

Exeter Conservation Commission
May 10, 2022
Nowack Room
Exeter Town Offices
10 Front Street
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, David Short, Alyson Eberhardt, Conor Madison, Select Board representative Nancy Belanger, Don Clement, Alternate, Kyle Welch, Alternate and Bill Campbell, Alternate (remotely).

Staff Present:

Mr. Koff called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM.

2. Public Comment (7:00 PM)

Mr. Koff asked if there were any questions or comments from the public related to non-agenda matters and there was none.

Action Items

1. Exeter Trail Race (Ri Fahnestock)

Ri Fahnestock presented the request on behalf of the Exeter Trail Race Committee with directors Sarah Sallade and Chris Dunn to use the trails for the race, which is proposed for Father's Day, the 3rd Sunday in June. The details are the same as in the past but with COVID protocols. Race times will be posted on the board. He welcomed a representative from the Commission to set up a table and/or review trail conditions before the race. He doesn't expect any impact issues or impending weather.

Mr. Koff asked how many runners there typically were and Mr. Fahnestock noted usually 100. There are two great courses, one long and one short. The long course goes into Oaklands and the short course into Henderson Swasey. Protocols are discussed at the pre-race meeting and there are aide stations and water. Same day registration is available and refunds for those who registered but can't come to the race.

Mr. Koff noted Alternates Don Clement and Kyle Welch would be active voters.

43 **Mr. Short motioned to approve the event agreement for Exeter Trail Race on June 18, 2022. Mr.**
44 **Clement seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Eberhardt – aye, Welch – aye, Clement –**
45 **aye, Koff – aye, Mattera – aye, Short – aye and Madison – aye. The motion passed unanimously 7-0-0.**
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47 2. Wetland and Shoreland Conditional Use Permit applications for five pole replacements within the
48 existing A126 Electric Transmission Line corridor, Exeter NH (Kristopher Wilkes)
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50 Kristopher Wilkes from VHB presented the applications on behalf of Eversource for a wetlands and
51 shoreland conditional use permit recommendation to the Planning Board. Mr. Wilkes noted the project
52 is to replace wooden pole structures with weathered steel in the same H-frame design but with a slight
53 height increase of 5-15.’
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55 The first structures he noted are off Pine Road and access will be via a gated access to the ROW. There
56 will be some temporary wetland impact. Timber matting will be used around the access road and work
57 pad.
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59 There is a prime designated wetland between Lines #201 and #200 with temporary impacts to get to
60 #200 and buffer impacts of 100’ and 40’ in the Town Wetlands Conservation District.
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62 There are two structures west of Captain’s Way, #166 and #167 which will utilize existing trails for
63 access, which will have timber matting placed, to line #167. There is an unnamed perennial stream
64 running north to south channelizing at the edge of the ROW, not well defined, inundated. The flow will
65 pass freely under the mats but there will be buffer impact in the wetland and in shoreland protection
66 area because of the stream, within the 150’ buffer. BMP will use erosion controls prior to the start of
67 work with wildlife friendly options, biodegradable mats that won’t tangle turtles and snakes. VHB will
68 hold training with the contractor and do inspections and reports.
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70 Mr. Wilkes noted that a state permit is being pursued as well, statutory permit by notification. The
71 project is scheduled to start mid-July.
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73 Jeremy Pennell from Eversource explained how the work area would be closed to the public for safety
74 and methods of communicating that through the Facebook Page and physical signage. Mr. Short
75 recommended a temporary reroute of the part of the red trail. Mr. Koff advised that Kristen Murphy the
76 Natural Resource Planner should be notified of the time frame.
77

78 Ms. Eberhardt asked about soil disturbance, reseeding and managing spread of invasives. Mr. Wilkes
79 explained the methods VHB utilizes with the contractors to minimize disturbance, erosion and invasives
80 and returning the area to the condition it was prior to commencement of the project. He noted the area
81 bounces back quickly without seeding and does not recommend introducing shrubs especially if they are
82 non-native because they would need to be maintained and not cut during mowing. Purple Loose Strife
83 and Glossy Buckthorn were among the invasives noted. Mr. Koff noted there is knotweed in the parking
84 area. Mr. Wilkes noted equipment and mats are cleaned off before being moved. Equipment is
85 delivered to the site clean.
86

87 Ms. Eberhardt asked to describe the dynamic of oversight and Mr. Wilkes noted they have been using
88 the same contractors for about five years and written reports are provided to Eversource with most
89 action items fixed on the ground and a record of those items in the report.

90

91 Ms. Eberhardt asked if the mats were stiff enough to go over. Mr. Wilkes described the size of the mats
92 16'x4' and how an abutment is created on either side. Mr. Koff noted there will be very little flow in July
93 short of a major rain fall event. Mr. Wilkes noted the contractors would likely not work on a day with
94 extremely wet conditions.

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96 Mr. Koff summarized the three impact areas with 7,000 SF of direct impact and 26,000 SF of temporary
97 buffer impact. The Commission reviewed the eight conditions. There was no alternative design with
98 less impact due to the guardrail on Route 101 and lack of shoulder being a safety concern. Mr. Wilkes is
99 a wetland scientist and stamped the plan as to the function and values assessment he did not see
100 anything other than temporary as it will be dry during that time of the year, so it is the right time of year
101 to do this.

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103 Mr. Koff asked about wildlife habitat in the prime wetland and Mr. Wilkes described a lot of scrub shrub
104 and the Deer Hill Wildlife Management Area in Brentwood nearby which was formed to mitigate
105 another wetland project. Mr. Wilkes did the data check with NHB, and no plants were identified, and
106 they are working with Fish & Game concerning rare turtles and black racer and also with training crews
107 to recognize and report observations. A visual walkthrough is done to make sure species are not up in
108 the equipment. Mr. Koff noted the project is not detrimental due to its temporary impact the area will
109 rebound quickly. Mr. Koff noted he is satisfied with the efforts to minimize impacts and there is no
110 threat to public health, safety and welfare with the coordination of the trail closure and rerouting and
111 notification to the public. He noted Fort Rock Riders would be another group to communicate with. Mr.
112 Koff reviewed #6 and noted there is no increase elsewhere – not applicable. #7 no grading is proposed,
113 and restoration efforts were discussed. Mr. Wilkes described how the old poles would be cut to the
114 ground and the butt left in the ground in the impacted areas. #8 State permits are in process.

115

116 Mr. Madison noted he would be recusing himself from voting. Mr. Koff activated Alternate Bill
117 Campbell.

118

119 ***Mr. Koff motioned that the Commission after reviewing this application recommends that the wetland***
120 ***conditional use permit be recommended for approval with the condition that the trail closure and***
121 ***notification be coordinated with Natural Resource Planner Kristen Murphy prior to the***
122 ***commencement of work. Mr. Short seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Campbell – aye,***
123 ***Short – aye, Koff – aye, Mattera – aye, Eberhardt – aye, Welch – aye, Clement – aye. The motion***
124 ***passed unanimously 7-0-0.***

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126 Mr. Koff noted a memo would be drafted to the Planning Board with the Commission's
127 recommendations.

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129 Mr. Wilkes presented the request for the Shoreland CUP. Mr. Koff noted there is a stream west of
130 Captain's Way with 7,300 SF of impact within the 150' shoreland buffer. Mr. Koff referenced the five

131 criteria for granting the recommendation concerning preserving surface water quality and not causing
132 unhealthful conditions. Mr. Koff noted there appears to be enough sediment control. In a major rainfall
133 Mr. Wilkes noted work would stop for the day. There is no discharge of wastewater on site. Mr. Wilkes
134 detailed the BMPs for refueling vehicles in appropriate locations and procedures for spill reporting. Mr.
135 Wilkes discussed the rare species and work with Fish & Game. Mr. Koff asked about water bird species
136 because of Deer Hill and Mr. Wilkes noted they are not on that side of the road, and no access to open
137 water. That habitat does not exist in the work area.

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139 Mr. Koff reviewed Article 9.3.4 and 9.3.1 and asked if there were any questions from the public at 8:25
140 PM and being none closed the hearing to the public for deliberations.

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142 **Mr. Koff motioned that the Commission after reviewing this application recommends that the**
143 **shoreland conditional use permit be recommended for approval to the Planning Board. Mr. Clement**
144 **seconded the motion. A vote was taken, the motion passed unanimously 7-0-0.**

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146 3. Committee Reports

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148 a. Property Management

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150 i. Milkweed for Whites Meadow – Expenditure approval (if desired) (shipping cost only)

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152 Ms. Murphy reported she reapplied for the grant the Commission was not awarded last year
153 and was surprised to be selected. The plants would be distributed at Monarch Watch Stations.
154 There are 160 plants. The project would be labor intensive to prepare the site. Mr. Murphy
155 detailed the success of a similar planting in another area which she did not feel was greatly
156 successful. Water would need to be hauled out to the plants throughout the summer. She
157 noted they would do things differently than they had at the Morrisette property and put out pin
158 flags and make sure they did not have to compete with other plants. Mr. Campbell noted a
159 couple of good spots grew out, but Ms. Murphy noted it wasn't what you would expect with 700
160 plants. However now there is a good seed source out there. Ms. Eberhardt noted Ginny Raub
161 had success with her plantings and that method may be the way to go. Ms. Murphy noted the
162 change in mowing practices.

163

164 Ms. Murphy noted that the Town would get \$450 worth of plants and only pay \$50 for shipping.

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166 Mr. Clement asked if they could be distributed to residents and Ms. Murphy noted they must be
167 at designated Monarch Watch Stations and the requirements for not distributing to areas that
168 are not registered.

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170 The Commission agreed that the project was more work than they could take on right now.

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172 b. Trails

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174 i. Trail Work Day Report – Expenditure Approval – Trail Bridge Fasteners

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Mr. Short reported the bridge was done two weeks ago and all that is left is the cleanup and he has spoken to Jay Perkins with DPW. The wood supply was donated from a condo deck refurbishment in Kingston so there was only the cost of reimbursing for the hardware.

Mr. Koff noted Alternates Welch and Clement were voting.

Mr. Koff motioned to reimburse \$113.38 from the Conservation Fund for the screws. Mr. Mattera seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously 7-0-0.

Mr. Short provided a handout of the trail network. He noted the rogue trail is not an issue next to the plank bridge. Mr. Short discussed a trail that could be closed down and is not needed between BLT and the Demoralizer and recommended getting these removed off the trail apps (Trail Forks). Mr. Short will contact Toby and ask him to contact the admin. Mr. Koff explained how expansions happen and promote rutting. Mr. Short noted Jolly Rand is muddy and discussed drainage work done there at one time and ditches that have filled in with leaves over the years and could use some bridging.

Mr. Koff recommended closing Side of Lettuce and asked if more blazing was needed on BLT. He noted a trail west of Jim Bob which could be closed. The trails have had much more use since COVID. Patrons are being courteous and not parking in the 3C1 lot. Mr. Koff thanked Mr. Short for all that work.

c. Outreach Events

i. Alewife Festival 5/14

Mr. Koff noted the Alewife Festival is scheduled for Saturday from 9-1 at Founder's Park and the temperature is forecast to be a high of 88. There will be activities for the kids at the library and with the Tree Committee and other environmental tables. Fish & Game will be showing native fish. The winners of the Alewife Run Guess the Date will be in the running to win a Kayak, t-shirts can be ordered and Sawbellies is selling \$10 pint glasses which if brought to their location get those who present their glass, a free beer. There is a Kayak Tour at the Town Boat Ramp. A waiver will be signed, and a life jacket is required. No pre-registration.

Mr. Clement noted he talked to Eric Turner at the DPW will be doing highlights of the Wastewater Treatment and a side trip up Wheelwright Creek.

Mr. Koff noted there will be environmental films, the Sustainability Committee, DES Climate, Exeter TV with Bob Glowacky's film and Wastewater Treatment updates.

Ms. Murphy noted there will be a Food Truck - Winnies, offering breakfast food, and music from 12-1.

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Mr. Koff and Mr. Mattera will be running the DES groundwater flow model and the Enviroscope models that show how pollutants move and affects of groundwater. Ms. Murphy will print sea rise maps and some trail maps will be available for Raynes and Little River.

ii. Geocaching Event Planning – TBD

The Commission discussed how to get started with geocaching by finding the first ten before placing your own. There is an app to download, and a flyer can describe the date, meeting place and description.

4. Approval of Minutes:

i. March 8, 2022 Meeting

Mr. Clement motioned to approve the March 8, 2022 meeting minutes. Mr. Koff seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously 7-0-0.

ii. April 12, 2022 Meeting

Mr. Koff motioned to approve the April 12, 2022 meeting minutes. Mr. Mattera seconded the motion. Mr. Clement abstained. The motion passed 6-0-1.

5. Correspondence

Mr. Koff thanked Tom Patterson and Kristen Osterwood for their service to the Commission the last two years and noted there are openings for three vacancies, two alternates and one voting member. He recommended Kyle Welch could be moved up by the Select Board to a voting member. Mr. Campbell and Mr. Clement noted they were happy with their alternate status. The next Select Board meeting is on the 31st. Mr. Clement noted they are also looking for reps for Exeter Squamscott River Advisory Committee (can have up to 4).

Mr. Campbell noted that Julie Gilman sent a memo concerning HB 307, concerning legislation by the governing body as to the use of firearms on municipal property. Ms. Murphy discussed the Conservation Deeds which did not permit hunting which are not affected and the effect on not being able to restrict properties that do not regulate in the deed already. A letter could be sent by the Commission to voice their concerns or individuals could write to their state reps and/or the Governor. Ms. Belanger recommended reaching out to individual representatives and also the Governor in case it was to pass, comments are open electronically.

6. Other Business

Mr. Koff announced the passing of former Select Board Representative Anne Surman and thanked her for her hard work for the Town, her concern for the community touched a lot of people.

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264 Ms. Murphy reported she is having difficulty getting a response to the RFP that went out for Raynes
265 Farm and is hoping for some feedback from contractors. The price of materials has gone up
266 significantly and contractors are backlogged with other projects. She will contact the LCHIP
267 representatives for suggestions.

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269 7. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled (6/14/22), Submission Deadline (6/3/22)
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271 Adjournment

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273 MOTION: Mr. Koff moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 PM seconded by Mr. Mattera. A vote was
274 taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

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276 Respectfully submitted,

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278 Daniel Hoiijer, Recording Secretary
279 Via Exeter TV

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281 This meeting was also presented virtually Zoom ID 848 3795 0762