

CONSERVATION COMMISSION
APRIL 11, 2017
-As Approved at the May 9th, 2017 Meeting-

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Bill Campbell, at 7:03 pm.

1. Introduction of Members Present:

Members present were David O’Hearn; Andrew Koff, Ginny Raub, Bill Campbell, Vice Chair/Acting Chair, Anne Surman, Selectmen’s Representative, Alyson Eberhardt and Todd Piskovitz.

Staff present were Kristen Murphy, Natural Resources Planner; and David Pancoast, Recording Secretary. Members of the public, presenters and consultants were present as well.

2. Public Comment: There was none.

Action Items:

1. McDonnell Conservation Area Kiosk – Eagle Candidate (Caleb Mahoney)

Caleb Mahoney, Life Scout in Exeter, asked permission to construct a Kiosk at the McDonnell Conservation Area. It will be 9 feet tall and 5 feet across. It would be sited at the edge of the parking area down by the trailhead. It will condense the tree signage that exists for the area. He is to begin construction in end of June and complete it by mid-July. The funds will be raised by him through a car wash. Ms. Diane Arnheim, owner, was present and confirmed he had permission to do this project and she appreciated it, but suggested he bring a lot of help to dig holes for the posts.

Mr. Koff raised discussion of the footings for the posts going down the frost line. Ms. Murphy reported that Doug Eastman, Code Enforcement Officer, said that due to vandalism it needed concrete footings and, if installed with them, it would be fine at 3 feet deep.

Ms. Eberhardt asked about sign consolidation. Mr. Mahoney's thought was to combine several of the tree signs with the warnings and rules on them. Mr. Campbell said to be sure to keep access hours very visible. Ms. Eberhardt moved to approve the application with the suggested details, and expend up to \$100 for signage, Ms. Raub seconded and it was unanimously approved.

2. Morrissette Conservation Area Kiosk -- Eagle Candidate (Daniel Stinson)

Mr. Stinson, Life Scout of Exeter, presented an update. He proposed to construct a kiosk with a site map and information. It will be sited across from Little River, the Town will cover the cost of signage. Also he is doing his project like the one at McDonnell above and will install the 6" x 6" posts in cement as well. Mr. Campbell said the kiosk will be like the Kimball Reserve kiosk. Mr. Stinson wants to also do a kid's trail sign and a general clearing of the trails. Mr. Koff said the proposed location is subject to Commission final approval. Discussion was for fine-tuning the location to avoid the sewer easement, with DPW input. Digsafe approval is only good for 30 days. Ms. Murphy will take care of getting that. Ms. Murphy said the Morrissette owners are also present. Michelle Morrissette Wade, a descendent of the original owners for whom the parcel of land is named, spoke. Her Grandfather owned it and she is liaison on this and will help with it if she can. Mr. Campbell said the field will remain a field and the apple trees are being revived. Milkweed was sown for wildlife too. Ms. Raub said this will be for Morrissette, not Jolly Rand. A motion to approve the project as presented with a \$100 sign expenditure was made by Ms. Raub, seconded by Ms. Eberhardt, and unanimously approved.

3. Exeter Shoreland Conditional Use Permit ("CUP") Application for the construction of a 3,000 sq foot 3-bay car wash at 108 Portsmouth Ave, Tax Map/Lot #52, 52 (Jones and Beach)

Mr. Campbell pointed out this would be a recommendation to the Planning Board. Wayne Mollin from Jones and Beach Engineering presented. This site is in between Exeter Lumber and the café next door. The former gas station was torn down and cleaned up. The environmental clean up was handled and is done. This site is within the 300 foot Exeter Shoreline District. The high water zone of Wheelwright Creek was ascertained. Existing conditions plan is presented tonight. Development was cleared to

20 foot buffer in the back. Soil test results showed silt-clay loam there. A landscape buffer is proposed at the rear to block car lights. Rain garden in front is to allow water to come to the front and be discharged to Town drainage. Rest of the drainage is to rear into a pond away from the residential property at Leary Court, allowed on this by regulations. He went through all five items for the CUP. They will install silt fencing for excavation for Town water and sewer. Stormwater is collected, treated and discharged into the Town sewer system. No septic or leach field will be located onsite. This site will have significantly lower risk use than the former gas station. The ground will be maintained by a full time employee onsite.

Mr. Campbell asked about soapy carwash water disposition. Mr. Mollin said the water is not reused but all dirt is captured in the middle process. There are settling tanks to allow materials to come out. Everything filters through two different tanks for cleanliness. Ms. Eberhardt asked about sludge pump-out. Mr. Mollin said the maintenance plan is for it to be pumped out and cleaned out about every six months. Ms. Raub asked about TRC and what about cars dripping other things while in the waiting queue. Mr. Mollin said the grading plan flows to the pond and they have an operations and maintenance plan that includes that pond. Discharge is through Exeter Lumber's lot with approval. Ms. Murphy said there is a person who will take care of site maintenance. Landscaping is part of what they do. Mr. Mollin said that high pressure nozzles are used. The owner of lot and car wash will be present there or on call, he is not selling the project Mr. Campbell asked about issues for a huge thunder storm? Mr. Mollin said there will be a sump in the basin and an outlet going out.

Mr. Piskovitz said there's a manhole onsite with a basin that has an inlet and outlet, that is not DPW's, between the prior building and lumber yard. Mr. W said all tanks were removed. Mr. Piskovitz said it's still there on east side of where the building was. Mr. Mollin said that might be an old septic tank. If they find it, it will be crushed, filled and buried. There was limited history on this site. Mr. Koff said the back half isn't developed. Mr. Mollin said it was cleared a year or two ago by the Exeter Lumber owners. There was a prior project proposed for this site.

Mr. Campbell said a motion to recommend approval of this CUP to the Planning Board with conditions was necessary, to include investigating and resolving the manhole and connections mentioned. Ms. Campbell said snow storage will occur in front, on the right side and some between this and Steve's Restaurant and the rest would be over by the proposed dumpster. Mr. Mollin said the online regulations don't discuss plowing of snow and asked about plowing and storing snow, but knows they can't dump snow on this protected district area. Ms. Murphy said those functions must typically be outside the 300 ft district and any zones or buffers. Mr. Campbell said you can plow but not store it in that zone. Mr. Mollin said that was fine. Ms. Raub said she is not a proponent of rain gardens, as they usually don't work. The proposed rain garden was discussed. Mr. Campbell asked for a motion on the two items. Ms. Raub moved the Commission report no objection to the CUP as proposed, subject to a detailed plan of the rain garden with a maintenance plan of it, and a determination of the manhole situation, and all snow storage to be outside the 300 foot shoreline protection area. Ms. Eberhardt asked who is on hook for the rain garden? Mr. Mollin said grounds will be maintained every day by onsite staff. Mr. Koff seconded and it was unanimously approved.

4. 2017 Proposed Trail Projects (Bob Kelly)

Bob Kelly of the Trails Subcommittee presented a graphic. He presented a list of projects for this Commission to consider. The Trails Committee focused on repairs needed. At Henderson Swasey/Fort Rock, with four major trail groups: red, blue, green and yellow. At Henderson Swasey there are ten projects to do: first one off Continental Drive at industrial park now being developed. That private party is ok with trail entry going in there once his project is done. Next is trail off Industrial park, small wooden bridge, section to be rerouted on the hill and as trail goes up the hill. Third is far western area, 'rooty' section and large rock with low wet area there-reroute around it for better access to the hill. Fourth is Yellow Trail, large section of trees down, roots and rocky area. Trail has been split by users. They want to discontinue it and make a smoother access there. Mr. Campbell asked how do they resolve 'rootiness?' Mr. Koff said they should go around it with an 's' trail. If the walkers still use it even when it's rerouted, the Trail Committee should do brushover to that access, to keep

folks out of it. Fifth: on southern section, near railroad trestle area, a lot of logging has been done. Drop zone there with a trail through it. Loggers want to keep it open for regrowth. The Trail Committee wants to do a short reroute around it, to keep the trail in the woods as before. There was discussion on no grading in that area. Mr. Campbell said the open area should be kept open. Mr. Kelly agreed. Problem is with traffic in there and no defined trail. Commission members will go look at it. Sixth, back to wooded area, there is a wood plank bridge near Norris Brook that needs to be replaced. Seventh: open space near turn at southside near the other open area to go north: there is an undefined trail in logging area, they want to define the trail. Eight: more northerly along the Dean property, for the trail at her property, lots of cutting was done in there and some brush and trees are down across the trail. Folks went around them. Want to cut them up and toss them to sides to restore that trail. Ninth: off 'yellow' trail, two short trails down to the tunnel from the southside have arisen and it is hard to get oriented in there. Need 8" x 11" signs to direct folks to the highway tunnel. Tenth: large pine tree fallen at 'green' trail and 'yellow' trail intersection needs to be removed. Ms. Murphy said at Henderson Swasey there is another tree down at the gas line that should be cut up.

Oakland list: #1 is to come down from the Oakland parking lot where a plank bridge is being replaced by Comcast this year. DPW will stage the materials for work on sections. Should be minimal disruption with pre-construction at DPW. It is a very long plank bridge 15-20 years old now, lots of maintenance has been done on it, but it's falling apart. They want to replace that bridge. Up on another section at hill there are a lot of roots, trail needs to be redone. Mr. Piskovitz said that could be closed as there is already an alternate route for it. Discussion on that. Mr. Kelly continued that halfway out on red trail, rooty area, 20 feet long or so needs a trail maintenance reroute around it. At Forest Bridge, a bridge was done with Town funds, due to unsafe conditions and big drop-off, there's a big cut tree to be removed. This list contains about a year or two of work.

Mr. Campbell would like to see the rerouting of the rooty hill part. The Comcast project will be busy, so they have time to look into it. Mr. Kelly said the removal of downed trees is important priority. They can wait on trail reroutes until later. Mr. Campbell mentioned that the beaver dam

bridge needs to be done, how big a job? Mr. Kelly said it would be a relatively big job, as it's far out, remote, and they need to carry everything in there. Also, the bridge needs supports.

Ms. Murphy said Oakland #4 is part of the Natural Resource Conservation Service easement area now so we need to work with them on it. Oakland #3 and #2 have vernal pools, and they need to avoid them. Henderson Swasey #1 should be rerouted. A company named CTI was planning to do part of that work and would like to pitch in at the appropriate time. Mr. Kelly said road blacktopping would be the best time.

Mr. O'Hearn moved to approve all components, allow tree removals now, but wait on the trail reroutes and anything with monetary needs, until the Commission can review those on a site walk, and that any future sponsors should be directed to this list for project ideas. Mr. Kelly said he got New England Mountain Bike Association ("NEMBA") match on the Commission contribution-so there is now a \$1000 total budget. Ms. Eberhardt said some folks might need to weigh in on any approvals. Mr. Kelly said the Oakland components are all construction except #4, which is half and half. The ones that are just maintenance are #8-11, and #1 and #5, are approved, plus the Comcast Cares Day work already approved. Mr. Kelly said they would like the Commission's blessing to avoid issues with the public. Mr. Kelly will work with Kristen as this develops about tree removals and maintenance. Later the Commission can view re-routes. After the discussion, Mr. Koff seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

5. Elliott Forest Management Objectives (Megan Henderson)

Ms. Murphy reported that Ms. Henderson needs to know what the goals are before she writes a plan. She reviewed the list Habitat-high, specific wildlife species habitat (Blandings turtles there)-high. Rare and endangered communities-high. The pond has pitcher plants, very rare. Managing forest for periodic income wood-not interested. Recreation-medium-not for off road vehicles but including snowmobiles. Ms. Eberhardt said low impact activities could all be high and others could be medium. High for passive recreation, medium for others. Mountain biking is already out there, so it's ok. Recreation for others-not interested. Limited use by others: NA, protection water quality-high, preventing soil erosion-high, protection of

wetlands etc.-high; maintaining a healthy forest-high; scenic views-high; maintaining stone walls-medium. Not applicable for the rest of the list. Access trail or road: Ms. Murphy said a right-of-way from Stone Wall Way leads into it. Cutting is a not high priority, it would be more for habitat use.

6. Raynes Lease

Ms. Murphy said she met with Darren Davis of Little Brook Farm and went over it with him. He will continue to hay it for the Commission. Couple of steps needed. NRCS fertilization plan is to be followed. Longer term lease of 1-10 years is of interest to him. Ms. Murphy said that it should be 5 years with a renewal extension of 5 years, unless no approval was done at Town Meeting which she needs to confirm. Grasslands bird habitat mowing being delayed to mid-July. He is not interested in planting corn at all. No hay or other storage is planned in the barn. He is supportive of community garden when we find a location-up to one acre in size for that. Ms. Raub asked if he could record the amount and dispersal dates of the fertilizing he does for the river documentation, just like in the original lease. Kristen said the original lease is pretty close, do you want to see changes? Mr. O'Hearn said the Stewardship Committee is meeting tomorrow evening, they should see it. Ms. Murphy suggested it should be approved tonight subject to the review and approval of the Stewardship Committee.

Ms. Murphy suggested if the Stewardship Committee is good with this lease, that the Commission convey a recommendation that the Board of Selectmen approve the lease, pending approval of the Stewardship Committee agreement, for up to five years duration. Ms. Eberhardt moved that, Mr. O'Hearn seconded, and it was unanimously approved.

7. Barry Conservation Camp Sponsorship Discussion (David O'Hearn)

Mr. O'Hearn would like Ms. Murphy's input and assistance on doing the materials for this. Students should have choice of what interests them the most to write about. Essays might be of 800 words, or could do less. Accept hand-written if legible, so as not to prevent applications from those who might not have a computer. Discussion on the challenge of comparing entries was held. The goal of Commission should be to sponsor a student who might not be able to do this otherwise. Ms. Raub wants to see a component about how they would give back to the Commission and share

the experience, even if just a story walk and Ms. Eberhardt agreed. Ms. Raub said the Commission is a Town Committee with the use of Town funds, can't just hand over money to an individual. There was discussion on that. Maybe just a volunteer requirement was considered, such as 10 hours of volunteer service with a point person on the Commission for coordinating that. Mr. Campbell said first year should be a talk to the Commission and next time do more. Mr. O'Hearn suggested working on a format on this and Ms. Surman will be involved too, as will Ms. Murphy.

8. Invasive Plant Treatment at Henderson Swasey Town Forest

Ms. Murphy reported that Charlie Moreno, forester, and a contractor for this work walked it with her. Invasives are a range of concentrations throughout the area. Goal is to get this need in to the queue. Need three bids. Have a quote from one, need more due to the cost involved. A wall there had burning bush entirely along it. Can't manage it without chemical treatment. Contractor uses fine nozzles and spraying is restricted during winds. They would drive down trails on ATVs with backpack sprayers used. There is a 95% success rate first year, with a follow up within 3-5 years. Ms. Raub asked if the gas company would contribute? Ms. Murphy said they usually leave it to the landowner. The proposal was \$19,000, but the Commission only has \$12,000, so it needs to treat per acre in phases. Need to talk about limits and boundaries. Ms. Raub said use of chemicals and ATVs is not great but there seems to be no other way to do it. Mr. Campbell said there doesn't seem to be any other choice but for chemicals. The follow up needs to occur or a disaster results. Charlie Moreno suggested the Commission take action now-the longer it waits, the more expensive it is. Need commitment now for late fall of this year. It is too late for this spring. There are no other funding options at this time. Ms. Murphy was directed to go ahead and schedule this work for this coming fall.

9. Application Guidelines (Alyson Eberhardt)

Ms. Eberhardt gave the context: wetland permit application requirement allows for clarity for the Commission, beyond the standard DES application. Spells it out clearly so applicant knows. She requests that everyone look at it at home and find time in a future session to go over this. Trying to make process easier for all. She is also working on a second document of questions which the Commission wants answered in order to advance

projects. She thought this might work for other Commissions, there is a lot of interest on this. Discussion was held on colored plans for clarity. Mr. Campbell asked about a work session on another night to include bylaw work. A start time of 7 pm is best for most Commissioners. He will try to schedule something for this.

10. By-laws Update (Ginny Raub)

This was tabled to another evening.

11. Committee Reports

a. Property Management: Trails (15 min)

Above discussion was already held on this matter.

b. Outreach (20 min)

i. An Evening with the Singing Woodcock 4/22 @ Morrissette (David O'Hearn)

Mr. O'Hearn saw Classroom 120 and it's fine for folks to sit. The rental amount is \$60 for two hours. He will help set it up. Use school entrance that night. He is getting Power Point presentations from some organizations that are being helpful. After the presentation, attendees will walk to the site for viewing at three places. None of this will disturb the breeding area. The area is very muddy, so folks need boots and flashlights. Everything is booked. Anything anyone can do there to manage for woodcock is a benefit. Discussion on bees being brought in was held. Mr. O'Hearn moved to authorize up to \$60 on room use rental, Ms. Surman seconded- it was unanimous.

ii. Rain Barrel Program

Ms. Murphy said she needs someone to distribute the barrels at DPW on a Saturday from mid-April to early May. Purchase price is \$75 and direct downspouts in for water collection. Mr. O'Hearn will do it.

12. Quarterly Treasurers' Report

Discussion was held on Raynes Barn sign money. \$100 was voted to pay for Ben Anderson's materials. Sign in middle of the barn, it looks best there and also provides the best view of it. The sign font should vary for the barn's

construction date. Mr. O’Hearn will seek a recommendation for this from the Stewardship Committee tomorrow night.

13. Approval of Minutes: February 14th, 2017, Feb 14th Site walk, March 21, 2017

After discussion, Ms. Surman moved approval subject to the corrections, additions and changes discussed, seconded by Mr. Piskovitz and unanimously approved.

February 14, 2017 site walk: Ms. Raub moved approval as presented, seconded by Ms. Surman and the vote was unanimous.

March 21, 2017: Ms. Surman moved approval of these minutes as presented, Mr. Piskovitz seconded, and the vote was unanimous.

14. Correspondence

There was none.

15. Other Business

There was none.

16. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled (5/9/17), Submission Deadline (4/28/17)

17. Adjournment:

There being no further business coming before the Commission, Ms. Surman moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Eberhardt and the vote was unanimous. The Chair adjourned the session at 9:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted by David Pancoast, Recording Secretary.