

Exeter Conservation Commission
March 9, 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, Alyson Eberhardt, Donald Clement, (Alternate), Nick Campion (Alternate), Kristen Osterwood (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: Ginny Raub, (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.

Action Items

1. Raynes Barn Current Conditions RFP Update and Firm Selection/Conservation Fund Expenditure

Ms. Ward reported an RFP was sent out in January to update the older assessment and cost estimates to update the historic structure in support of the L-CHIP application to be submitted in May. Two companies went on a site walk of the property. The committee met last week and recommended Bedard's proposal. The committee, which consisted of Ms. Murphy, Ms. Ward, Mr. Campbell and Doug Eastman, was impressed with the detail of steps to be taken and experience of Bedard. The committee was impressed with the enthusiasm of both companies who submitted proposals and hope they will both be interested in sending proposals for the work to be done.

Mr. Koff asked to describe the scope of work and Ms. Ward noted the historic structures assessment is a guidance document for needed repairs to get the property into condition for public use such as maintenance, replacement of clapboards, structural items such as the foundation and any additional items identified since the last report using 2021 criteria and standards for the Secretary of Interior L-CHIP application and 2021 cost estimates. Ms. Murphy added the type of materials and cuts would be identified to maintain the historic integrity of the property.

Mr. Mattera asked if the L-CHIP cycle would be met and Ms. Ward responded yes, both companies were able to meet the deadline. The intent is to apply in May.

Ms. Eberhardt asked about prioritization and Ms. Ward noted Bedard used a phasing approach which is useful when L-CHIP asks if you couldn't get all the funding what smaller items would you focus on this round.

MOTION: Ms. Eberhardt motioned to approve the review committee's selection of Bedard Preservation & Restoration LLC for the preparation of a Current Conditions Assessment of Raynes Barn and authorize the Chair to send a letter indicating the selection to the applicants. Mr. Mattera seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Koff – aye, Mattera – aye, Ward – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Guindon – aye and Eberhardt – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

MOTION: Ms. Eberhardt motioned to approve the expenditure of \$2,500 from the Conservation Fund account in support of the contract with Bedard Preservation & Restoration LLC to prepare the Current Conditions Assessment for Raynes Barn. 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. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Ms. Ward extended thanks to Nick and Kristen for installing the cameras at Raynes and compiling the images and data. Mr. Campion noted there were hundreds of visitors and wildlife among the images.

2. NHACC Dues Approval

MOTION: Ms. Ward motioned to approve the expenditure of \$700 for the 2021 Annual NHACC Dues from the Dues category of the Town allocated budget. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Koff – aye, Mattera – aye, Ward – aye, Short – aye, Campbell – aye, Guindon – aye and Eberhardt – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

3. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

Mr. Campbell commented on the use of the trail machine at Oaklands which was a big hit. Mr. Short noted there was a brief window when they were able to use it and it did a great job with potholes and ruts.

b. Trails

i. Trail Conditions and Temp Closure Discussion

Mr. Short noted he would keep an eye on the condition of the trails and if they become saturated there may be need to close some trails temporarily. Ms. Murphy noted metal signs had been purchased and Mr. Short will reach out to Mr. Kelly to see if he has those.

Ms. Eberhardt recommended the trail etiquette signs lead with the direction to trail users, the thing you want them to do. The Montpelier example is a little busy. Mr. Short noted the signs may be rendered for next year.

c. Outreach Events

i. ESRLAC – Septic Owner Outreach (Don C.)

Mr. Clement reported NHDES started an awareness campaign concerning septic systems and will be developing and sending out maintenance brochures on septic systems in partnership with ESRLAC next month. Ms. Ward asked what percentage of households are on Town sewer and Mr. Clement noted he believed 75%.

ii. Parks and Rec/ConsCom Hikes (Nick C.)

Mr. Campion noted Parks & Rec joined him for a few hikes, one was at Raynes Farm with about six kids. The 4th-6th grade kids saw a lot of wildlife and a bobcat.

Ms. Murphy noted her seven-person group went out on a family hike using the Continental Drive access which met up with the trail network. Snowshoes were borrowed and many of them had used snowshoes for the first time. Another hike is planned next Wednesday led by Mr. Campion and one will be during April vacation with hopeful vernal pool activity.

iii. Tree Committee Virtual Tree Walk Video (Sally W.)

Ms. Ward reported the Tree Committee is working on ordinances and had a tree walk to look at tree cover across Town with an arborist who led the walk. The walk was filmed by Exeter TV and the virtual walk should be posted soon. The Committee is meeting again tomorrow.

iv. Trail Puzzle and Grab and Go – Bird ID Concepts (Kristen/Nick)

Ms. Murphy reported that Mr. Campion had an idea to take a picture of a native NH critter such as an owl and cut it into puzzle strips. Visitors would collect the pieces which would be cached in different locations and can be colored and put together and a photo sent into us. Ms. Murphy hoped to launch the program on Earth Day or during April vacation.

Ms. Murphy recommended the Library could be another dedicated space and a field guide could be created for kids to use.

v. Green Minute

Mr. Koff reported the Commission had been asked along with other committees to provide a “Green Minute” narrative video highlighting what the Commission does to work on sustainability presentations to submit in April and ideas would be appreciated.

Ms. Murphy recommended focusing on invasive plant removal, wildlife corridors, Raynes Farm, Pollinator Pathways and trail use.

Ms. Osterwood recommended focusing on wetlands and protection efforts and highlighting the miles of trails and Conservation land the Town has to offer.

Mr. Campion offered use of his drone. Mr. Guindon noted his older son took some aerial footage of Raynes Farm that could be used. Ms. Murphy offered some still photos. Mr. Koff will work with them.

Ms. Eberhardt recommended focusing on the Commission's most important message.

4. Approval of Minutes: February 9, 2021 Meeting

Mr. Koff recommended an edit.

MOTION: Mr. Campbell motioned to accept the February 9, 2021 minutes as amended. 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. The motion passed 7-0-0.

5. Correspondence

a. Exploratory Drilling

6. Other Business

Rain Barrel Program

Ms. Murphy reported she is getting the rain barrel program started early this year with purchases up until April 11th and pick up on April 17th. Discounted rain barrels are offered through the Commission from Great American Rain Barrel Co. at \$79 each. Information will be posted on the Facebook page and Town webpage. 12 were sold last year.

Ms. Eberhardt and Ms. Ward noted they had purchased some and they were very handy during last year's drought.

Membership

Ms. Ward indicated she will not be continuing as a member after her term is up in April. Perhaps an alternate could be moved up. Ms. Ward noted she will continue to help on the committee with the L-CHIP application for Raynes.

Mr. Clement noted he would like to continue as an Alternate.

Ms. Murphy asked interested members to reach out prior to the April meeting.

Saving Special Places Conference

Ms. Murphy noted registration is open for the virtual conference this year and will send out the information.

7. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled (4/13/21), Submission Deadline (4/2/21)

Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Koff moved to adjourn at 8:17 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