

Exeter Conservation Commission
August 10, 2021
Nowack Room
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, Trevor Mattera, Nick Campion, Julie Gilman Select Board Liaison, Conor Madison, Bill Campbell, Alternate, Thomas Patterson, Alternate and Kristen Murphy, Natural Resource Planner.

Absent: Kristen Osterwood, Dave Short, Alyson Eberhardt, and Donald Clement, Alternate

Mr. Koff called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and indicated that Alternates Bill Campbell and Conor Madison would be active.

2. Public Comment (7:00 PM)

Mr. Koff asked if there were any members of the public who wanted to speak to an item not on the agenda and being none closed public comment.

Action Items

1. NHDES Wetland Dredge and Fill application for 26,665 SF of temporary wetland impacts and 1,250 SF of permanent wetland impacts within the tidal buffer zone of the Squamscott River for horizontal directional drilling beneath the river to replace failing sewer siphons in the Jady Hill and Swasey Parkway areas as part of the Sewer Siphon Repair/Upgrade effort. Tax Map/Lots 64/36, 64/45 and 64/86. (Britt Eckstrom, Wright-Pierce and Paul Vlasich, DPW)

Mr. Koff read the Public Hearing Notice.

Kevin Garvey from Wright Pierce provided handouts of the proposed plan to install sewer syphons to replace corroded ones. Brit Eckstrom of Wright Pierce and Paul Vlasich the Town Engineer were also present. Mr. Garvey indicated the plan is to drill 20' below the level of the river which is the least impactful. Equipment will be stored on the grass. There will be two project sites on either side of the river. Work will be done at the main pump, Swasey Parkway, the river and grass areas. There will be excavation to expose the existing pipe. A couple of catch basins within Swasey may need relocating. There will be a pit on both sides of the river. There are temporary impacts on the west side of the river which will be restored. There is no wetland impact. There will be a small gravel access drive. The dots shown on the plan represent manhole covers which will be of permanent impact. There will be erosion control to prevent sediment in the river. There will be an access easement with private property owners. A frac tank will be utilized and material will be trucked off site.

Mr. Campbell asked the size of the replacement pipes and Mr. Garvey noted they would be 10" and 12." Mr. Campbell noted that will generate quite a bit more volume. Mr. Campbell asked about the new pump station upstream, if the pond will handle the runoff and about invasives along the shoreline. Mr. Garvey explained the pump station upstream will be upgraded and that he hopes runoff will not end up at the pond as that only takes place in an emergency.

Mr. Koff asked about trees and anticipated SLR and Mr. Garvey noted one tree will be removed and replaced with 2-3 on the Mill property. Mr. Koff warned that compressing the soil can cause damage and asked if they planned to speak with the Trustees of Swasey Parkway. Mr. Garvey noted the plans will be presented to them as part of the process. The Select Board is talking about closing the Parkway and making it one-way out of Town. Mr. Garvey indicated the Parkway would be closed while the work is being done. Flows are anticipated to be the same in the short-term.

Mr. Koff recommended with \$5,000 going into the ARM fund for mitigation that the Commission have some local projects in mind so that it can come back to benefit the community and be potentially added to grants that the Town can apply for.

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned that the Commission having reviewed this application has **no objection** to the application as proposed. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

Ms. Murphy indicated that she will send the memo to DES and copy the Town and Wright Pierce.

2. NHDES Minimum Impact Expedited Dredge and Fill application for wetland impacts resulting from roadway access for a 16-unit condo development proposed along both Tamarind Way and a portion of the cul-de-sac on Cullen Way. The project will include a total of 2,960 SF of wetland impact, including 1,680 SF of forested wetlands and 1,280 SF of impact to existing farm pond. Tax Map 96-15-1 (Brian Griset, applicant and Jim Gove, GES Inc).

Mr. Koff read the Public Hearing Notice.

Brian Griset presented the proposal for the 16-unit open space condominium development which requires a NH DES minimum expedited permit. There will be 3,000 SF of wetland impact. The property is forested wetlands and has a farm pond. The existing farm road will be utilized. A block wall will be added. An arborist has looked at preserving the existing Swamp White Oaks near the road access. A small portion of the farm pond will be filled but will not affect functions and values.

Mr. Griset noted he would be returning to work with the Commission on the Easement conditions at a later meeting.

Mr. Koff noted he attended the Site Walk meeting at the parcels. Mr. Griset received recommendation from the Commission and the Planning Board for the NH DES wetlands and shorelands CUP. The Planning Board approved the request for a waiver for the road width to 20' from 24.' Page 170 of the packet shows the impacts mostly next to Tamarind Lane (off Kingston).

MOTION: Mr. Campbell motioned that the Commission after having reviewed this application has **no objection** to the application as proposed and authorizes the Chair to sign the NH DES State Expedited

Wetlands Application. Mr. Koff seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

3. Recommendation to Select Board on Bower Land Donation (Tax Map/Lot 28/16, Beech Hill Road)

Mr. Koff read the Public Hearing Notice.

Ms. Murphy indicated the Commission would provide recommendation to the Select Board concerning acceptance of the donation. The Commission was contacted by an attorney for the owner's estate after Mrs. Bower passed away. The parcel is five acres and contiguous to other Conservation parcels and there are some trails and a lot of wetlands. The easement would be fee owned for conservation purposes. There are no other conditions or expenses.

MOTION: Mr. Campbell motioned that the Commission based on the information provided, **RECOMMENDS** the Select Board accept the donation of the 5.0-acre Bower property (Map 28, Lot 16) for conservation purposes. Mr. Mattera seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

Ms. Murphy will send a memo to the Select Board.

4. Committee Reports

a. Appointment of Tree Committee & River Study Committee representatives

Ms. Murphy noted representatives are needed for the Tree Committee and River Study Committee. The Tree Committee is a subcommittee of Conservation and meets at 8:30 AM and is working on a tree ordinance. They were instrumental in having Exeter be a Tree City. The River Study Committee is not a subcommittee of Conservation and advises the Select Board. They meet the third Tuesday of each month at 3:00 PM. They are working on the letter of deficiency on Pick Pocket Dam.

Ms. Gilman noted the meetings may change to quarterly as needed and one or two members can participate electronically.

Dave Short indicated earlier that he is willing to participate in the Tree Committee and Mr. Koff noted it would be a good fit since he is in the tree business. Don Clement already attends the River Study Committee meetings. Ms. Murphy will reach out to them. Mr. Koff and Mr. Mattera expressed an interest in the River Study Committee.

b. Property Management

i. Conservation Land Mowing Proposal

Ms. Murphy reviewed the mowing proposal. Mr. Koff noted the contractor offered the same rate and could start in September or October.

Ms. Murphy explained the reasons for mowing half of the Morrisette property last year and that one-third would be mowed this year to promote the milkweed and other plantings. Mr.

Campbell asked if the other seedlings were successful, and Ms. Murphy noted she pinned the locations and did not see success with those but the milkweed was successful and brought positive changes to the parcel.

MOTION: Mr. Campbell motioned to approve up to \$1,575 for the mowing contract. Mr. Koff seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

ii. LCHIP Grant Update

Ms. Murphy provided an update to the LCHIP grant application for repairs at Raynes Farm. She has received notification that the completed application was received. There will be a Site Walk on September 2nd. The contractor who prepared the historic assessment will be there.

c. Easements and Trails

Ms. Murphy reported the Riverwoods easement is getting executed and baselines signed by both parties.

Ms. Murphy reported on the Oaklands trail which seasonally has been underwater a few inches and now is substantially under water and impassable. Signs were made up and it was posted closed on the website and Facebook page. The trail is temporarily rerouted, but this adds a mile and a quarter and an alternative needs to be found. There is a large Blanding's Turtle population.

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to approve up to \$300.00 for additional signage. Mr. Mattera seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

Mr. Koff noted muddy patches at Jolly Rand which causes hikers to go around which widens the path.

Ms. Murphy asked about parking at Watson where the wetland constricts the ability to expand parking. Users are parking along the road and there is a sharp curve. A wetlands delineation would be needed and assistance from Public Works. Mr. Koff recommended no parking signs to give enforcement ability.

Ms. Murphy noted residents of Drinkwater have concerns about parking and the use of the Smith Page parcel property for hunting u-turns, attracting users and having no existing parking lot. There are vernal pools. The LWCF sign is not in place. There is a prescribed LWCF sign which has a different look.

Ms. Murphy noted the PEA trails were removed from the Town website. Mr. Koff noted people are not parking there to access Smith Page so there is not a lot the Commission can do.

Ms. Murphy will put signs and trails on the agenda for further discussion at next month's meeting.

d. Outreach Events

Ms. Murphy reported that the Star Gazing event is still planned in October at Raynes Farm.

Ms. Murphy recommended continuing with the snow shoe event and work on planning later.

Ms. Murphy noted there are bat box kits left over and a workshop could be hosted.

5. 2022 Budget

Ms. Murphy provided copies of the operating budget and noted items that have a history of not being spent down which could result in cuts. Mr. Koff noted that interns will work this year where they were inactive during COVID. Ms. Gilman noted the same was true of training and education. Mr. Koff recommended reviewing the Master Plan and putting emphasis in 2022 on trails which have all seen a substantial increase in use during COVID. The trail at Raynes Farm should be kept open to the barn.

Mr. Campbell recommended working on invasives and creating parking areas.

Ms. Murphy will look into quotes via Request for Qualifications or RFQ and check on NACC dues,

6. Approval of Minutes: July 13th 2021 Meeting

Mr. Campbell recommended edits. Ms. Murphy will send a copy of the NH DES recommendations memo for the dock presentation by Sergio Bonilla to the minute taker so they can be incorporated in the July 13, 2021 minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to approve the July 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes as amended. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Mr. Mattera and Mr. Patterson abstained. The motion passed 5-0-2.

7. Other Business

8. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled (9/14/21), Submission Deadline (9/3/21)

Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Campbell moved to adjourn at 8:48 PM seconded by Mr. Koff. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Hoiijer, Recording Secretary
Via Exeter TV

This meeting was also available for electronic access through Webinar ID: 837 3734 8082