picked up the camping materials, but not the tent-that was left. Ms. Murphy said that it is on Exeter Public Works' radar to do it. Mr. Campbell said that a sign that the property is closed from dusk to dawn is needed. That helps the police if it's posted. Ms. Murphy suggested that instead of many signs, maybe it would be better to reach out to the Boy Scouts to see if they would do a kiosk with the limitations posted on it. That would display the rules and would dress it up. Mr. Campbell asked about physically-challenged access there-the Commission might put in a physically-challenged trail for those folks. The trail is too close to river now, but it could be a nice little loop if done correctly.

Mr. Guindon asked what the Commission wants to do now? Ms. Murphy said she could do a sign for about \$35, put it on a post already there, and have DPW remove the others. A kiosk could come later. Perhaps if the Commission could approve \$40 for it? Mr. Campbell made a motion to expend up to \$40 for a sign and post there, seconded by Ms. Raub, and the motion was approved unanimously.

iii. Henderson Swasey Timber Harvest:

The Chair deferred this matter until after Raynes Farm below, due to the presence of an interested party.

iv. Raynes Farm:

1. Lease Update

Ms. Murphy reported that last year the lease expired with Stewart Merrill, so she reached out to Darren Davis last fall, but he was too busy, so she tried again this spring. He is still interested in haying the property. She sent him a copy of lease

with Mr. Merrill, with information on ConCom's desires for that parcel, such as a community garden up by the parking lot. Delayed the haying until June 21<sup>st</sup> to accommodate the bobolinks mating season. The prior long term lease with Mr. Merrill had to go to Town Meeting. She has read the warrant article, not specific to person, only to the location of Raynes Farm. She is not sure if they can just do a five year lease or if need to go back to Town Meeting for it. Next meeting she will have an update for the Commission on that process.

Mr. Bristeldon said that they could pay someone to cut it just one year and could get someone to do it just for the "health" of the farm- as a one-time cut. Want it harvested there-not called mowing. Mr. Campbell said he was on the Board when we passed that. Mr. Bristeldon said that would give us more time to pursue a long term lease on it. Ms. Murphy asked that the Commission authorize the Chair to do that. Mr. Bristeldon moved the Commission enter into a contract with Darren Davis of Middlebrook Farm for a one-time harvest of Raynes Farm some time in July at no cost to town. Mr. Campbell said that it should be done in summer, and he would second it. Ms. Raub said not just be done in summer, but the arrangement should cover both cuts. Mr. Bristeldon said he is ok with both of those changes to his motion so Mr. Campbell seconded it as modified. The vote was unanimous for approval. The cutter gets to keep the hay.

## 2. LCHIP (Land Conservation Heritage Investment Program) Inspection Walk

Ms. Murphy stated that Paula Bell [?] from LCHIP met Mr. Campbell and her at the property and walked it. She was very pleased with it-said the Commission is doing a great job with it. According to her, the Raynes Farm agreement differs from most of LCHIP's. Interest is in land itself now, not just the barn, which was only for 5 years. It's a unique situation there. They can possibly pursue LCHIP funds later for improvements. Ms.

Bell said the Commission stands well for such a grant. If it was done, LCHIP would get interest in both farm and land. The structural needs of the barn could be met. It would go through an historic buildings assessment process. Some things are allowed, some not. Grant funding deadline is coming shortly. Ms. Murphy sent her an email, but hasn't heard back yet. She is looking into it. It would help our 'ranking' in going forward.

Mr. Campbell said that LCHIP was most enthusiastic representative that I've seen. She tried to contact MPR on it. She gave the town a replacement sign, which needs holes drilled in it. Mr. Bristeldon offered to do it.

Chair Guindon said that the Commission should follow up on another LCHIP proposal, need Raynes background on it. Mr. Bristeldon said that he would do that too. Mr. Campbell said that they should use part of the old sign with Raynes Farm stated on it, not just LCHIP. Mr. Bristeldon said he will look at doing that. The application is due this month and Ms. Murphy will work on doing that.

### 3. Signage

Full LCHIP grant is in process right now. Ms. Murphy said that in addition to the LCHIP sign, they have had trouble with skeet shooters in the field there and folks driving on the field, so she went to Selectmen on it 2 weeks ago, and they approved the sign expenditure.

### 4. Bridge Replacement

The Chair discussed bridge replacement, all the bridge boards are there, it's in good shape and intact and there are enough there to cross the stream. Don't need to use stones for crossing. All that's needed are the two stringers to run them over. They should be pressure-treated 4"x4" x 14 to 16 feet long. There are fairly wide rocks could use as supports for

those. They would need to buy the stringers, and just use bridge boards that are there. Mr. Campbell said that the Commission was tight on money right now and the Chair agreed. There was discussion on the wood needed and how to pay for it. Ms. Murphy said that the stringers would be \$15 each at 8 ft long and the Chair replied that they would need much longer ones. Ms. Murphy said that even with adjustments for committed expenses, the Commission had set aside \$400+ for trails work. The timber harvest will provide the Commission with some money, but it's still close and tight. Mr. Bristeldon moved the Commission expend up to \$50 for two stringers at Home Depot, and that they be positioned on the rocks. There was some discussion on those costs. Mr. Guindon suggested that the motion be changed to expend up to \$60 for it. Mr. Campbell suggested it be not more than \$75 total, to repair the bridge. Mr. Bristeldon agreed with the change in his motion and said that they won't spend that much if it's not needed. Chair Guindon seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Bristeldon then asked who would do the work. Mr. Guindon said they would need a vehicle to get the wood out there where it can be dropped off. Mr. Bristeldon said he has a trailer and can do it. Mr. Guindon said to let him know when it's there and he will set it up. Mr. Piskovitz said that he has a large pry bar for levering the rocks if necessary. It needs to be done before folks take the wood that's bought and taken out there. Mr. Bristeldon asked if a Saturday work day would work? The interested members said yes, that would work. It will be scheduled as it unfolds, but the sooner the better. An email will be send to the members when the materials are ready to be taken out there.

Mr. Bristeldon then reported further on the LCHIP visit, that historic structures aspect was done in the past, as well as the baseline on Raynes barn and Farm, so perhaps it is now eligible for the NH Register of Historic Places. That designation might enhance our ability to get additional funds for it. The note I

sent to the Commission was on the LCHIP process going on and certain steps are needed.

There is not enough time this year to do it, but we could do it for 2017. Listed all things to do a few months ago. Sills for foundation repairs, clapboards, etc., adding up to about \$200,000. Need matching amount of 50% if get a grant. Need a warrant article for this to get the money. Have to think ahead about it and the amount to seek. The work is there and it needs to be done. Sills need to be done. At the top of the list is something that Emmanuel Engineering is looking at, which is the failed foundation now. Clapboards are terrible, barn needs to be painted. Connector to the silo and silo preservation itself. There is MUCH work to be done, which could be planned for multiple years or just one year. Probably need a work session in next few months on it.

Ms. Raub asked about a warrant article for when-about nine months? Mr. Bristeldon said the Commission would go for warrant article before LCHIP grant but LCHIP wants a commitment in advance. Ms. Raub said the Commission does need to do that. Mr. Campbell said that perhaps it can be discussed at the next session. Mr. Bristeldon said it needs to be done sometime this summer. Maybe we can apply for it using the prior 2002 documentation as basis. Mr. Campbell said that the Commission has already committed money for design of foundation repairs. Mr. Bristeldon said it was not for entire structures report, which is needed.

The Chair said that this matter, especially the barn, is a huge item that keeps coming up. It's a great property, but the needs overwhelm the Commission's obligations on other properties. He wished the Exeter Historical Society would assist in its upkeep. There was discussion on capacity of that Society to participate in grant proposals. Mr. Guindon said that Raynes Farm is very valuable but it distracts from the Commission's other responsibilities. Ms. Raub suggested that it needs a



separate foundation to be responsible for it. Ms. Eberhardt said there should be a work session on that element of it. Mr. Bristeldon said that he is all for a work session on it. Mr Koff asked if there was a Raynes Farm stewardship committee? Ms. Murphy said yes, but it hasn't met for a year. So we should reconvene them after the work session to bring them into it and up to speed for their assistance.

Mr. Campbell asked if the stewardship committee could come to the work session? Or should the work session be with just the Commission.

The Committee membership includes Kathy Norton, Ben Anderson, Kevin Smart, and Darren Davis if he leases it. Ms. Murphy suggested that the work session should be outside of the regular meeting in July, even though an extra meeting. There are two things coming up for July session and one is regarding wetlands. We should set it up for July with a second meeting before budget season in August. Mr. Bristeldon said maybe they will decide that even 2017 is too soon, maybe it will need to be for 2018.

Mr. Campbell asked if the work session could meet before next regular session? Ms. Murphy said that they need the Emmanuel estimate first, so they could do the work session after getting that and within next two months. This timeline was agreed by the Commission.

v. VRAP monitoring schedule:

Ms. Murphy first mentioned that as normal, she is now working Mon-Wed from the last week in June through the last week in August, for the summer. Every Tuesday at 8:30 am for the Volunteer River Assessment Program (VRAP), and she issued a call for volunteers. It would be better to have more volunteers. Standing time is for the work to be done each week from 8:30 am on Tuesdays. Mr. Koff asked if his wife and

two kids could do the work? Ms. Murphy said yes, it's simple. They test for water clarity, dissolved oxygen and conductivity at nine sites in town. The only challenge is roadwise and on bridges, regarding safety.

The Chair then directed the discussion back to item iii. Henderson Swasey Timber Harvest, above, which was deferred until after Raynes Farm discussion:

Ms. Murphy reported that the first harvest was 37 truckloads. 3-4 logs, 8 chips, 6 pulp, 8 firewood. Most chips went to Portsmouth and some to Berlin NH, both biomass plants. Rest went to variety of other places, including HHP mills in NH and veneer logs to Columbia Forest Products in Vermont and Canada. Recommended to BOS that they waive timber harvest tax on this, so if we follow same process, we would do that again. Mr. Campbell then moved that the Commission recommend to the BOS that it waive the timber harvest tax. Ms. Eberhardt seconded and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Bristeldon suggested that they have a pre-logging meeting. About 50% done first time, but some was left, needs to finish it, so we can close it out and mark trails for this second cut. The Chair said he would participate in that.

#### vi. Property Monitoring Plan/Schedule

Ms. Murphy said if she had a set time during week to inspect certain properties, might help commission attendance. It would be good for the Commissioners to have some monitoring experience. Maybe do a Saturday every month for inspecting a certain property in town. Want to target all Conservation easements for this process, someone helping to take it on would be great. The Chair said he would help with it. Ms. Murphy said she would do a packet for participants and drop it at their houses. It was decided to do it on a Monday and that Ms. Surman and Mr Campbell would participate.

There followed some discussion on property assessments annually, which involved the aspects of the work, including looking for property pins, flagging those missing, assessing dumping of grass clippings and such, and use of the land. Ms. Murphy reported that interns have done at least cursory reviews of all properties since 2012. That's a start. Finding pins needs to be a priority.

The Chair said that he feels good about the property monitoring. We can email Kristen on our interest in helping out.

#### b. Trails

i. June 25<sup>th</sup> Race Day handouts will be available at that event. Ms. Murphy said she is not sure of specifics of the handout. The Chair suggested it include a call for volunteers and timber harvesting property brochures, ConCom brochures, and project descriptions. Ms. Murphy then asked who from the Commission can be there. The Chair asked for a volunteer for Saturday, 6/25. He said he can be there, unless someone else wants to do it. Off Commerce St, at the cul-de-sac. Ms. Murphy will prepare 25-50 handouts for the event and will bring some trail maps

#### ii. Trail Committee Meeting

Ms. Murphy did not hear back from them yet. Before the next hay harvest, they will try to wedge in a trail committee meeting to discuss it.

#### c. Outreach

#### i. National Trails Day Update

Ms. Raub announced that for NTD June 4<sup>th</sup> was perfect weather. Everything went great, even without any publicity on it, but social media was good and some people were there-it was a good mix. Kids were "into" the outdoors. She had some

things left over, some things are sprouting. Didn't spend the whole amount allocated, it was about \$80 total for all.

#### ii. River Clean Up Update

Ms. Raub said there was not too much more to report-met with DPW, can't start it before July 1<sup>st</sup> due to the permit that's needed. Takes about two days, so there is no definite date set yet. July 15<sup>th</sup> is another event, so won't compete with that. A river meeting this Thursday and she'll have more info after that. Ms. Eberhardt asked if the river drawdown is to prepare for dam removal? Ms. Murphy said yes. Ms. Raub said there is no dam removal ceremony that she knows of. Ms. Murphy inquired if there was any talk at BOS of a celebration, and Ms. Surman replied that some event is being considered. Ms. Murphy said that Pete Richardson's daughter wants to be present at that for his sake, so she suggested that the Commission do a dedication to him so she can be there for that.

#### 4. Conservation Commission Annual Activities Planning

The Chair stated that Kristen is preparing a calendar laying out general planning for ConCom, which she will email to everyone-it's a spreadsheet.

#### 5. Approval of Minutes:

For May 10, 2016:

The Commission made some changes and corrections to those minutes and Mr. Campbell moved approval of the minutes of May 10, 2016 be accepted as amended. Ms. Surman seconded and it was approved unanimously.

#### 6. Correspondence

Ms. Murphy discussed the Facebook page-the subject most viewed in the past year was the trails article mentioned at last meeting-5,800 read it. Trail closures was viewed by 1,500, the celebration of Pete Richardson's life by 1,200. Trails interest is a huge component of what readers are looking for.

Ms. Raub then inquired if there should there be signage on Morrisette Property? Ms. Murphy reminded the Commission that the property was offset mitigation for wetlands impact on the school lot-so the schools donated it. Wheeled vehicles are prohibited. [There was further discussion on the property.]

#### 7. Other Business:

The Chair raised the Little River Trail rerouting, raking and so forth. He used a hand saw to cut out the impeding material. There is some flagging still there. He is very impressed with layout, makes a nice trail. He trimmed it a bit, reflagged a bit and it's ready to go if some folks will do trail work, moving rocks, some more vegetation removal, etc., can leave it at that.

There was then some discussion on general climate change concerns.

Ms. Murphy reminded the commission that she sent out an email for the All Boards meeting the next night of June 15, 2016, at 6:30 pm. If anyone can attend, please do. Mr. Campbell said he will be there, Ms. Surman will be there as well. Also, Dave Sharples, the planner, had asked Ms. Murphy if Pete Richardson's presence on the Technical Review Committee (TRC) could be replaced. It meets Fridays during the day. It's every other Friday and even then they meet only if any development plans are in works. Mr. Koff stated that he might be interested. Mr. Campbell stated that the TRC goes through the plans and applications before the Planning Board gets them. Ms. Murphy said she could forward plans for someone to review and get comments back to Mr. Sharples. AB: there's a context for those sessions, input of others and such. In person discussion is of the most value.

#### 7. Next Meeting:

The next meeting date is 7/12/16, with a submission deadline of 7/1/16.

#### 8. Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Raub moved to adjourn the session, seconded by Mr. Campbell. The vote was unanimous. The session was adjourned at 9:14 pm.