

Exeter Conservation Commission
November 10, 2020
Virtual Meeting
Draft Minutes

Call to Order

1. Introduction of Members Present (by Roll Call)

Present at tonight's meeting were by roll call, Chair Andrew Koff, Vice-Chair Trevor Mattera, Sally Ward, Clerk, Dave Short, Treasurer, Bill Campbell, Carlos Guindon, Julie Gilman (Select Board Liaison), Ginny Raub, (Alternate), Donald Clement, (Alternate), Lindsey White (Alternate), Nick Campion (Alternate), Kristen Osterwood (Alternate), and Kristen Murphy, Natural Resource Planner.

Members present indicated there was no one else present in the room with them during this meeting except for Mrs. Campbell.

Absent: Alyson Eberhardt. Daryl Browne, Select Board Alternate Liaison

Mr. Koff called the meeting to order at 7 PM and activated Alternate Virginia Raub for Ms. Eberhardt.

Mr. Koff read the meeting preamble indicated that an emergency exists and the provisions of RSA 91-A:2 III (b) are being invoked. As federal, state and local officials have determined gatherings of ten or more people pose a substantial risk to the community and the meeting imperative to the continued operation of Town and government and services which are vital to public, health, safety and confidence. This meeting will be conducted without a quorum physically present in the same location and welcome members of the public accessing the meeting remotely.

2. Public Comment (7:00 PM)

Action Items

1. Minimum Impact Expedited Wetland Application for 569 SF emergent wetland fill of a human-made farm ditch for grading associated with the construction of a single-family home on Brentwood Road Tax Map 63, Lot 93-5 (Paul Kerrigan, Christian Smith, Jim Gove)

Jim Gove presented the application for Bramble Meadows which was originally a project by Joe Falzone. Mr. Gove posted the plan. There were no original wetlands impact. There is a man-made ditch in the back of the field. The subdivision was sold, and houses put in. The grading did not work as planned. The function of ditch was to be recreated around the house, so it will not flood out. There was no function and value because of swale. Have pictures to show dredge and fill. Christian

Smith made sure the design will not put water on abutting properties. Some trees at the ditch were cut. Flagging was refreshed. Construction on road is ongoing.

Mr. Koff opened the hearing to the public for comments and questions at 7:15 PM.

Dan Hamel of 54 Columbus Avenue expressed concerns with flooding, especially in the woods and his yard and damage to his property.

Ms. Murphy noted differences in grading would be addressed at another Planning Board meeting.

Mr. Gove noted the swale will be replacing the ditch and the contractor will be removing the fill from the ditch.

Mr. Campbell asked if the new swale would alleviate the flooding issue and Mr. Gove noted it was part of the original design and expanded to keep water off abutting properties.

Mr. Koff noted everyone was here to talk about the wetland feature and asked if there was any function to the ditch. Mr. Gove noted it was very small, like the side of the field.

Ms. White asked if there was any response from DES and Mr. Gove noted not yet.

Mr. Campbell asked to give them an idea where in location to Mr. Hamel's property this is and to comment on how they would ensure that water is carried away from Mr. Hamel's property. Mr. Gove noted he asked Christian Smith to look at it carefully and he stated the swale would work to divert water. Not sure can answer with regard to grading. Mr. Koff noted the Planning Board would address that aspect. The Commission will decide on the wetland being filled.

Ms. Ward noted there should be a condition as to water not going onto the abutter's property. Mr. Campbell agreed. Ms. Murphy noted that could be done as this is not going to be expedited or signed. Mr. Gove agreed noting they have already filed with the State. Mr. Koff agreed.

Mr. Hamel noted the proposed home is twice the size of the others, 4000 SF and questioned whether the owners would maintain a swale behind their home. Ms. Murphy noted a letter would be sent to DES and a copy to the Planning Board. Mr. Koff recommended a member of Conservation attend the Planning Board meeting.

Mr. Koff recommended a condition: that the constructed swale capture all water coming from the property so that no water will flow onto the adjacent lot and consider extending the swale behind the house.

MOTION: Ms. Ward motioned that after reviewing the application the wetland application be approved with the condition that the constructed swale capture all of the water from the property so that the abutter's property will not be affected.

Ms. Murphy noted there may be additional drainage features such as the drip edge for example.

AMENDMENT: Ms. Ward amended her motion to include “and other drainage features”

Mr. Campbell seconded the motion and amendment.

A roll call vote was taken Guindon – aye, Ward – aye, Koff – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Mattera – aye and Raub – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

2. Continued conceptual discussion on the construction of an additional parking/car storage lot for the McFarland Ford Dealership on 110 Holland Way
Tax Map 51, Lot 17 at the applicant’s request (Wayne Morrill, Jim Gove, Chris Lane)

Mr. Koff noted this is for a conceptual design for property on Holland Way discussed last month.

Erick Poulin posted the proposed plan with design changes. Mr. Poulin noted the site was condensed to shrink the footprint away from the buffers. Previously there was 14,600 SF of impact in the 100’ buffer and the new design has 6,300 SF of impact in the 100’ buffer. The parking spaces were decreased by five from 136 to 131 spaces. The small wetland pocket on the right is no longer impacted. The wetland impact on the entrance is the same.

Mr. Gove noted there is no impervious surface in any buffer. The lot consists of a combination of forested wetlands and scrub shrub wetlands with Hemlock, hardwood and Pine and some Appalachian oak pine mix. Mr. Gove verified the stream behind Hannaford bypasses the Reservoir and connects to the sluiceway under Route 108.

Mr. Poulin noted the water table is 2.5’ to 3.5’ down. The main driveway would be standard pavement with porous in the 100’ buffer areas.

Mr. Koff noted it was a more efficient use of space and likes the porous pavement and elimination of the impact in the small right-side wetland and the easement is good.

Mr. Mattera agreed with cutting the buffer impacts in half.

Ms. Ward agreed it was an improvement with porous, the reduction and the right margin eliminated and asked if there was anyway to eliminate the driveway through the wetland or go around it. Mr. Koff agreed and asked if a smaller driveway could avoid direct impact. Mr. Clement noted a second drive cut would make him nervous with traffic from Hannaford and existing Holland Way traffic which goes at a good speed.

Mr. Guindon agreed it was an improvement over what it was. Mr. Campbell agreed.

Ms. Raub asked about snow storage and Mr. Gove noted the porous melts fast.

3. McDonnell Gate Seasonal Closure

Ms. Murphy noted last year the McDonnell Conservation area gate was closed seasonally while the property was still usable. One benefit is that it cuts down on police calls for parking lot misuse.

Ms. Ward and Mr. Campbell agreed and had no problems and could see the benefit. Mr. Koff noted beyond the gate is good for boat and canoe access during the summer months. Mr. Clement noted it is popular for fishing starting in the early spring and expressed concerns with hikers having enough room to park. There is room for careful parking of two cars with the gate closed.

MOTION: Ms. Ward motioned to follow Ms. Murphy's recommendation for seasonal closure.

Ms. Murphy noted the gate is closed daily and opened through volunteer support.

Ms. Raub recommended December to April. Ms. Murphy explained there had been some dumping taking place in the fall which is why they chose November. Mr. Koff recommended effective immediately through the end of March or early April.

AMENDMENT: Mr. Koff amended the motion to take place immediately through March 31st.

Mr. Koff will add it to the agenda for the March meeting and thanked the volunteers.

Mr. Campbell seconded the motion and amendment.

A roll call vote was taken, Guindon – aye, Ward – aye, Koff – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Mattera – aye and Raub – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

4. By-Laws, Review and Update

Ms. Murphy directed the Commission to page 51 of the packet to review the role of alternates in the By-Laws. Currently the rotation is seniority based and would like to rotate alternates. They could be informed ahead of the meeting and have the option to decline. Ms. Ward noted this would increase the participation of alternates. Mr. Mattera agreed. Ms. Osterwood noted she is new and would rather not vote until she has enough experience.

Ms. Ward noted the option is at the Chair's discretion in the By-Laws as they are written.

Ms. Murphy posted the proposed language for conceptual discussions, to define the process in the by-laws. It was modeled after the Planning Board's procedure but is a thinned-out version. Mr. Koff read the addition out loud. Ms. Ward noted it sounded good.

MOTION: Mr. Campbell motioned to add the section, as written. Mr. Guindon seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Guindon – aye, Ward – aye, Koff – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Mattera – aye and Raub – aye. With all in favor the motion passed 7-0-0.

5. E-bike policy

The Commission discussed a proposed E-Bike policy on Conservation controlled properties.

Mr. Short noted there are different classifications of E-Bikes. Some move at a good rate of speed, 20 plus miles per hour. They may not fit in well with walkers and hikers and there is the question of how to enforce a policy.

Mr. Clement asked how the Commission could manage different classifications and expressed concerns about erosion and widening of the trails. Are there places where the use could happen where it is flatter and wider.

Ms. Ward noted older people use E-Bikes to keep biking. They don't throw noxious fumes and are quiet. Ms. Ward recommended considering in the future.

Mr. Short noted the intensity of use on the trails has ramped up. Trails are already suffering, and enforcement is an issue.

Mr. Koff asked the Commission to consider if an E-Bike could be turned off and used as a regular bike.

Mr. Campbell asked about posting it.

MOTION: Mr. Campbell motioned to not allow E-Bikes on Conservation land that we oversee. Mr. Guindon seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Guindon – aye, Ward – aye, Koff – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Mattera – aye and Raub – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

Mr. Koff asked about posting. Ms. Murphy will update the Conservation Land Use Policy on the Town webpage.

Mr. Short noted signage would be useful but would likely be vandalized. If the use increases, the Commission can revisit posting.

6. Treasurer's Report and End of Year Expense Requests

Ms. Murphy posted the Treasurer's Report and Year End Expense Requests. Ms. Murphy proposed payment of dues for ESRLAC for \$150 and SELT for \$150. Ms. Murphy noted the trail materials were donated and she removed the \$200 expense approved at the last meeting. Raynes barn could use siding and the L-Chip grant would be matched.

Ms. Ward recommended purchasing another wildlife camera which could be setup at Raynes Farm to gauge use and used at other locations also. Ms. Murphy noted the camera purchased in 2010 cost \$100.

MOTION: Mr. Campbell motioned to allow up to \$300 to be spent for a game camera from the Conservation Commission Land Administration fund. Mr. Short seconded the motion. A roll call vote

was taken Guindon – aye, Ward – aye, Koff – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Mattera – aye and Raub – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

MOTION: Mr. Campbell motioned to pay ESRLAC dues in the amount of \$150. Ms. Ward seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Guindon – aye, Ward – aye, Koff – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Mattera – aye and Raub – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to pay SELT dues in the amount of \$150. Ms. Ward seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Guindon – aye, Ward – aye, Koff – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Mattera – aye and Raub – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

The Commission tabled consideration of the Clapboards at Raynes Farm. Mr. Campbell noted he believed there was originally \$1,000 in the maintenance fund but Jeff may have charged the account for the work he did and the DPW. Ms. Murphy noted an exterior light may have been paid from that account as well as mowing and will check the balance for the next meeting.

7. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

Mr. Koff noted the tree by the road was removed. Ben Anderson did encroachment work and cleared 12.’ Ms. Murphy noted David O’Hearn had not been able to complete \$500 of hours and can encumber with the Select Board. Ms. Gilman advised it would need to be pre-contracted and a worthy project.

Ms. Murphy noted there has been beaver activity reported on the Stone property and provided photos of trees down. Ms. Murphy noted no trapper would be involved as Conservation allows the natural process to occur.

Ms. Murphy noted the Riverwoods easement will go to legal and for work on the meets and bounds description in December before going to the Select Board for approval.

b. Trails

Ms. Murphy noted the HOA of Linden Street would like to do a joint trail day and have a couple of Commission members help out. Mr. Guindon noted a bridge has been knocked off its base and could use some people to move it. Mr. Guindon noted he will help. Mr. Short noted he can help after the end of November. Ms. Murphy will let them know.

c. Outreach Events

\$120 was donated from the Halloween event. Ms. Ward noted another solstice event is being planned. Clean up date is November 21. The Historical Society is working on display items with interpretive posters. Mr. Guindon noted the UNH event was snowed out.

Ms. Murphy noted Greg Bisson from Parks & Recreation raised an issue of people golfing on Conservation lands and could not imagine leaving golf balls behind to decompose is an approved use.

Nick Campion reported participating with the kids' hiking program. There have been three hikes with this group and the kids seem to enjoy the trails. A couple of scavenger hunts were made. Ms. Murphy noted Oakland was last week and Henderson/Swasey will be Thursday. Morrisette will be the week after. Parks & Recreation may extend the program over the winter.

Mr. Campion noted there may be a snowshoe event at Raynes Farm and proposed a winter festival, snowman contest, sledding and education about the Raynes property, history and wildlife.

Ms. Murphy noted Greg Bisson asked about a suitable Conservation property to conduct a Wilderness First Aid training program. Mr. Koff recommended the Morrisette property.

8. Approval of Minutes: October 13, 2020 Meeting and Site Walk

October 13, 2020 – Tabled

Site Walk

Mr. Koff recommended adding that the potential owner was also present.

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to approve the Site Walk minutes as amended. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Guindon – aye, Ward – aye, Koff – aye, Short – aye and Campbell – aye. Ms. Raub and Mr. Mattera abstained. The motion passed 5-0-0.

9. Correspondence

Ms. Murphy reported receiving an email from the DOT about resurfacing 101 from Hampton Road to Newfields Road. The email did not state if there were wetlands impact but asked about the Commission's mitigation preferences. Conservation Commission has a list of properties, but it is doubtful that much mitigation is required. Ms. Murphy will ask if DOT can work on an exit further up which may be outside the project purview. Phragmites could be removed in the work zone.

Mr. Koff thanked the subcommittee and Ms. White for working on the list of parcels. The workshop enforced the importance of having that list rather than the ARM fund.

10. Other Business

Mr. Koff noted the NHACC meeting was this past weekend and some of the members participated in that.

11. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled: December 8, 2020, Submission Deadline: November 25, 2020**

** Dates revised due to holiday/Town Office building closed

Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Koff moved to adjourn at 9:49 PM. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Guindon – aye, Ward – aye, Koff – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Mattera – aye and Raub – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary