

Exeter Conservation Commission
March 12, 2024
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, Nick Champion, Connor Madison, Keith Whitehouse, Alternate Michelle Crepeau, Alternate Bill Campbell, and Alternate Don Clement

Staff Present: Kristen Murphy, Conservation and Sustainability Planner and Town Planner Dave Sharples

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

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

47

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

50

51 Mr. Campbell asked if an applicant filed with the state would they come before the Commission and Ms.
52 Murphy indicated applications may be seen if they accompany wetlands applications coming before the
53 Commission but there is no requirement for shoreland applications to come before the Conservation
54 Commission, ESRLAC reviews those.

55

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

59

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

63

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

67

68 2. Committee Reports

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70 a. Property Management

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72 Ms. Murphy provided an update on the \$20,000 Moose Plate grant. She noted that she submitted
73 the paperwork to DNCR to receive the \$20,000 to enter into an additional contract. At the 50%-
74 mark L-Chip needs to conduct a site visit and review the paperwork. The Board of Directors will
75 review it and will hopefully sort it out in a week or so. She indicated the Home Town grant was not
76 received.

77

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

82

83

84 b. Trails

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86 i. Eversource Powerline Work Update

87

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

91

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

94

95 ii. Gate Stewards

96

97 Ms. Murphy indicated gate stewards were needed on Linden Street.

98

99 c. Outreach Events

100

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

102

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

105

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

107

108 Ms. Murphy noted the contest was going through the end of the month.

109

110 iii. Seed Library Update

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

114

115 iv. Sustainable Film Festival

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117 Ms. Murphy noted the student did a good job and they got some donations from Helpsy.
118 She noted she would like to work with someone to pick out a film so that Conservation
119 can do one tied in with the rain barrels.

120

121 v. Earth Day Town Wide Clean Up 4/20-4/22

122

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

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129 vi. Alewife Festival

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

136

137 vii. Citizen Science Project -- River Herring Migration Count

138

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

143

144 viii. February Full Moon Snowshoe 2/22

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

148

149

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

151

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

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

156

157 ii. Window Dressers

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

162

163 3. Approval of Minutes – February 13, 2024 Meeting

164

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

168

169 4. Correspondence

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

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173

174 6. Adjournment

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176 MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 PM. Mr. Campion seconded the
177 motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

178 Respectfully submitted,

179 Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary

180 Via Exeter TV, Zoom ID 860 2106 8084