

Draft Minutes

Conservation Commission

10/10/17

Call to Order:

1. Introduction of Members Present

Present are Sally Ward, Dave Short, Virginia Raub, Carlos Guindon, Bill Campbell, Todd Piskovitz, Andrew Koff, Marie Richey, Kristen Murphy, and Don Clement. Chairman Bill Campbell began the meeting at 7:00pm.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Action Items

1. Raynes Farm Replacement Sign (Kathy Norton)

Kathy Norton asked for suggestions from the board about the sign. Mr. Guindon said that he liked both designs, but suggested that the red might stand out better. Ms. Raub suggested using the blue design instead. Mr. Short agreed with this. It seemed that the overall consensus was for the blue design.

**MOTION:** Mr. Koff moved to approve the blue design of the Raynes Farm sign. Mr. Piskovitz seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

2. Wetland Buffer Impact waiver request for 23,025 SF of buffer impact at 3-5 Continental Drive for the construction of a 30k SF commercial building and associated infrastructure. Tax Map 47/Lot 1-3 and 1-4. (Brendan Quigley, GES Inc.)

Brendan Quigley came before the board and said that the buffer impacts proposed had been changed. He said that these changes did not affect the numbers that were discussed at the last meeting. He said that the wetlands on the property are small isolated pockets in two cases and shallow drainage paths in another two cases. They have tried to minimize wetland impacts on the project. He showed the board a diagram of the project, and showed that the lower section of the property is wetlands.

When going through the requirements of the waiver, they discussed the habitat value and also water quality maintenance function. He showed the board the isolated wetlands and said that they did not receive drainage and transmit it towards the river like the other wetlands. He said that many projects near Continental Drive have many pockets extending from the core resource area. The function and value of the wetlands is contained further down from the project, so the project effects would be minimal.

He also said that the minimization of the buffer impacts go along with the minimization of the wetland impacts, including the rotation of the building and siting it close to Continental Drive. He pointed out that only some of the impact is for hard structures. He said there is a buffer impact for the crossing which is unavoidable. There is also some grading impact, which will be restored with seed

mixes. They will also clean up some wood debris around the crossing. Mr. Quigley said that there is a gravel wetland on the site which is less than the 50% threshold. There is a permit pending for this. There is also a rain garden outside of all of the buffers.

Mr. Campbell asked what they would do to restore the landscape. Mr. Quigley said that they would replant the graded slopes so they would have some of the same functions as the original buffer. They would use a roadside mix. They are also proposing to remove a lot of woody debris. Mr. Campbell asked if anything would be done with the area that has been logged. Mr. Quigley said it would left to regenerate itself and that it would in a few years.

Mr. Guindon asked if the trees along the entrance and near the crossing would be left. Mr. Quigley said that they would remain as-is. Mr. Koff asked what the culvert construction detail was. Mr. Quigley said it was an 18-inch pipe through it. The design of that was driven by the needed capacity. Mr. Clement asked about the parking and roadwork, specifically where the stormwater drainage would be directed to. Patrick Crimmins answered this question and said that it would be collected in catch basins and would go to rain gardens or the gravel wetland.

Mr. Koff asked what the comments from the technical review committee about the changes were. Mr. Crimmins mentioned the parking area will be reserved, and will only be built as needed. He said the TRC comments did not affect the buffer impact calculations.

**MOTION:** Mr. Koff moved that the conservation commission recommend to the planning board that they have no objection to the wetland waiver for PB case 17-30 for 30,000 square feet, tax map 47-1-3 and 47-1-4. Ms. Raub (7:28) seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Mr. Campbell asked if there were any plans for the back part of the lot. Mr. Crimmins said the plan was to donate the 7-acres to the town's conservation.

3. Shoreland Conditional Use Permit application for the installation of minor athletic improvements to the Women's Softball Field located within the Shoreland protection district.  
Tax Map 983-1. (Ken Costello, Rep for PEA)

Ken Costello spoke about this project, which is to build two dugout structures at the PEA softball field. He showed the board a diagram of the two structures, which will be wood-sided with asphalt shingles. They will sit on a concrete slab which will resist frost. There will only be electricity in the structures. He also mentioned a small storage area on the backside of the buildings used for storing sports equipment. The construction will be inside of the existing lawn area only.

Mr. Campbell asked where the drainage would go. Mr. Costello said that half would go on the field and half would go towards the river. None of the green space will be changed. Mr. Koff asked about the porous paver area, which he did not see on the plan. Mr. Costello explained that that was not part of the application. Mr. Koff asked if the netted backstop would require an excavation. Mr. Costello said it would require four poles to be drilled into a foundation, similar to a fence.

**MOTION:** Mr. Piskovitz moved to recommend to the planning board that the conservation commission has no objection with the condition that the porous paver area is not included in the permit, and recommends that the conditional use permit for PB case 17-32. Mr. Guindon seconded the motion

(7:38). Mr. Koff asked for clarification as to what “PD” on the application refers to. Ms. Murphy stated it referred to Poorly Drained soils and is there due to an error in the application. She stated the square footage of buffer impact should be 385 SF. Having clarified, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Wetland Conditional Use Permit from Public Service Company of NH (dba Eversource Energy) for Transmission line Storm Hardening (Tracy Tarr, GZA)

Tracy Tarr presented the maintenance project to the board. She handed out the plans for the project to the board. She mentioned that it is a maintained existing right-of-way, with nothing being expanded or added on to it. The work is to provide resiliency for storm events and to prevent outages. They only need to access and work on one pole. She showed the board a detailed map of the project and highlighted key areas. The structure is located in a prime wetland, and temporary impact on the wetland will be 12,627 square feet. The impact in the non-prime wetland buffer will be 5,162 square feet and 9,968 square feet of the prime wetland buffer. All of the impact will be restored at the end of the project.

She showed the board an example of the guy wire they will be working on. They did a functional assessment of the wetland. They are not adding any fill and will be restoring the area with a seeded mix. The area will also be matted which prevents tire ruts. They will be monitoring for snakes and turtles in cooperation with Fish and Game. They will be mulching and seeding any exposed soil after the project is done.

Ms. Raub asked when the construction would take place. Ms. Tarr said that it will start as soon as it is approved, as it is scheduled for Fall 2017. Mr. Piskovitz asked how far the project would be from the river. Ms. Tarr said she could forward that to Ms. Murphy if needed. Mr. Koff asked why only one pole would be affected. Ms. Tarr answered that it is the only work in Exeter that requires timber matting in order to access the structure, and the wires do not meet the current standards. Ms. Richey pointed out that the fall timeline allows for less impact on the wetland wildlife.

**MOTION:** Mr. Guindon moved that the commission recommend to the planning board that the conservation commission has no objection to the conditional use permit for PB case 17-33. Mr. Piskovitz seconded the motion (7:52), and it passed unanimously.

5. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

i. CC Property Monitoring Support

Mr. Campbell began by saying that the town is responsible for monitoring about 70 properties. They are trying to get back onto schedule with monitoring them. He suggested that each member of the board select a property and monitor it once a year, including walking the boundaries and any trails within the property. Ms. Murphy and Mr. Campbell wrote up a list of 9 properties to select. The board members should indicate somehow the path that they take through the property.

Ms. Ward pointed out that there are 9 properties on the list and asked about the others. Mr. Campbell said that they will eventually be taken care of but they are open to being taken care of as well. These 9 are the ones that are the most readily available. Ms. Raub said some of the properties had been recently worked on. Mr. Guindon asked if the procedure for monitoring easements was different. Ms. Murphy asked that if the board members select an easement property, that they reach out to her so that she can coordinate with the property owners. The members began to choose the different properties. They started talking about the Swasey property on Greenleaf Drive, which they thought would be a good place for trails but discovered that it is not in the best shape for trails. Ms. Richey asked what the goal was for tracking their walk. Ms. Murphy suggested a GPS file or using MyTracks, so they have a record of where they went.

#### ii. Property Monitoring Report

Ms. Murphy talked about a property monitoring report that an intern had begun. They should be able to get through all of the properties this year. Mr. Guindon suggested having a different report for the conservation easement lands.

#### b. Trails

##### i. Oaklands Trail Project

Mr. Short said that he, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Guindon had taken a walk down, where Mr. Short said that 7 or 8 years ago they had put in untreated wood which is now in disrepair. They are thinking about moving the trail to higher, drier land. There is another trail that parallels Route 101 that is very steep, which would also benefit from being closed and redone.

#### c. Outreach

##### i. NHACC Partnership Project

Ms. Murphy said that there would be a team meeting involving this project. There is a proposal roughed out and there are some budget items to discuss. At the middle school in Stratham, there are two areas that students will explore. They will learn about buffers and will take and test water samples. They will go out on a later date and retest the water after a storm occurs. It is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade project. Ms. Richey suggested also incorporating macroinvertebrate sampling or something more exciting to get the students interested.

Mr. Campbell brought up the Barry conservation camp, which had been something that David O'Hearn was directing. He was looking for a volunteer to head up the project who would push the essay contest through the schools. It will go to both middle and high school students from an Exeter school. Ideally, there will be 2 or 3 people reading the essays and deciding on a winner. Mr. Guindon suggested that they have the schools suggest names as candidates. Mr. Clement said that before, the conservation commission would sponsor a student to go to conservation camp and that they need a level of commitment from the student. Mr. Koff volunteered to take on the project.

#### d. CC Representatives Report on Other Committees

##### i. River Study Committee

Ms. Raub said that the committee was formed 13 years ago to advise the board of selectmen on river related issues. The dam has been removed. The new name of the committee is the River Advisory Committee and they advise on both the Exeter and Squamscott Rivers. They have 11 members as well as citizen's representatives. At the September meeting a member of Fish and Game came and helped to monitor the fish count. The numbers were lower than hoped.

Because of the wet spring season, a lot of fish ended up swept downstream. There is also a lot of aeration, and low water temperatures. There is a fish counter at the Pickpocket Dam. Sea lampreys clogged the fish ladders, however, and the count there was not accurate. The count was about 100,000 fish from all of the estuaries in the Seacoast. Fish and Game went back out and moved rocks and made the channels more accessible for the fish. They also modified the Pickpocket Dam fish ladder.

#### ii. Master Plan

Ms. Raub said that the committee is wrapping up, and the draft is going to be about 55 pages when complete. They included comments and excerpts from the public. It will be released for public comment likely within the next month. There is a section called the "action agenda", which is the guideway. The master plan will be a 10 year plan. There are different areas identified, the leaders for these areas, and the support system. The conservation commission has various responsibilities.

#### iii. Conservation Roundtable

Mr. Campbell said that various towns from around the Seacoast attended this meeting. The topic was how to handle monitoring easements and town lands. Some of the towns present, including Exeter, use interns. Other towns rely on volunteers from abutting properties to monitor the lands.

#### 6. Approval of Minutes: September 12th Meeting

Ms. Raub suggested clarifying that Kathy Norton is not from Raynes Farm.

**MOTION:** Mr. Piskovitz moved to approve the minutes as amended (8:52), Ms. Raub seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### 7. Other Business:

Mr. Koff asked the board if they were aware of the issue surrounding the Mill Road Dam on the Exeter River. It is a privately-owned dam which needs a lot of work, and the current owners are selling it with no plans to fix it. There are a lot of people living around it that have been affected by its draining.

Mr. Clement said that before it was privately owned it was a hydrodam, and DES issued the owner a letter of deficiency. A part of the dam malfunctioned and the dam cannot be closed. There is also discussion about removing the dam.

Mr. Campbell said that he and Ms. Murphy met with the budget committee and formally submitted their budget. They asked that the Raynes barn electricity be charged to the electricity in the account for "other buildings". They have also asked for another \$500 from the barn repair fund and set up a special line item.

#### 8. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled (11/14/17), Submission Deadline (11/3/17)

Mr. Piskovitz moved to adjourn the meeting (8:58), Mrs. Raub seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by recording secretary Samantha Cave.