

Exeter Conservation Commission
September 4, 2018
Draft Minutes

Call Meeting To Order

Bill Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office Building.

1. Members Present: Present at tonight's meeting were Bill Campbell, Dave Short, Carlos Guindon, Todd Piskovitz, Sally Ward, Andrew Koff, Alyson Eberhardt, Ginny Raub, alternate, Lindsey White, alternate, Don Clement, and Kristen Murphy.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment at this meeting.

Action Items

1. Family Orienteering Event, November 4th, 2018

Deborah Humiston of local orienteering club Up North Orienteers requested a hold on the day of November 4th for an orienteering event in the town forest. She has not held this event for a few years, so her original orienteering map needs corrections. She will use existing data provided by Ms. Murphy as well as fieldwork to update the map. There is no pre-registration, but she expects about 30 people, 10 - 20 families and 10 elite runners. She will know if the event is feasible by early October.

Mr. Guindon asked if the event is primarily off-trail; Ms. Humiston responded that the beginners will be on-trail, the intermediate will make a few forays between trails, and advanced runners are off-trail. She has worked with the Commission before to ensure they stay away from certain areas. Mr. Campbell asked if the event will have enough parking; Ms. Humiston said that they are hoping to use the C3I parking lot on Commerce Way, which is near the trailhead, but is waiting to hear back from that company.

Mr. Guindon said that the event was a great idea, and that unless the number of attendees was huge it would have minimal impact. Mr. Campbell would like to have a representative from the commission check out the trails before and after the event.

MOTION: Ms. Ward moved to approve the request for an orienteering event on November 4th, with details to come in October. Mr. Short seconded and the commission approved. Ms. Humiston or Ms. Murphy will bring details to a future meeting.

2. Shoreland Conditional Use Permit Review for a Multifamily Residential Building at 25, 29 Franklin Street. Tax Map 72-75, and 72-77 (Shaun Vando, TF Moran)

Jeff Kavan of TF Moran presented an updated proposal for a multifamily residential building. Mr. Campbell prefaced the presentation by saying that this project had been granted a CUP by the commission several years ago, but that this proposal is different and slightly better. Mr. Kavan stated that previously, there was a parking lot in the back, but now there is an

underground garage so that the back area would remain grass. Also, they are proposing an underground StormTech-type system with treatment and detention for the roof runoff before the water is transported offsite. The impervious lot coverage has decreased from 5000 square feet to 4600, two parking spaces' worth. The lot coverage used to be 48%, but is now reduced, and will not result in unhealthful conditions for the adjacent river. They are asking for a conditional use permit for the site to have greater than 10% lot coverage within the shoreland protection area.

Mr. Campbell asked Mr. Kavan to describe how the stormwater will be treated. Mr. Kavan said that there is an underground plastic chamber system. The roof runoff is captured in a grass swale. There is filtration material under that; the StormTech system has an isolator row wrapped in fabric, so that if there are sediments they will be captured there. The system will infiltrate as much water as it possibly can, while the overflow from bigger storms would be detained in the system and released later at a slower rate. Mr. Clement asked about their plan to keep excess nitrogen content from getting into the Exeter River. Mr. Kavan said that the first flush will be captured in the soil filter layer, removing pollutants before it infiltrates into the water table. Mr. Campbell asked if they will be capturing driveway runoff. Mr. Kavan said no, the driveways sheet forward into the road system, but that they tried to reduce the area. Mr. Campbell asked who will maintain the filtration system, and Mr. Kavan responded that the association of the building's four units is responsible.

Ms. Raub asked if the proposal was reviewed by the planning board or TRC. Ms. Murphy responded that TRC had reviewed it, and asked whether current flood data was used and whether the information could be entered into the nitrogen tracking system, but otherwise had fairly minor comments. Mr. Campbell asked if the commission had any comments to send in a letter to the planning board recommending approval.

Mr. Koff asked if they had looked into pervious pavement for the driveways. Mr. Kavan replied that you'd need good soil, a low water table, and special winterized treatment. A regular snowplow can't be used on porous pavement, you need a rubber blade, and you leave a layer that will turn into slippery ice. Trying to change the grade of the driveways to sheet back onto their own system would make them excessively steep. They couldn't do more for the driveways without putting a trench drain and infiltration systems in the public right of way.

Ms. Raub asked if there is green space in the plan. Mr. Kavan said that they're adding curbing and landscaping in between driveways and sidewalks. Ms. Eberhardt was concerned about Cheyenne Privet in the landscaping plan, and Mr. Kavan agreed to discuss a change with the landscaper.

MOTION: Ms. Eberhardt moved to send a memo to the Planning Board that they have no objection to the project. They do however recommend the applicant consider an alternative native landscape plant to the privet proposed due to its invasive qualities. Mr. Guindon seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Liberty Utilities Lease Update

Mr. Campbell said that Liberty Utilities wants to build a three-building metering station on

a 1/3 acre corner of a 4.5 acre lot listed on the conservation map as the Wilfred Moreau Nursery. The Conservation Commission had permission from the Select Board to use the lot for a tree planting program back in the 1970s, and considered it as one of their pieces of land, but they don't own it and have no conservation easement. Mr. Campbell asked if the commission approves of Liberty taking that corner in a permanent easement, and if would they like to recommend mitigation such as another tree nursery or a community garden. Ms. Murphy said that the commission doesn't have authority to approve, only to make a recommendation.

Mr. Clement stated that this matter is in front of the Select Board, and that the approval is not for the pipeline, but only for the easement for the metering station. Liberty Utilities proposed to give the general fund \$30,000 up front, then if they decide to build a metering station in this space and get permits, they would pay an additional \$100,000. The station would be similar to the one on Epping Road near Great Bay Kids' Company, but larger. The alternative to using this parcel is to build a metering station on the East side of the Squamscott River, in Stratham, but then there would have to be directional drilling under the river.

Mr. Koff asked whether Public Works was involved in the decision. Mr. Clement answered yes, there's already access along a gravel road to get around the holding ponds and they don't have a problem with the proposal. Mr. Clement pointed out that there are already two gas lines that already go through this area. Mr. Guidon said that if they're going to be following the right of way, they will transect forested area, creating a permanent gap and fragmenting the system. Mr. Clement stated that there's an existing dirt or gravel road. Ms. Eberhardt asked if Exeter were to take this on, would that prevent them placing the pipeline in the riverbed? Ms. Murphy confirmed that it would not have to cross beneath the river. Ms. Eberhardt observed that avoiding the directional drilling into the river is positive.

Mr. Clement said the Select Board asked Liberty Utilities if they would be amenable to clearing a piece for a nursery as part of the construction, and they said yes, if the town wanted to pursue that. Ms. Raub stated that if they started a nursery, they could do shrubs and take cuttings, not just grow trees. Mr. Campbell asked if the commission wanted to suggest to the Select Board that they try and work out a way of clearing that lot or getting money toward community garden. Mr. Clement said that they are already pretty far along with the budget. Mr. Guidon wanted to leave the 30 or 40 years of regrowth of trees, as they could be good for the site. Mr. Short thought it made sense not to ask them to clear it, but rather to request financial support if they decided to proceed with the tree farm, and that the Select Board could come up with reasonable figure for mitigation contribution. Mr. Clement stated that this would not be a mitigation, but rather an outright lease of town-owned land. Mr. Campbell stated that the town will benefit financially and through taxes, and he recommended that a piece be carved out for conservation. Even though it's not technically conservation land, it's been considered as such for fifty years. Mr. Clement said that any changes to the agreement with Liberty Utilities would force the Select Board to go through another meeting, whereas they had intended to yay or nay the issue in the next Monday meeting.

Ms. Murphy clarified that the Conservation Commission was asking if the selectmen would consider dedicating some of those funds to conservation purposes, and that the agreement could be board to board instead of board to developer. Mr. Clement said that the \$130,000 and ensuing taxes will go into general fund, and that he did not hear a consensus

about a proposal such as reconstituting the nursery. Ms. Ward said that the commission would like to have a conversation with the Select Board about options for conservation. Mr. Campbell proposed that they direct a letter to the Select Board, stating that they had no objections to the metering station, but the commission should be compensated; Ms. Ward added that alternately the funds could be used for conservation efforts. Ms. Eberhardt stated that their goal was to increase the conservation value, onsite or in another nursery in the spirit of the site.

The general consensus was that the commission should write a letter to the Select Board to the effect that they have no objection to the project but feel that they should benefit from the easement. However, they need time to develop a specific response.

4. Raynes Farm Use Agreement

Mr. Campbell presented the town's application for use of town properties, and suggested that two or three members from the Conservation Commission review the town version and incorporate any aspects not currently included in the application for the use of Raynes Farm or any use of conservation land. For example, they should consider aspects such as insurance, crowd control, traffic control, alcoholic beverages, and charcoal grille use. Ms. Eberhardt and Ms. Ward agreed to review the town permit for ideas.

Mr. Campbell suggested adding fee information to the application itself, but Ms. Raub thought that they didn't have enough history to standardize the fees in the application, and Ms. Eberhardt suggested that it was better to leave it flexible for each event. Ms. Murphy responded that without standard fees, applicants can't get a sense of the cost in advance, so she can't advise them when they inquire about use of Conservation properties. Mr. Campbell said it is difficult to set a standard/fee schedule with a property like Raynes farm. Mr. Short suggested that Ms. Eberhardt and Ms. Ward work on everything besides fees, and fill in that blank when reconvening.

5. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

i. Henderson Swasey Invasive Plant Management

Mr. Guindon suggested an invasive plant event for the commission and/or volunteers in October, following a training that he is taking on the subject but prior to the leaves falling, which will make identification harder. He suggested that the primary purpose could be to create a record of what is happening with invasive plants now, but that they may also want to pull strategically in areas of the least growth. Attacking heavy growth without chemicals would be a major project. He noted that the worst areas are where the invasives were recently harvested, making him hesitant to do management at that scale without follow-up treatment. He suggested that they concentrate on a few species, such as Glossy Buckthorn, Japanese Bittersweet, and Burning Bush, which would make identification easier. Marking the plants is difficult; paint doesn't stay long enough to mark and come back months later, while flagging works better but may not be evident with the fast growth. Saturday, October 6th was proposed for the event, with the time TBD.

ii. CC Property Monitoring

Ms. Eberhardt agreed to monitor Allen Street Woodland Park. Ms. White had intended to visit Exeter Country Club, but she is busy with work and travel. Ms. Eberhardt stated that Ms. Eberhardt and Ms. Murphy had already been talking to the groundskeeper there and could follow up. Mr. Koff agreed to monitor 80 Epping Road.

b. Trails

Mr. Campbell showed samples of trail signs created by John Thunberg. There are nine trail signs and the numbers 1 - 20. He asked for advice on how to mount them; his suggested mounting pressure-treated wood on the tree with countersunk bolts, then screw the sign into the wood with aluminum or steel screws. Ms. Murphy suggested using one-directional screws, which will tighten but won't loosen. Mr. Short suggested placing them up high, and Mr. Campbell asked if the trails committee would help, to which Mr. Short said yes. Mr. Campbell asked if the board would approve a thank you gift for the signmaker, who did this at cost.

MOTION: Mr. Short moved that Mr. Campbell pick out a gift of appreciation for the signmaker at his discretion. Mr. Piskovitz seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

c. Outreach

i. Draft Sign Review: Little River @ Garrison Lane, Morrissette @ Skate Park

Ms. Murphy presented draft signs for review. Mr. Campbell suggested that Morrissette should include a trail at the grassland/pollinator field. Mr. Clement suggested identifying the river as Little River and labelling the confluence of Dudley Brook and Bloody Brook with the river. Mr. Koff said that he will email Ms. Murphy with text corrections, and also suggested that zooming into the trail portion would make the map more user friendly. Ms. Murphy said that she will work with the map further.

ii. September Kayak Event

Mr. Campbell proposed a public kayak trip on the Squamscott River, starting with a brief history and then a trip down to the oxbow. He suggested the 23rd of September as the best day, since the high tide that day is at 1:30 PM, but the commission disagreed about the optimal time for the trip based on the tides. Mr. Campbell, Ms. Murphy, and Mr. Guindon were planning an exploratory trip the day following the meeting, and would report back on conditions at the next meeting.

iii. Raynes Events: Disc Golf 10/12-14, Raynes Farm Makers Fair 10/20, Story Walk 10/27 ages 4-7 d. CC Representatives Report on Other Committees

It was previously proposed that there be a promotional effort for the Raynes Farm disc golf event in October at the similar event at Stratham Park on Sept 14-16. Ms. Murphy contacted the organizers and learned that the peak

event times are Saturday starting at 8 and Sunday at midday, and these would be the best times to staff a table. Mr. Short said he would speak to his contacts there.

Mr. Campbell suggested the commission have a table at the Makers Fair. The time is not yet specified. Mr. Campbell and Ms. Raub volunteered to attend.

Ms. Raub gave an update on the Story Walk. The book will be "The Little Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid of Anything," and she is waiting for the book to arrive before deciding on further details.

Other committee reports: Mr. Campbell mentioned an email from Ms. Murphy regarding the NH Association of Conservation Commissions awards for conservation activities, and asked for suggestions on accomplishments to highlight for this group. Ms. Raub suggested Peter Waltz's spring tree planting program, and Mr. Guindon agreed that it was a good idea. Mr. Campbell will work with Ms. Murphy on the submission.

6. Approval of Minutes: August 14th Meeting; no changes

MOTION: Mr. Piskovitz moved to approve the minutes, Ms. Ward seconded. All were in favor. Ms. Eberhardt abstained as she wasn't present at the meeting.

7. Correspondence

Ms. Murphy presented three items of correspondence:

A representative of Southeast Land Trust asked if the Conservation Commission would like a complimentary table at their Trail Fest event, Saturday Sept 22nd from 9 - 2. Mr. Campbell volunteered to attend.

There was a request to use a metal detector in the town forest. She stated that Raynes farm has historical significance, so although there's no official policy, she thought that the commission would not be supportive. The commission agreed that they are not supportive of the use of metal detectors on conservation land.

Jen Brackett asked for commission member email addresses to promote a boat tour of Great Bay on an unspecified date. All members agreed to share their contact information.

8. Other Business: There was no other business.

9. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled (10/9/18), Submission Deadline (9/28/18)

MOTION: Mr. Campbell moved to adjourn, Mr. Piskovitz seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanna Bartell

Recording Secretary