

Exeter Conservation Commission
May 14, 2019
Town Offices Nowak Room
Draft Minutes

Call To Order

1. Introduction of Members Present

Present at tonight's meeting were Bill Campbell, Carlos Guindon, Ginny Raub, Andrew Koff, Sally Ward, Todd Piskovitz, Andy Weeks, Lindsey White, Alyson Eberhardt, Dave Short, Lucretia Ganley, Trevor Mattera, Julie Gilman, and Kristen Murphy. Mr. Campbell called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

2. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

Action items

1. Eagle Project Proposal for Bridge at Raynes Farm (Luke Tyner)

Luke Tyner, an Eagle Scout, described the bridge project he is working on at Raynes Farm. The gap is 4 - 5 feet, and he estimates the bridge will be 10-15 feet long and 6 feet wide with railings, but he does not yet have a design. Ms. Murphy asked Mr. Tyner to have Mr. Short, who is supervising the project, review the physical design for the bridge. Mr. Campbell suggested also putting a trail marker to show where to enter the woods.

MOTION: Ms. Ward moved to go ahead with this project and have Mr. Short be the point person reviewing design and overseeing the effort. Ms. Eberhardt seconded. All were in favor.

2. Wetland and Shoreland Conditional Use Permit Applications to allow for temporary impacts associated with transmission utility line maintenance within the exiting right of way at Watson Road (adjacent to trail parking lot) and Newfields Road (Raynes Farm property). PB Case #19-05 (Kristopher P. Wilkes, VHB)

Sherrie Trefry of VHB and Matt Cardin and Matt Flanders of Eversource were present to discuss the project. Ms. Trefry said that Eversource had identified several poles in Exeter that require replacement due to age and condition. There will be four replacements on the A126 transmission line and two replacements on H141. The existing structures are wooden H-frame structures, to be replaced with steel. Each will be moved forward or back along the existing line of utility between 10 and 40 feet, and some structures will increase in height between 9 and 22 feet to achieve appropriate clearances for the line.

Along transmission line A126, access is proposed to come from an existing parking area on Watson Rd. There is a proposed 100' x 100' work pad area of timber matting which will have 8,237 square feet of wetland impact and 1,754 square feet of buffer impact. Ms. Eberhardt asked if they could move the impact area around structure 176 to the west to reduce wetland

impact, but Mr. Cardin responded that to the west is a large pile of rocks, so they would have to level that whole area and the work pad would be larger than 100' by 100'. There will be temporary wetland impacts, but the vegetation should bounce back within the growing season. Ms. Murphy agreed, saying when Eversource worked in this area two years ago it was surprising how quickly the vegetation came back.

Mr. Campbell asked if they will address the invasive Japanese Knotweed present, and Mr. Cardin said that the best access option is to go through a section of Knotweed, so they could unearth it down to the root and bury it as mitigation. Mr. Guindon said that would be a good solution as long as they bury it deeply. Ms. Eberhardt was concerned that burying it would just be planting it somewhere else, and Mr. Cardin said that they would be sure to bury it in place so in the worst case it would come back up in the same place.

Ms. Trefry said that at Raynes Farm, working on structures 158 and 140 there would be 1,878 square feet of impact, all on matting with no long term impact to soils. For structure 157, there is 3,255 square feet of impact. There would be some buffer impact for the establishment of the work pad and access crossing the wetland, 982 square feet. Structures 156 and 138 are adjacent to the Squamscott River, upland but near the shoreland. There's a 300' shoreline buffer impact of 14,266 square feet, and 55 square feet in the 150 foot tidal buffer.

Mr. Campbell asked if they would remove invasives there as well, but Mr. Cardin said the main effort they would make to control invasives would be to make sure that the mats and equipment are cleaned with compressed air going in and out, so they are not distributing invasives.

Ms. Raub asked when the project would start at Raynes Farm. Mr. Cardin said it would correspond to a planned outage of the lines from October 7th to end of November, although the crew will need to go in earlier to place the timber mats. He hopes the work can cohabitate with planned events at Raynes Farm. Events will be taking place on weekends, so they could use signage, fencing, or even a marshal to keep people away from work sites. Mr. Short said the access road is not an issue, just the worksite, although he suggested blocking off the road to ensure no one drives it off hours. Ms. Murphy asked if the Commission would consider closing the property during this period, aside from the two planned events. Mr. Campbell felt they could leave it open and just use signage or some barrier.

Mr. Campbell asked if they would reseed impacted areas. Mr. Cardin responded that this shouldn't be necessary, but if there is a need for restoration they would work with the town on the appropriate seed.

Mr. Campbell went through the Conditional Use conditions: 1) *Proposed use is permitted in the underlying zoning district.* He said this is true. Ms. Trefry said yes, it's in the rural zoning district. 2) *Cannot feasibly be carried out on a portion of the lot outside the Wetlands Conservation Overlay District.* Ms. Trefry said it's unavoidable to impact the wetlands, but they tried to minimize the impact. 3) *Proposed impact has been evaluated in the context of the "relative value" of the wetland, and is not detrimental to the function and value of the wetlands.* Mr. Campbell said yes. 4) *Design, construction, and maintenance of proposed use will minimize detrimental impact to the wetland buffer.* Mr. Campbell said yes, and there doesn't seem to be a way around some impact. 5) *In the case where the proposed use is temporary, the landowner agrees to restore the site as nearly as possible to its original grade and condition following construction.* Mr. Campbell said in this case Eversource is the restorer, and they will use seed

and mulch if necessary. 6) *Proposed use will not create a hazard to public health, safety, and welfare due to the loss of wetland, the contamination of groundwater, or other reasons.* Mr. Campbell said yes, the impacts are temporary. 7) *All required permits will be obtained from NH DES before the project.* Ms. Trefry said yes.

Mr. Campbell then went through the 9.3.4(G)(2) conditional uses - conditions for a wetland buffer. A) *Proposed use will not detrimentally affect the surface water quality of the adjacent river.* Mr. Campbell said they will use erosion and sediment control barriers. B) *Proposed use will discharge no waste water on site.* Ms. Trefry said there will be no wastewater. They will use air to blow off the mats. If necessary, any water will go to a dewatering basin, but they do not anticipate this. C) *Will not damage spawning grounds.* Mr. Campbell said that no wildlife habitat impact is anticipated. D) *Proposed use complies with the use regulations identified in Article 9.3.4.* Mr. Campbell said yes, they just talked about that. E) *Design and construction of the proposed use will be consistent with the intent of the purposes set forth in Article 9.3. 1. Exeter Shoreland Protection District Ordinance.* Mr. Campbell said yes.

Ms. Ward suggested monitoring the site for public safety concerns. Ms. Trefry said there will be a monitoring component. Mr. Cardin added that safety is a huge component of their work, and he will alert the crew to be aware of public impacts. They will also have environmental inspections once a week. Ms. Murphy asked them to coordinate with her so she can bring the farmer into discussions regarding the timing of haying. Last year they haying was not done before October 8th due to wet fields. Mr. Cardin proposed that 3 - 4 weeks prior to October 1, they could see where the conditions are at, but Eversource may want to do the work regardless. He said that Mr. Flanders works with property owners and has a formula for crop loss compensation, so if there were impacts they could work with the municipality or the lessee.

MOTION: Ms. Ward moved that they recommend approval of this project to the Planning Board, contingent on working with Kristin Murphy on the haying operation three weeks prior to the project. Mr. Guindon seconded. All were in favor.

3. Election of Officers

- a. Mr. Campbell opened the floor for nominations for chair. Ms. Ward nominated Todd Piskovitz. Dave Short seconded. Mr. Piskovitz warned that he doesn't do much communication outside of meetings or participate in events.

MOTION: Ms. Eberhardt moved that the nominations for Chair be closed and to make one unanimous vote for Mr. Piskovitz for Chair. Mr. Short seconded. All were in favor. Mr. Piskovitz said he would take over at the next meeting.

- b. Mr. Campbell asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Ms. Ward nominated Mr. Koff. Mr. Guindon seconded.

MOTION: Ms. Eberhardt moved that nominations for Vice Chair be closed and to unanimously vote for Mr. Koff as Vice Chair. Ms. Ward seconded. All were in favor.

- c. Mr. Campbell asked for nominations for Treasurer. Mr. Guindon nominated Dave Short. Ms. Ward seconded.

MOTION: Ms. Ward moved to close the nominations and to unanimously vote for Mr. Short as treasurer. Mr. Piskovitz seconded. All were in favor.

d. Mr. Piskovitz nominated Sally Ward as Clerk. Mr. Short seconded.

MOTION: Mr. Guindon moved to close nominations and unanimously vote for Ms. Ward as Clerk. Ms. Eberhardt seconded. All were in favor.

e. Ms. Ward thanked Mr. Campbell for his service as Chair and presented him with a gift.

Ms. Eberhardt left the meeting at this time.

4. Committee Reports Planning and Property Management

i. Updates: SST Morrissette Clean Up, PEA Invasive Pull

Mr. Campbell said he had done a cleanup of the Morrissette property with three classes from SST. They cleaned it up pretty well and spread wood chips to help with the dampness. Ms. Murphy added that it was awesome to see such engaged students, and gave thanks to Public Works who disposed of materials afterwards.

Mr. Guindon said that he, Mr. Campbell, and 14 PEA students had done an invasive pull. They didn't cover much area but pulled up a lot of invasives. He also checked on previously pulled plants; some were hung and some were bagged, but he found that hanging worked better, as almost 100% of the ones pulled and hung were dead.

Mr. Short left the meeting at this time.

ii. Raynes Farm Stewardship Committee Meeting Update

Ms. Ward said that at the Stewardship Committee meeting of April 17th they went over the dashboard, which summarizes events, property maintenance issues, and goals. The dashboard is a great resource and they will use it extensively when applying to the LCHIP grant next year. Ms. Murphy clarified that their dashboard was a filter view of the shared Google sheet.

Ms. Ward said that they had also talked about recent events. They had to cancel the Easter event due to lack of registration, possibly because of the fee. About 10 people participated in the Woodcock Walk on Earth Day, and they heard and saw the Woodcock despite the weather. The bat event had to be moved from the farm to the Town Offices because of weather, but the talk on bats by a UNH PHD student was engaging and several attendees made bat houses. The Stewardship Committee have also been in discussion with Lincoln Street school to have the history of Raynes Farm integrated into their 4th grade project next year.

There were property management updates, such as the bridge previously discussed in this meeting. They acknowledged the work that Mr. Campbell did with the DPW to clear and spread out a dirt pile at Raynes. They met with Jordan Dickenson regarding sustainable agriculture and Raynes Farm. They discussed the concept of the Raynes Conservation Center as a virtual center, not a physical center, and intend to add the "Conservation Center" tag to their discussions of Raynes Farm. That concept will continue to unfold as they work on the barn.

Mr. Campbell added that there are nesting signs at Raynes farm; bobolinks are in the fields so please keep dogs on leash.

Ms. Murphy said that there is a window repair workshop in June in partnership with the Exeter Heritage Commission and the NH Preservation Alliance, and she would like to know in advance if someone on the commission would like to attend at a discounted rate of \$60.

iii. Walleryszyk Easement

Ms. Murphy said she had a phone call about logs being stored on the Walleryszyk Easement, which is not in compliance with the easement. This property is a small conservation easement area on Court Street along the Exeter River, associated with Exeter Elms campground. She sent them an email and followed up with a certified letter, and the letter was returned. She needs to figure out the proper address to send it to and may follow up with a compliance action. She hopes it doesn't get to the court level.

b. Trails

i. Oaklands Plank Replacement (Funding Request)

Mr. Campbell said that Mr. Short had volunteers replace the boards that go towards the tunnel from the parking lot and needed reimbursement. Ms. Murphy thanked Mr. Short for being vigilant on trail issues.

MOTION: Ms. Ward moved to reimburse Mr. Short \$138.67 for plank replacement. Mr. Koff seconded. All were in favor.

ii. Final Draft Henderson Swasey, First Draft Oaklands Kiosk

Ms. Murphy said she'd made updates to the map for the Henderson Swasey Kiosk, based on the Commission's previous comments. They have about \$400 left for replacement kiosk signs. For the Oaklands update, she made similar changes. Between the maps, blazing, and planking, she hopes to have a much safer trail environment. She asked that the Commission members get comments to her by the end of the week.

c. Outreach Events

i. Past Events Update: Woodcock, Spring Tree, NH Bats, Rain Barrel

Mr. Campbell said that he went to the spring tree planting presentation, and was impressed. 200 kids were attentive to Peter Waltz's tree presentation.

Ms. Murphy said that the rain barrels were a challenge. She thought they were delivered but didn't know where, but they couldn't be found. Not until Monday did they find out they were never delivered. Ms. Murphy and the electrical inspector dropped off the rain barrels today.

ii. Exploring Exeter Walk, McDonnell 5/18 8:30 - 11:30 AM

Mr. Campbell said that this event is part of their new ties with Parks and Rec. Mr. Guindon will lead the walk, which is a birding trip.

iii. Coop Middle School Project 5/22 and 6/4

Ms. Murphy said she is continuing the project they do with 8th graders, explaining the importance of buffers in water quality. They will do a Google Earth mapping project and

compare a man-made drainage basin with a wetland basin, and then do water testing. The testing on June 4th, 7:30 AM to 1:50 PM. Mr. Campbell is coming, and Ms. Murphy is looking for one more volunteer to help with the meters.

5. Approval of Minutes: April 9th meeting

MOTION: Ms. Ward moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Koff seconded. All were in favor.

6. Treasurer's report

Mr. Koff said there were slightly different budget amounts this year, since they moved things around. Much of the remaining budget is salaries for the interns. There is \$5,500 for the SCA invasive management program. Ms. Murphy said the group were booked up for the year before she got back to them, but we'll be ready to hit the ground next year.

MOTION: Mr. Piscovitz moved to accept the Treasurer's report as submitted. Ms. Ward seconded. All were in favor.

7. Correspondence: Action Agenda - Cooperative Extension Opportunity

Ms. Murphy has pulled out the action items in the Master Plan relevant to the Conservation Commission, and she'd like to look at the short term items at the next meeting. There's an opportunity through the NH Coastal program to receive some support which aligns with Prepare action 2A, Educate. A group can come in, inventory properties, and educate property owners about flood risk. The NH Coastal program offers this as a service, it's a grant with no financial match required. Dave Sharples mentioned the option at the Planning Board, and the board were in favor of moving forward with that submission. She may be looking for a work committee that works with the NH Coastal group to move it forward.

MOTION: Mr. Koff moved that they pursue this idea with Lisa Wise and Amanda Stone and submit an application for assistance to this group. Ms. Ward seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Campbell mentioned the project at Exeter Country Club, which they were looking at with an eye to applying to ARM for funds, but no funds were available for the watershed this year. Mr. Mattera said they set up a meeting with Tom Ballestero, a civil engineer at UNH who has also been working on the Wagon Hill Farm living shoreline project, using a natural stabilization method to stop erosion. Mr. Campbell and Mr. Mattera brought Mr. Ballestero on a sitewalk at the Country Club to talk about mitigation funding. Mr. Campbell added that Mr. Ballestero said he would submit some ideas, but they haven't yet heard from him and Mr. Mattera should follow up. They looked at two areas, an area where the marsh is moving in and an eroded area. They haven't approached the Country Club yet, they're looking for specific ideas first. They can submit a grant request to ARM next year or wait for a mitigation project to come before them.

Lindsey White said she's plugging along with her summer project of GIS mapping for priority mitigation sites in Exeter, following Section 800 of the environmental rules. This project takes into account a point-based system of what they look for and what gets prioritized. They can then try to line up projects on parcels that are in the best position for funding.

Mr. Campbell said that at the next meeting, he'd like to discuss how to prioritize short term goals, i.e. the next 1-3 years.

8. Other Business

Ms. Ganley asked if they had considered composting for the whole town. Ms. Ward said the composting company Mr. Fox works with municipalities, and suggested that Public Works could work with them. Ms. Murphy said herself and Darren Winham were scheduled to meet with Mr. Fox regarding downtown businesses but they need to reschedule, and she would be happy to bring Ms. Ganley along. Mr. Fox also contracts with private homes. Mr. Campbell added that the town composts leaves at the landfill, and you can get compost there.

Ms. Ganley said that the Squamscott River needs dredging, since the curve of the river is getting narrower. Ms. Murphy said there's a project with NH Fish and Game to address deposits on smelt beds downstream from String Bridge, where they plan to do some modification and management. The Academy dredged boat dock at one time but it was very costly.

Ms. Gilman said that SB 285 on Coastal Resiliency just passed through Senate and House. This will allow them to create districts to help preserve a natural resource; for example, Exeter and Stratham could work together to protect the river.

Ms. Murphy said they'd received mail from a resident on Riverbend Circle asking how they can protect 110 Linden Street, which is directly north of McDonnell conservation area. The property came before the Commission many years ago for a controversial subdivision. A Wetland permit was issued, but project never went forward. The Commission doesn't have an application in front of them, so she just wants the commission to be aware.

9. Next Meeting

- a. Date Scheduled 6/11/19, Submission Deadline 5/31/19

Non-public Session

Non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(d) for the consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property.

MOTION: Ms. Ward moved to enter non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(d) for the consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property. Mr. Piskovitz seconded. Ms. Raub and Ms. White were asked to vote as Ms. Eberhardt and Mr. Short had left. By a roll call vote, all were in favor.

Public session resumed at 9:45 pm. Ms. Ward made a motion to seal the minutes, seconded by Mr. Koff. All were in favor.

Adjournment

9:45 pm Bill Campbell made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Ward. All were in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary