

Exeter Conservation Commission

March 12, 2024

Novak Room

10 Front Street

7:00 PM

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, Connor Madison, Keith Whitehouse, Alternate Michelle Crepeau (remotely), Alternate Bill Campbell, and Alternate Don Clement

Staff Present: Kristen Murphy, Conservation and Sustainability Planner

Mr. Koff called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, introduced the members and activated Alternate Don Clement.

2. Public Comment

There was no one from the public present.

Action Items

1. Draft application for urbanization exemption under RSA 483:B12 from the state shoreland regulations in the downtown area (*Dave Sharples, Town Planner*)

Town Planner Dave Sharples presented a request for a recommendation for the Town's application for urbanization exemption from the state shoreland regulations under RSA 483:B12. He noted the Select Board would make the request to DES for the shoreland area along the Squamscott River downtown, shown on the plan by red hatch marks. He indicated the shoreland regulations cover 250' from the high-water mark and as most of the area shown is developed and has no vegetated buffer it would eliminate an unnecessary step. There are three town-owned parks. Mr. Sharples noted that he brought the request before the Planning Board and received their recommendation to support the application.

Mr. Campbell asked if this would change any regulations and Ms. Murphy indicated it is not for any work done in the water. Mr. Sharples noted the exemption was for an indefinite period, but the state could always change its laws. He showed the 1884 map of the same area which appeared more dense.

Mr. Clement stated he was not in favor because the urban area needs more protection and noted the nitrogen and phosphorous loads and runoff in Great Bay and recent heavy flooding which has affected

the downtown area attributed to sea level and climate change. Mr. Sharples noted the state shoreland regs do not add any protection to this area. It is designed to protect natural resources where in this case none exist.

Mr. Mattera agreed with Mr. Sharples that this is a tool that doesn't offer any protection in this area where there are no vegetated buffers and is a wasted process.

Mr. Campbell asked if an applicant filed with the state would they come before the Commission and Ms. Murphy indicated applications may be seen if they accompany other applications coming before the Commission such as wetlands, but applicants would not come to the Commission for shoreland.

Mr. Koff asked about the effect of additional building and Ms. Murphy indicated flood plain regulations would still apply. Mr. Sharples noted the increase in freeboard from 1' to 2' above flood for structures within the flood plain.

Mr. Whitehouse noted a half dozen or so dead ash trees by the corner of the library and asked if those could be removed. Mr. Sharples noted that would fall under dead or diseased. He recommended getting a letter from an arborist and not pulling the roots out.

Mr. Koff motioned that after reviewing the application the Commission is in support of this application. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. A vote was taken, Mr. Clement voted nay, the motion passed 6-1-0.

2. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

Ms. Murphy provided an update on the \$20,000 Moose Plate grant. She noted that she submitted the paperwork to DNCR to receive the \$20,000 for the work which has been contracted. She indicated some difficulty with L-Chip who would do a site visit and approve the additional funds. There was no indication from them that there could be any limit to the final payment after staff review and having documentation feels that it would not be appropriate. The Board of Directors will review it and will hopefully sort it out in a week or so. She indicated the Home Town grant was not received.

Mr. Campion indicated that getting funding should be a priority. Ms. Murphy noted that while there was a lot of support for the project this year there were several vacancies in public works to be filled. Ms. Murphy indicated that perhaps the Raynes Farm Stewardship Committee should get involved. Mr. Campbell agreed.

85 b. Trails

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87 i. Eversource Powerline Work Update

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89 Ms. Murphy reported that Eversource has finished their work and the trails are open. Mr. Short
90 noted some minor spots need to be tied into the main artery and a rough plank bridge could be
91 put in where there is a dip. He indicated Eversource did a good job with restoration.

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93 Mr. Madison asked if the beaver deceiver was working and Mr. Short noted the water level has
94 stayed down.

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96 ii. Gate Stewards

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98 Ms. Murphy indicated gate stewards were needed on Linden Street.
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100 c. Outreach Events

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102 i. Exploring Exeter Collaborative with Parks 3 PM 2/27, 3/27, 4/24 and 5/22

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104 Ms. Murphy indicated there was a good turnout at the Oaklands Walk with Mr. Welch and
105 Recreation. The next walk will be on 3/27.

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107 ii. [Heard Bird Contest Ongoing](#)

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109 Ms. Murphy noted the contest was going through the end of the month.
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111 iii. Seed Library Update

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113 Ms. Murphy reported the seed library is up and running and there is a Pollinator Plant
114 grant for \$100-\$200 available and a display at the library about that.
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116 iv. Sustainable Film Festival

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118 Ms. Murphy noted the student did a good job and they got some donations from Helpsy.
119 She noted she would like to work with someone to pick out a film so that Conservation
120 can do one tied in with the rain barrels.
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122 v. Earth Day Town Wide Clean Up 4/20-4/22

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124 Ms. Murphy noted that supplies can be picked up at Public Works including vests, gloves
125 and bags. Trash can be taken to the Transfer Station or picked up. There will be a table
126 at Town Hall on April 20th
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vi. Alewife Festival

Mr. Mattera indicated he will be present. Ms. Murphy noted that Fish & Game will be there and Kathy Corson will be doing the Healthy Laws/Clean Water presentation. Mr. Glowacky is reaching out to Center for Wildlife to see if they will come and there may be a charge for that. Ms. Murphy noted she submitted the application for use of Founder's Park.

vii. Citizen Science Project - – River Herring Migration Count

Ms. Murphy reported Fish and Game are looking for volunteers to count the herring on Great Bridge. Each count would be for ten minutes and they are looking to cover seven days for two months straight, nine times per day. Fish and Game will count a portion and have a training session t/b/d. Interested volunteers should contact Fish & Game.

viii. February Full Moon Snowshoe 2/22

Mr. Koff reported there was no snow and other than himself and Mr. Welch no one participated.

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

i. Public Presentation on Pickpocket Dam Feasibility Study 2/27 at 6:30 PM

Mr. Clement noted ERSIAC will discuss the presentation at their next meeting and that there are four potential seats open to sit on that Committee.

ii. Window Dressers

Ms. Murphy reported the Energy & Sustainability Committee is looking for volunteers to help with building weatherization inserts. The inserts save 20% on utility costs and are reusable. They are hoping to build in January.

3. Approval of Minutes – February 13, 2024 Meeting

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to approve the February 13, 2024 meeting minutes, as amended. Mr. Short seconded the motion. A vote was taken, Mr. Clement and Mr. Madison abstained, the motion passed 5-0-2.

4. Correspondence

5. Next Meeting; Date Scheduled 4/9/24, Submission Deadline 3/29/24

175 6. Adjournment

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177 MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 PM. Mr. Campion seconded the
178 motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

179 Respectfully submitted,

180 Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary

181 Via Exeter TV, Zoom ID 860 2106 8084