

Exeter Conservation Commission
December 12, 2023
Novak Room
10 Front Street
7:00 PM
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, Dave Short, Connor Madison, Kyle Welch, Keith Whitehouse, and Alternate Michelle Crepeau.

Staff Present: Kristen Murphy, Conservation and Sustainability Planner

Mr. Koff called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, introduced the members and activated all of the alternates.

2. Public Comment

There was no one from the public present outside of agenda items.

Action Items

1. Commemorative Bench – Dedication and Selection Criteria

Mr. Short noted that a commemorative bench was discussed when Carlos Guindon passed away. Mr. Short noted that one of Mr. Guindon’s interests was birding at Rayne’s Farm and Mr. Short recommended something in that location. Mr. Short noted the purchase of materials to build a Leopold bench were approved and a friend and woodworker assembled them. The Commission discussed honoring Commission members by dedicating one large marker, and for each of those who have served for ten years with a placard with their name on it attached to the backs of the benches. The large marker would have the Aldo Leopold quote on it:

“When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

Mr. Short recommended sending a thank you to Jordan for assembling the benches. Mr. Koff recommended having a formal dedication on site.

MOTION: Mr. Short motioned to approve the plan presented. Mr. Mattera seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

45 2. Underwater Camera – purchase request

46 Ms. Murphy noted that the proposal is to attach an underwater camera to a paver brick downstream
47 from the String Bridge where the Alewife pool and rest before traveling upstream. She checked with
48 Fish and Game and no permit would be required. She noted there was no estimate for connecting to
49 the library internet. There could be an interpretive sign in the children’s room or a visual display in the
50 spring. The livestream would be shared on the website.

51
52 Mr. Mattera asked about cleaning the camera. Mr. Short asked the length of the migration and Ms.
53 Murphy indicated a maximum of two months. Mr. Mattera noted the camera could be wiped down
54 occasionally or a camera with wiper could be purchased.

55
56 MOTION: Mr. Short motioned to authorize up to \$800 for the purchase of an underwater camera. Mr.
57 Welch seconded the motion. A motion was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

58
59 3. Town Report Topics/Photo Request

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61 Ms. Murphy noted that the Commission’s submission to the Town Report was due in January and
62 welcomed any feedback or photos on what to include. Mr. Koff recommended photos of the Leopold
63 benches and of Rayne’s Barn which are more core to what the Commission has been doing. Ms.
64 Crepeau offered to assist with writing the report.

65
66 4. Letter of Support from TPL for LWCF grant application – Rugg Property

67
68 Ms. Murphy noted that a letter of support for the Newfield’s grant for the Rugg Property was requested.
69 Ms. Crepeau expressed concerns that the letter stated it would not apply to the Exeter portion Mr. Koff
70 noted that Exeter did not receive the drinking water grant this year but would apply again next year.
71 Mr. Short questioned why the funds would not be applied proportionally in the partnership. Mr. Koff
72 noted the Newfields side would have access and parking, but he was not sure Exeter would be eligible
73 on its own. Ms. Crepeau requested clarification. Ms. Murphy noted Parks & Recreation are also
74 applying for LWCF grants. Mr. Koff noted he did not see Exeter applying separately. Mr. Mattera noted
75 that he would hope Newfields would support Exeter if they were applying. He noted Exeter was not
76 going to start its own project. Ms. Crepeau expressed concerns that there was no other funding for
77 Exeter. Mr. Koff noted the support letter was due tomorrow and Mr. Short agreed the Commission
78 could support without holding up the application and discuss that after. Mr. Koff noted TPL were
79 meeting with the Select Board next week.

80
81 MOTION: Mr. Short motioned to authorize Mr. Koff to sign the letter of support to pursue the grant.
82 Mr. Welch seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

83
84 5. Committee Reports

85
86 a. Property Management

87

88 Ms. Murphy reported the trail sign was damaged at Brickyard and Parks and Recreation put it back
89 out.

90 b. Trails

91
92 Ms. Murphy reported the work on the powerline was ongoing and should go through the end of
93 January. Mr. Koff noted the trail is still closed.

94
95 Ms. Murphy reported leaf blowing activity in the town forest, which is prohibited. She noted
96 concerns with trail erosion and noise and indicated the land use policy is on the website and
97 Conservation manages that property and it is up to them to decide. Mr. Short noted that he
98 believed whoever did it knew it was prohibited and Toby has attempted to make people aware. Ms.
99 Murphy noted she would provide more background information on why it is prohibited.

100
101 c. Outreach Events

102
103 Mr. Koff would like to schedule the Full Moon Snow Shoe event for February.

104
105 Mr. Koff recommended scheduling a planning meeting in January for the next Alewife Festival.

106
107 Ms. Murphy noted Mr. Welch is working on the birding event. Mr. Welch indicated the events could
108 be seasonal, in winter starting on January 1st and running through March 21st and start again in April.
109 People can post their results on the Commission's Facebook page. Ms. Murphy recommended
110 having some prizes and will post it after the holidays.

111
112 d. Other Committee Reports (River Study, Sustainability, Energy/CPAC, Tree, CC Roundtable)

113
114 Mr. Koff reported there was a presentation at the Word Barn last Wednesday with Newfields
115 concerning the proposed community forest which would be jointly managed. He noted they
116 discussed the benefits to the town in conserving the property. Mr. Short agreed they made good
117 arguments, not just for mountain biking.

118
119 Ms. Murphy noted there was a donation of 8-10 spruce seedlings from Mr. Short's mother-in-law.
120 He planted them near the Trestle parking lot on the slope which hasn't had anything growing since
121 the logging operation.

122
123 Ms. Murphy noted that Mr. Welch offered to help do the LCIP report.

124
125 Mr. Koff reported that there was a meeting regarding the donation of the 23 Water Street property
126 and Seacoast online wrote an article. There was a public hearing and will be another next week. A
127 design committee will be formed. Mr. Whitehouse is donating some time to the project. Ms.
128 Murphy noted the Select Board will vote to accept the donation at their December 18th meeting. Mr.
129 Koff noted that Mr. Champion expressed his support but offered concerns about long term
130 maintenance costs with Conservation and Parks & Recreation already having a long list of property to
131 maintain like Raynes, which has not been discussed yet.

132 Ms. Murphy reported there will be a presentation tomorrow (Wednesday 12/13) from 6:30 to 7:30 at
133 Town Hall concerning the downtown pedestrian and parking analysis and an open house from 7:30 to
134 8:30.

135
136 Ms. Murphy reported there will be a Board Commission Celebration held across the street on
137 Thursday 12/14 from 4 PM to 6:30 PM and the Select Board and Town Administration invite the
138 Commission to attend and thank you for your work throughout the year. She noted that Ms.
139 Belanger sent her holiday wishes.

140
141 6. Approval of Minutes

- 142
143 • November 10, 2023 Meeting

144
145 Ms. Crepeau recommended an edit to line 102.

146
147 MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to approve the November 10, 2023 Minutes, as amended. Mr. Short
148 seconded the motion. A vote was taken: Mr. Mattera and Mr. Madison abstained, the motion
149 passed 5-0-2.

150
151 7. Correspondence

152
153 Ms. Murphy reported two letters of support were received regarding the Rugg property from Ray
154 Southworth who included pictures of black racer and spotted turtle he saw in the area. Nancy Belanger
155 received one from Janet Stevens.

156
157 Mr. Koff noted he received email correspondence regarding the Rugg property also.

158
159 8. Next Meeting; Date Scheduled 1/9/24, Submission Deadline 12/29/23

160
161 6. Adjournment

162
163 MOTION: Mr. Koff moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 PM seconded by Mr. Short. A vote was
164 taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

165
166 Respectfully submitted,

167
168 Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary
169 Via Exeter TV