

Exeter Conservation Commission
January 12, 2021
Virtual Meeting
Approved 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 (@7:26 PM), Alyson Eberhardt, Ginny Raub, (Alternate), Donald Clement, (Alternate), Nick Campion (Alternate), Conor Madison (Alternate) and Kristen Murphy, Natural Resource Planner.

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

Absent: Kristen Osterwood (Alternate) and Julie Gilman Select Board Liaison

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)

None.

Mr. Koff called the meeting to order at 7 PM and activated Alternate Ginny Raub for Carlos Guindon.

Mr. Koff welcomed new alternate member, Conor Madison. Mr. Madison introduced himself. He works at GZA and is involved in permitting large construction projects. He attended graduate school with Mr. Mattera.

Action Items

1. Raynes Farm Winter Solstice Contest Drawing

Ms. Murphy reported the DIY Winter Solstice event at Raynes Farm was accompanied by a scavenger hunt and photo contest. 16 people submitted photographs for the contest which can be seen on the Exeter NH Conservation Facebook Page. Two winners were drawn at random by Ms. Murphy for the prize of a coco/coffee gift card. The winners were: Kate Seaver and Meredith Goss.

The Commission voted to reimburse for the expenditure of the two (\$20) gift cards.

Mr. Campbell moved to expend \$40 for the two (\$20) gift cards from the Community Service Account. Ms. Raub seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Koff – aye, Mattera – aye, Ward – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Eberhardt – aye and Raub – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

2. Prime Wetland Waiver Request for a Forestry Statutory Permit by Notification for Russel Hodge (Tax Map 107/8) (*Frank Varney, Logger, Crystal Eastman*)

Mr. Koff indicated the application had been withdrawn. Ms. Murphy read the withdrawal letter from Crystal Eastman out loud. The applicants are working with the Hampton Falls Conservation Commission as well and determined there is no need to take wood out of the prime wetland area in Exeter.

3. Annual Goal Discussion

Ms. Murphy indicated information in the member packets including 2020 goals. First for discussion are the Property Management, Trails and Outreach goals for 2021. Regulatory goals could also be discussed and might include proposed zoning amendments.

Mr. Clement noted 2021 will be affected by COVID into the Fall and any events should take social distancing into consideration. Mr. Koff agreed.

Property Management Goals 2021

Raynes Farm

Ms. Murphy noted focus on the L-Chip grant for Raynes Farm. An RFP would go out for an updated list of repair needs and cost estimates with a January 29th deadline. If the grant is received, then the Warrant Article would follow.

Ms. Ward noted a game camera was approved for Raynes Farm to document visitors and wildlife but has not been installed yet. Ms. Murphy recommended finding a way to setup a share app. Mr. Campion recommended a game camera bingo. Ms. Eberhardt recommended categories, such as things with feathers, four-legged animals, something with fur.

Ms. Eberhardt recommended hosting a BioBlitz with a focus on one property identifies natural resources, bird lists, etc with the assistance of graduate students and academic experts and volunteered to set that up.

Mr. Guindon recommended the I-Naturalist app to record and identify sightings including plant species. Users can become identifiers. Mr. Campion recommended the Picture This app for use as an identifier.

Henderson Swasey

Mr. Murphy noted Mr. Guindon will continue invasives removal at Henderson Swasey.

Mowing

Ms. Murphy noted Mr. O'Hearn experienced equipment issues and funds were encumbered to finish 2020 mowing work.

Bloody Brook

Ms. Murphy noted game cameras under Route 27 and Route 101 have documented use of the wildlife corridor and proposes working with DOT to ensure that use continues. Ms. Stone from the Cooperative Extension is in support of the wildlife corridor and writing an article to get ideas from other communities.

Pollinator Pathways

Ms. Murphy noted she did not know what Pollinator Pathways would look like in 2021 with COVID and social distancing.

Trails – Goals 2021

Mr. Short thanked Exeter Lumber for the big donation of lumber and a convex mirror which will be mounted at the rail bridge by the trestle lot. Approval was obtained from Pan Am. They are working on signage marking the bridge repair.

Mr. Campbell noted the trail committee is working with Tobey and crew at Fort Rock Riders who list trail conditions for biking on their webpage and help with repairs. A trail was identified encroaching on Dunkin Donuts on Epping Road and the person who did it was contacted. Another person was contacted after putting in a trail near Deertrees subdivision and that was closed.

Ms. Murphy noted there was not a lot of submissions for the trail challenge to locate unusual places. The passport program needs to have the posts put back and possibly a new design for the rubbing markers. Ms. Eberhardt and Mr. Mattera volunteered to help with that. Ms. Murphy noted in Kingston they partnered with the local ice cream establishment.

Mr. Campbell asked about an ADA trail or viewing platform and some locations were discussed. Ms. Ward noted Raynes Farm could be accessed with minimal excavation. Ms. Murphy noted a marsh area where a viewing platform would showcase a lot of wildlife without being difficult to get to. Mr. Short recommended the circle at the industrial park where public works parks their backhoe. Ms. Ward recommended highlighting areas of accessibility on the website. Ms. Raub recommended the viewing platform would be an excellent Eagle Scout project.

Allen Street

Mr. Campbell indicated he and Mr. Guindon would continue work on extending the Allen Street trail in the spring.

Outreach Events

Ms. Murphy recommended working with Parks & Recreation on hikes for February vacation similar to the after-school hikes last fall. Mr. Campion volunteered to continue to assist with that.

The Commission agreed it would sponsor an Alewife Festival in 2022 and collaborate with other Committees, DES and Fish & Game. A short virtual presentation with Mr. Glowacky's underwater Alewife video could be presented this year. Mr. Mattera recommended a 5k Alewife Run.

Ms. Ward noted the Tree Committee will be planting trees in the spring at Park Street Common and have submitted but not been approved yet as a Tree City designee. Ms. Murphy noted they are looking for interns to help with inventory. As one example Ms. Murphy shared that Dover did an adopt a street identification process.

Ms. Murphy recommended coastal awareness with sea level rise and a once-a-month signs of spring posting such as vernal pool activity one month.

Ms. Murphy will post the goals to the shared drive and members can contribute other goal setting ideas for 2021.

4. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

b. Trails

Ms. Murphy reported a property owner with an easement, Mark Dolloff reported a new trail was put in to connect Little River trail network to the adjacent development without approval. The development has a homeowner's association which owns surrounding land. Mr. Dolloff is not interested in expanding the network and biking is not permitted. The easement is for value of wildlife conservation. Mr. Koff pointed to the location on the map. Mr. Guindon noted bike obstacles were set up. There was no consultation with the owners or the Town. Mr. Short will talk to Tobey at Fort Rock Riders.

c. Outreach Events

5. Approval of Minutes: December 8, 2020 Meeting

Mr. Koff recommended edits.

MOTION: Ms. Ward motioned to approve the December 8, 2020 minutes as amended. Mr. Guindon seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Koff – aye, Mattera – aye, Ward – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Guindon – aye and Eberhardt – aye. With all in favor the motion passed unanimously 7-0-0.

6. Correspondence

Ms. Murphy reported correspondence from the Town Consultant and a Site Meeting tomorrow with Eric Feldbaum at the Smith Page parcel. Mr. Campbell asked if the neighbor on the north side had been contacted. Ms. Murphy noted there is a substantial process to go through with the temporary disturbance application before it gets there. The group did contact the neighbor to the south, Mr. Dunbar, who allowed Public Works to meet out there and possibly provide access if the project moves forward. Mr. Campbell noted the sign needs to be replaced when the project is finished and asked how long the project would take. Ms. Murphy noted from approval to completion has a maximum allowed time of six months.

7. Other Business

Ms. Murphy noted Matt Berube of Public Works will be working on sewer line maintenance on some of the properties where root systems may interfere with underground pipes. Public Works will adopt best management practices for invasives management and online training to control spread. Public works will commit to frozen ground timelines when dealing with prime wetlands.

8. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled: February 9, 2021, Submission Deadline: January 29, 2021

Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Campbell moved to adjourn at 8:26 PM. Ms. Ward seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Koff – aye, Mattera – aye, Ward – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Guindon – aye and Eberhardt – aye. With all in favor the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary