

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**June 12, 2016**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Carlos Guindon at 7:04 pm.

**1. Introduction of Members Present:**

Members present were Todd Piskovitz, Andrew Koff, Virginia Raub, Carlos Guindon, Chair, Bill Campbell, Vice Chair, Anne Surman, BOS Representative, and Don Briselden, Also present were Staff members Kristen Murphy, Natural Resources Director, and David Pancoast, Recording Secretary. Members of the public were present as well.

**2. Public Comment:** There was none.

**Action items:**

**1. Research/Training needs discussion for UNH Coop Extension's NH Citizen Planner (Madeleine R. Dilonno)**

Ms. Dilonno reported that she is from UNH Cooperative Extension's program for Conservation Commission training needs. A more in-depth survey will be emailed to the boardmembers soon. She asked first about big issue projects. The members mentioned the dam removal project, monitoring large town held properties, boundary marking, the large forest management project with some interaction between trail users and harvesting operators. Also the Commission weighs-in on wetlands reviews and is advisory to the Planning Board and other land use boards. National Trails Day work was mentioned and the Commission increasing awareness of Town properties and that the Raynes Farm property and Barn as a historic building and property. Trail maintenance is also a big element of the Commission's activity.

Ms. Dilonna then asked what issues are coming up in the next few years? The Chair said development near or containing wetland areas or near conservation properties is an important increasing element of the Commission's activities. Ms. Dilonna next asked what training sources the board goes to or utilizes or needs? UNH organizations as well as the Association of NH Conservation Commissions' annual meeting , the Great Bay Discovery Center and Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) were mentioned. The Chair said that members get training. Ms. Murphy said the budget contains training money.

Ms. Dilonna asked what would make their tasks easier? The Chair said the budget level is a little short of their needs. Ms. Dilonna asked if there were any other comments from the board? Ms. Raub said information from other commissions and linked information would be useful. Ms. Murphy asked about the format-if it's presented in webinars? Ms. Dilonna said that it's all on the Extension website, with access for training, links and such. She said that climate change is a hot topic, as is affordable housing, and many of the same concerns and topics arise from Commission to Commission.

## **2. 2017 Budget Planning**

Ms. Murphy drafted a budget suggestion sheet, and sent the Commission a multi-year view of past appropriations and expenditures, and she outlined upcoming needs and the 2016 sheet. In August the Commission needs to present its budget needs to the Town Manager, so she wants to get ahead of it, so they have at least a gist of the numbers the Commission is looking for. It is at \$10,057 now, and salary, wages and FICA/Medicare taxes are done by the Town Manager. There is \$1000 for the recording secretary fees for the year. Ms. Surman suggested that the Commission be as specific as it can be, provide more detail, actual estimates, etc., and prioritize the work, as that helps the Budget Committee, creates a good basis for items the Commission wants so the Budget Committee understands it. The Chair said there are no interns this current year. There was discussion on the possible use of interns for the coming budget year. He thought they should have them again, to help cover invasive species control, etc. He would like to have at least one next year. Ms. Murphy said that conservation property maintenance and trail work would be a good use of them.

There was discussion on trail and property signage coming into the budget. Also, the Contract Services amount was \$1400 last year, lower a bit from prior years. The Chair said invasive species control would be another Contract Services use. Ms. Murphy said that tackling Raynes issues 'wholistically' through grants has been the approach on it so far, not using Contract Services. Mr. Briselden suggested they need a line item for Raynes Barn of \$500 for some of the work, such as when problem clapboards come off, windows get broken, and such things need to be fixed. Ms. Murphy said that last year the mowing around the Barn was \$300, the Commission should move that cost up to the Mowing category. Mr. Briselden suggested \$500 for security repairs was an appropriate amount.

There was discussion about inclusion of two meters needed for the Volunteer River Assessment Program, for dissolved oxygen and a probe for pH levels. Together they would be \$2,200. The Town borrowed them from the State in past, and could do it again next year. Rentals of the meters was discussed and that the time period might have to be worked out, but it was also suggested that it might be better to buy, if they are used a lot. It was decided to run the numbers on it to compare and Ms. Murphy will take care of doing that.

Discussion on signage costs lead to those being included in the Conservation Land Administration or Trail Maintenance categories. Ms. Murphy wanted guidance on what amount to include, due to past costs being high for carved signs and the Commission decided it did not need them carved, so it the suggested amount of \$400/year for signs, using painted signs would be submitted.

Mr. Briselden said that trail inspections after recent rains showed erosion and stream rutting issues-some water bars needed and trail maintenance materials. He said that \$500 for trails for materials would do a lot. Mr. Campbell said that he thinks the budget needs to be level-funded, but the new meters could be argued to be a unique cost leading to a valid increase in the budget. Ms. Murphy said that the draft was at the \$8639 level at that point. Training is about \$200-300 total for the year so it was decided to put in \$300 and that the money can be moved into

different categories-they need only rough numbers for the Town Manager. Contract Services is a big item, as is Land Administration. If the meters are more expensive to rent or they can't borrow them from the state, only then put them into budget. Ms. Raub said that new meters should be deemed a capital expense, not a budget line item, as it's a one-time cost. Ms. Surman said if the cost of rental v. buying meters is shown with details, the Budget Committee might approve the expense. Mr. Campbell suggested that the money to level-fund go into Contract Services or if none are needed, then Trail Maintenance.

There was discussion on lump sum categories. Ms. Murphy had parsed it out instead of doing them as lump sums. Ms. Raub said that any high number(s) justification is warranted when they have a specific need identified. Discussion was held on the spread sheet.

### **3. Member/Alternate Preferred Focus Areas and Annual Calendar Planning**

The Chair asked what focus areas are of interest to the members? Ms. Murphy asked if the members could turn their choices into her and they handed them to her without discussion.

The Chair said there is a third item which was coverage of physical areas of town that the members would want to work on. Member coverage of all the different properties would be good, but that list can be created later and circulated separately. For clarification, Ms. Murphy said that individual members' interest are intended, not the Commission as a whole. Ms. Murphy will compile the list and circulate it to the members via email and in their packets.

The Chair said the Annual Calendar is in the packet. The main thing is awareness of planning, and it can be accessed through the Commission's website. There was discussion on the various events and for a Commission booth at them. Ms. Murphy will put them into the Calendar. The members should send any thoughts.

Ms. Murphy said she thought a Trail Committee regular schedule is worthwhile, meeting quarterly or such. It was decided that twice a year would be best, to

conform to the Stewardship Committee for Raynes that meets twice a year-late spring and fall is best for both of them.

#### **4. Committee Reports:**

##### **a. Property Management**

###### **i. Henderson-Swasey Timber Harvest**

Mr. Briseldon stated that harvest activities started again. It will all be posted on the Website. The Chair and he went out and posted it today, and will go back out soon to see if the notices are still there. It will take about 4-5 weeks to finish, then clean up and restoration and getting the trails back online. Discussion included a sign for the kiosk, and barriers for the logging operation. The Trails Committee members list was sent today by Ms. Murphy. She and Mr. Briseldon will keep updates coming as progress unfolds.

###### **ii. Parks & Recreation Teen Camp Community Service Project**

The Commission and Parks and Rec are partnering on a Teen Camp project to support Conservation Land, for building a new trail as flagged last year in the Little River Conservation area. The Chair is leading a crew for that. Ms. Raub is going to the Morrissette property. The Teen Camp leader is aware of the work needed. It will be about 15 to 30 kids total. The Chair will take 10 out and the other 5-10 can go out with someone else. They can clean up the grass and the skate park. Ms. Murphy will have bags etc. for that. Use of sharp tools will be decided by Rec & Parks. This work will be done on 7/20/16, next Wednesday.

###### **iii. Raynes Work Session Update**

Mr. Briseldon said that the Committee members all met there. The Barn is sound but one corner foundation has failed and they need an estimate to fix it. This year they are in no position to ask the Town for money, so it's best to look to 2017/18 for an LCHIP grant. Need to bring the barn up to snuff to use it for other activities. The barn was there when Abraham Lincoln came to town-so it's a major Town

asset. The Commission should move forward with the repairs as it can. An LCHIP grant application will be made. Mr. Briselden will get a DPW estimate for the corner and clapboard repairs and such. They will try to form a 'Friends of Raynes Barn' group-to help get funding and some work done. Next year they will apply with a package for improvements. The Raynes Development Plan has been circulated. It's a working copy, with the history of the barn. As for the discussion on inclusions in an upcoming budget, it will be best to submit the bigger items next year. They still need facts and figures for 2017 and for the presentation for the Capital Investment Program ("CIP"). Ms. Murphy and Mr. Briselden will work on that and the Commission will decide what to pursue.

Discussion was held on the Raynes Barn work as a capital warrant article or under Town Budget items. Mr. Briselden said that keeping all this in focus is very important-it can't be "static". There was also discussion on putting the Barn onto the NH list of Historic Places. Mr. Briselden said the Barn is eligible, have to document it and do the forms. It would likely be a definite approval given its history.

#### **b. Trails**

The Chair thinks the bridge at Raynes Farm should be done soon, perhaps this weekend given good weather. They need coordination for dropping off materials and getting folks to do some work to make progress on it. Ms. Murphy said Exeter Lumber delivers without a fee and she'll work that out for delivery. The time will be 8:30 am on Saturday. Power drills, saws, and a pry bar for rocks are needed.

Ms. Murphy added that there is money this year for trail work, for replacement planking, etc. Trail bikers will probably do the work in the timber harvest area, but in the Oakland area there is work to be done. Mr. Briselden said he found a "rogue trail" today, up on the

knoll toward the parking lot at Oakland, newly started. He'll brush it over and flag it. The Chair thought brush-over isn't very successful.

**c. Outreach**

**i. Exeter River Restoration-River Clean Up**

Discussion occurred on river drawdown and water levels, beavers, and water quality monitoring. Ms. Murphy said that she paddled the River with NOAA on Monday and the area looks great. The level of dissolved Oxygen was great that-in the 80's. Usually it's slow moving water with low oxygen.

Ms. Raub said that river cleanup is set for Saturday, 7/16, but she's not sure of the dryness for the cleanup work. Ms. Murphy said that a kayak or boat in the River is best, to just pull trash out. There is broken glass but no heavy things except a few tires. This Saturday it is scheduled for 9 am-12 noon. DPW has printed a cleanup location notice where debris will be placed so it can come on Monday and pick it up. There will be cones with signs where to put the trash. Ms. Murphy said they were given a "Happy Fish," in recognition of World Fish Migration Day-as stewards of the dam project for fish migration improvement. She would like a big group photo with it.

There was discussion on the McDonalds area bench that needs to come out of the water. Ideas were discussed and it was decided by Mr. Koff that he would pull it out with waders on and a come-along.

**ii. Raynes Farm Fall Festival**

Ms. Raub said that the Festival date is September 17, 2016. The Commission needs to increase the base support and there's been no function held there for 18 months. One of Stewards said the Commission should do a "Pumpkin Toss" event there. It's a good drawing card and possible fundraiser. Ms. Raub would like some support from others. A Pumpkin Toss could be fun and different.

Discussion was held on the seeds and Ms. Raub said the wild turkeys take the seeds right away. Ms. Surman said that squirrels eat them too. A catapult tosses the pumpkins. If it's well advertised, it could be a big draw. It would likely be held the second Saturday of October, which would be 10/15, after the last hay cut. It was suggested that the Committee sell T-shirts. Mr. Briselden moved to explore that event more, which was seconded by Ms. Surman and was unanimously approved.

The Chair then reported that he was at the trail race-a great turnout, but he didn't hand out a lot of materials. He made two contacts, one contact interested in water issues and beavers and volunteered to help out with those. The second one is for a Phillips Exeter Academy run and its Cross-Country team might follow up on the timber harvest work. Some folks picked up maps and stickers that said "I hike Exeter trails" The Commission bought a lot of them, but can give some to kids.

## **5. Approval of Minutes of May 10, 2016**

After some minor changes, Mr. Briselden moved to approve these as corrected, Ms. Surman seconded, and there was unanimous approval.

## **6. Correspondence**

Cynthia Field is resigning due to her husband's health. Her tenure expires in April 2017, and she is full member. Mr. Piskovitz is an Alternate, and could be moved up. Mr. Piskovitz said that he would like to be moved up to full member. Ms. Murphy needs a letter nominating him to the Selectmen for approval. Ms. Murphy thanked Ms. Field for all her efforts in the past. The Chair will send her a letter. Ms. Raub will also send her a letter.

Ms. Murphy got a letter from Global Partners about the conservation property on Epping Rd before the highway access. The company changed and the easement is still in place, it's just a new contact party.



Ms.Raub added that the Master Plan survey was put on the Town Website by Planner-it's very short and just phrases to be answered. Please do it online and submit it to Planning. The next Master Plan Steering Committee meeting is set for July 26<sup>th</sup>.

7. **Other Business:** There was none

8. **Next Meeting:** the date is 8/9/16 and submission deadline is 7/29/16.

9. **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Campbell moved to adjourn, Ms. Raub seconded, and the vote was unanimous. The session adjourned at 8:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted by David Pancoast, Recording Secretary.