

Exeter Conservation Commission
September 13, 2022
Nowak Room
Exeter Town Offices
10 Front Street
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, Dave Short, Nick Campion, Alyson Eberhardt, Don Clement, Alternate, and Kyle Welch, Alternate

Staff Present: Kristen Murphy, Conservation & Sustainability Planner

Mr. Koff called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and indicated Alternates Don Clement and Kyle Welch would be active.

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 were none.

Action Items

1. Management of Griset-Mendez Conservation Parcel (Tax Map 81/53) with regard to undersized railroad culvert, plans for water level management, no hunting posting (Brian Griset)

Brian Griset appeared before the Commission to give a history of the litigation and court order in 2008 relative to the Little River – Scanlon Brook area shown on the map. Railroad ties were dumped in the wetlands, including prime wetlands and the Court ordered NH DES to supervise cleanup.

Mr. Griset raised concerns over allegations he has had since that order which include temporary placement of railroad ties and more railroad tie replacement in 2019. Mr. Griset has since filed an email complaint with NH DES including email correspondence and photos shared with Ms. Murphy and has not had a response.

Mr. Griset alleged a stone box culvert was replaced without permit with a pitched drain and no retaining wall, created an elevation change of 2.5’ higher, changing the hydrology. He noted that while the Railroad is involved his research found that they must comply with local land use and environmental laws.

44 Mr. Griset cited issues with beaver management policies which Public Works have stopped. Mr.
45 Griset noted he would like the Town to adopt a policy similar to GZA and UNH Merrimack Policy. He
46 would like to see the policy extend to trail systems and drainage areas with flowing water. He noted
47 people are building dams to raise water levels which is illegal and against state law. This
48 information should be on the Town website. Mr. Clement noted any policy would have to go to the
49 Select Board. Mr. Koff noted the beaver deceiver device on Town Forest property is not managed
50 by the Commission. Ms. Murphy reviewed the oversight of the Commission which includes wetland
51 permits and management of conservation land. Ms. Murphy acknowledged his allegation that the
52 Town may have left silt fence behind.

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54 Mr. Clement recommended that staff contact NH DES to find out the status of the complaint to see
55 action and follow up.

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57 Mr. Griset raised concerns about posting for no hunting with the season beginning in a couple of
58 days. The signs out there now have his name on them and should be replaced with the
59 Commission's contact information.

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61 Mr. Griset raised concerns with the stipulations of the deed and signage rules and locations relevant
62 to trails and trail buffers of 100.' He requested the trails being constructed have access blocked
63 until signs can be put up.

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65 Mr. Clement asked the status of the proposed legislation prohibiting Towns to ban discharge of
66 firearms on Town property and Ms. Murphy indicated the bill died.

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68 Mr. Koff noted the Commission would work on signage and posting and check out the trail.

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70 2. Lamprey River Advisory Committee – Presentation and Request for Exeter Representative (Therese
71 Thompson)

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73 Therese Thompson appeared on behalf of the Lamprey River Advisory Committee. She noted there
74 are 14 Towns on the watershed, and she is seeking representatives to serve on the Committee from
75 each Town. Each Town can have up to four representatives. Ms. Thompson showed the LRAC
76 website and talked about funding and grants. She noted they meet on the 3rd Tuesday at 7 PM in
77 Lee at the public safety complex. There is a FAQ sheet on the website telling how to join.

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79 Mr. Mattera asked the responsibilities of a member and Ms. Thompson indicated they review a lot
80 of projects, fix trails and signs and can serve on subcommittees.

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82 Mr. Clement noted the Exeter River Advisory Committee is also looking for members.

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84 3. Committee Reports

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86 a. Property Management

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i. Haying cycle at Raynes Farm

Ms. Murphy asked the Commission if they would like to continue to adhere to the current haying cycle at Raynes Farm to allow for an early cut and delayed second cut to promote Bobolink nesting. The Commission agreed to continue without change.

ii. Raynes Repair Site Prep for contractor – Expenditure Request NTE \$910

Ms. Murphy reported on repairs at Raynes Barn and the need for asbestos testing on the west end ceiling and vegetation removal for scaffolding to be installed.

MOTION: Mr. Campion motioned to authorize the expenditure of up to \$910 from the Contractor Services budget line item for asbestos testing and vegetation clearing around the barn perimeter. Mr. Short seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

iii. Conservation Land Mowing – Expenditure Request \$1,575 or \$1,700

Mr. Murphy discussed the mowing cycle which is one-third of the property and concerns with woody vegetation creeping in which could use a bit more mowing.

MOTION: Mr. Campion motioned to authorize the expenditure of up to \$1,700 from the Roadside Mowing budget line item for field mowing on conservation lands. Mr. Short seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

Mr. Clement raised concerns about brush hogging the Stone property which is now overgrown. Mr. Murphy noted they attempted to have it done last year but it was too wet. Ms. Murphy will go out and take a look and get in touch with someone to do the work. Funds could be transferred from interns to roadside to contract out the work.

The Commission extended thanks to Mr. Campbell who has mowed White Meadow pass and the Garrison Lane path.

iv. Holland Way Pollinator Strip (5 mi) Expenditure Request NTE \$700

Ms. Murphy presented the proposal for a pollinator strip along the median on Holland Way. There would be rototilling and then a winter cover and seeding.

MOTION: Ms. Eberhardt motioned to authorize the expenditure of up to \$1,000 from the Conservation Land Administration budget line item for seed and supplies to convert the median strip along Holland Way to pollinator habitat. Mr. Clement seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

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b. Trails

Mr. Koff noted he would like to have a separate Trails Committee meeting sometime in October or November to discuss signage, density and maintenance.

c. Outreach Events – Expenditure Request \$125

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to authorize up to \$125 from Conservation Land Administration budget line item for outreach programming. Mr. Campion seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

i. Forest Bathing Program – 10/1

Ms. Murphy described the program as an immersion in nature. She has booked it for 9-10:30 at the Little River Conservation Area. Space is available for 12 and four have signed up so far. Mr. Koff recommended putting a broader explanation of the event on the website.

ii. SkyWatch at Raynes – 10/21 (Cloud Date 10/22)

Ms. Murphy reported she booked the SkyWatch event for October 21 at Raynes with the NH Ast. Society members. It will begin with a 30 minute presentation at the barn from 7:00-7:30 and then go out to viewing.

iii. Mushroom Walk

Ms. Murphy proposed a mushroom and foraging event. The Commission discussed properties and parking access.

MOTION: Mr. Campion motioned to approve the expenditure of up to \$200 for the mushroom/foraging event. Ms. Eberhardt seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

iv. Kayak Tour

Ms. Murphy reported that Parks & Rec. have secured some kayaks and will be doing an event at the Town Boat Launch on September 25th from 10:00-11:45. There was a strong interest and possibly will have a second follow up event in October.

v. Fall/Winter Collaboration with Parks & Rec.

Ms. Murphy reported there will be some opportunities for collaborations with Parks & Recreation coming up in fall/early winter.

176 4. Approval of Minutes
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178 a. August 9, 2022 Meeting
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180 Ms. Murphy recommended edits.
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182 **Mr. Koff motioned to approve the August 9, 2022 minutes as amended. Ms. Eberhardt**
183 **seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.**
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185 5. Correspondence
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187 Ms. Murphy reported an email stating that the preconstruction meeting for Rose Farm will be
188 September 20th and all permits are in place. They can start remediation efforts anytime now.
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190 Ms. Murphy reported Charter Street cleanup is underway in the prime wetland. Mr. Koff noted he
191 would like to see the before and after.
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193 6. Other Business
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195 a. Climate Resilience Technical Assistance – Floodplain and Flood Advisory Area Zoning
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197 Ms. Murphy discussed the Planning Board and RPC technical assistance proposal for flood area
198 with the increase for flood elevation from 1’ of freeboard to 2’ in special flood hazard area.
199 After review and recommendations it would go to the Select Board, have hearings and present
200 to Town Meeting in 3/2023. She noted Durham did a advisory program.
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202 b. Invest NH Grant – Incentivize zoning near existing infrastructure, minimizing resource
203 impacts, and Bike Pedestrian Master Plan
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205 Ms. Murphy reported that Town Planner Dave Sharples applied for and was awarded a \$45,000
206 Invest NH Grant and this will be used to consult on rezoning with the MPOC.
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208 c. Other Committee Updates (SAC, EC, Tree, Pollinator)
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210 Ms. Murphy reported the single use plastics Town Ordinance is proposed for Town property and
211 events and would have three public hearings. There would be exemption for Firer & Safety and
212 non-profits like Meals on Wheels. Information can be viewed in the Sustainability Committee’s
213 packet for their meeting last Monday.
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215 Ms. Murphy reported the Energy Committee received its first credit for hydro net metering
216 which is part of fossil fuel collaboration with the hydro power plant. This could become a
217 budget revenue to offset other programs.
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219 Ms. Murphy reported an electric vehicle showcase scheduled for September 25th.

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221 7. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled (10/11/22), Submission Deadline (9/30/22)

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223 Ms. Murphy noted the meeting will take place at Town Hall and a reminder will be sent.

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226 8. Adjournment

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228 MOTION: Mr. Koff moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 PM seconded by Mr. Madison. A vote was
229 taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

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231 Respectfully submitted,

232

233 Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary

234 Via Exeter TV

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236 This meeting was also offered via Zoom 886 8896 9737