

Exeter Conservation Commission
March 11, 2025
Nowak 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: Chair Dave Short, Vice-Chair Conor Madison, Andrew Koff, Trevor Mattera, Nick Campion, Keith Whitehouse, Valorie Fanger, Alternate Kyle Welch, Alternate Bill Campbell, Alternate Sean Torrez, and Alternate Don Clement (remotely).

Staff Present: Kristen Murphy, Conservation and Sustainability Planner

Chair Short called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and introduced the members.

2. Public Comment

Chair Short asked if there were any public comments, outside of agenda items.

Action Items

1. Morrisette Property Pollinator Garden (Ally Whitesell)

Ms. Whitesell introduced herself noting she is a senior at Great Bay Charter School, and this will be her second pollinator garden. She described the garden she had done at Great Bay Discovery Center. She proposed three to six types of plants for the garden at the Morrisette property and described the certification process she would need sometime in June before graduating.

Ms. Whitesell reviewed plant types for early, mid and late season, soil types, maintenance, and height. She indicated there would be interpretive signage. Ms. Whitesell requested support from the Commission to fund the materials for the project while she would be responsible for labor. She indicated students at the Charter School were interested in starting a garden club.

Chair Short offered to donate \$100 of materials from his business understanding that she may need to source materials from a few places. Mr. Whitehouse offered to cut back the area for her.

MOTION: Mr. Mattera motioned to authorize expenditure of up to \$250 from the Conservation Land Administration budget for the pollinator garden at the Morrisette property. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

44 2. Standard Dredge and Fill application from the Town of Exeter for water, drainage and road
45 improvements in the Westside Drive neighborhood (Tax Map 74 and 81). Various lots, see application
46 (Dan Rochette, Underwood Engineering)

47

48 Chair Short read the public hearing notice out loud.

49

50 Dan Rochette of Underwood Engineering presented the proposal on behalf of the Town. He described
51 the area where the work would be done which has an entrance off Route 111 and pointed out
52 jurisdictional wetlands shown with green lines. He described the existing five outfalls throughout the
53 neighborhood including the drainage system to the river on the left of the plan, the lower outfalls and
54 the top of the plan which is the northerly side. He recommended eliminating outfalls 3 and 4. The pipes
55 for 3 and 4 would be cut back and capped off, pulled back and left in place.

56

57 Mr. Rochette described details of the work including placing of a manhole, pipe outlet and head wall.
58 One pipe would be replaced completely and there would be stone fill as needed. There would be turf
59 restoration with either conservation or wetlands mix.

60

61 Mr. Rochette described the most significant impact with outfall 2 which would have a small pipe
62 replaced with a 15" pipe with a headwall, a lower invest, level swale and corrected grading.

63

64 Mr. Rochette described the inlet side work to replace an existing corrugated metal pipe with a plastic
65 pipe, new headwall and stabilization and clean up.

66

67 Ms. Murphy recommended use of the wetland mix in the wetland areas.

68

69 Mr. Madison asked about rip rap at the headwall for outfall 5. Mr. Rochette described use of rounded
70 off stone fill.

71

72 Mr. Campbell asked about treatment before the river and Mr. Rochette described catch basins with 3'
73 sumps existing. Mr. Campbell asked how flow would get to outfall 1 and Mr. Rochette indicated the
74 pipe is sunk deeper and the gravity drainpipe with outfall 2 gaining depth.

75

76 Ms. Murphy commented on the reduction of impervious coverage with the pavement of the road width
77 narrowing to 28.' Mr. Rochette noted a reduction of mid 40% with the narrowing which will become
78 lawn and yard for property owners. He noted there was a public meeting with the neighbors.

79

80 Mr. Mattera and Mr. Whitehouse indicated they would be recusing themselves, as they live in the area.

81

82 Mr. Koff asked about the front stormwater and Mr. Rochette indicated there was funding with
83 stormwater SRF with the state who did a report. He noted groundwater elevation was so high he is
84 limited as to what he can do from an infiltration standpoint. He noted deep sump catch basins were
85 being provided.

86

87 Mr. Koff asked about the material for outfall 1 and river migration over time. Mr. Rochette noted he
88 hasn't looked at the impact of bank scouring on the outside corner. There will be a headwall, and the
89 rest remains undisturbed and shouldn't change conditions much.

90

91 Ms. Murphy asked about the flow after reduction of impervious surface and Mr. Rochette noted even
92 with the reduction of impervious areas from a calculation standpoint with consolidation of the outfalls,
93 he can't say it is reduced to a single outfall. With individual outfalls he can't say that. The goal is to
94 convey surface runoff.

95

96 Mr. Koff asked if it would be maintained by the Department of Public Works and Ms. Murphy noted
97 there are drainage easements which are town infrastructure, and the town is required to maintain
98 them.

99

100 Mr. Madison asked about the pipe going underwater when it floods. Mr. Rochette described the
101 elevations and noted the pipe would only be submerged during significant storm events. Mr. Madison
102 commented about there being wood chip berms behind outfall 3 and 4 and noted the silt fence along
103 the riverbank.

104

105 Mr. Whitehouse asked, as a resident, when the project would start, and Mr. Rochette explained the
106 bidding process and work with NH Department of Environmental Services for final design review and
107 was optimistic the project would start this summer.

108

109 Chair Short noted that alternates Michelle Crepeau and Kyle Welch would be active to replace Mr.
110 Whitehouse and Mr. Mattera for this hearing.

111

112 MOTION: Chair Short motioned that the Commission reviewed the memo from NH DES and reviewed
113 the application and has no objection to the application as presented. Mr. Madison seconded the
114 motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

115

116 Mr. Whitehouse and Mr. Mattera returned and the alternates were inactivated.

117

118 3. Treasurer's Report (Drew Koff)

119

120 Mr. Koff reported the budget is \$9,796. The Conservation Fund has a balance of \$154,000 with
121 \$100,000 obligated for the Ryder property and \$50,000 for Raynes. The Stewardship Fund has \$4,000
122 for monitoring at 80 Epping Road and one other parcel. He reported the Forestry Fund has a balance of
123 approximately \$12,000 from proceeds of harvest which can only be used for forestry maintenance. He
124 noted examples such as invasive and insect control and referenced the fund guidebook/RSA. Ms.
125 Murphy noted an example of a town road or landing used to do the harvesting. She noted the Forestry
126 Fund is only for the town forest and special parcels designated at town meeting, mostly Henderson
127 Swasey and some of the Oaklands.

128

129 Mr. Koff indicated there was a proposal for chemical treatment which received concern from neighbors
130 about the environmental impact. Ms. Murphy noted there was a lot of hand pulling and Burning Bush,

131 and Garlic Mustard in areas. Chair Short noted Bittersweet could be chipped, it is choking the trees.
132 Ms. Murphy noted Black Swallowwort was seen by the parking lot at Henderson Swasey. Mr. Torres
133 asked about the chemical treatment and Ms. Murphy noted it is a spot treatment not broadcast
134 spraying and it needs to be done by a licensed contractor unless it is the landowner, which is hard to say
135 when it is the town. She noted there was some invasive treatment a couple of years ago at the Elliot
136 property adjacent to the Oaklands which was built into the easement.

137

138 4. 2025 Annual Work Plan & Budget Planning

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140 Mr. Koff noted the Commission would go over on mowing and the cost would have to be pulled from
141 other areas. He indicated there was possibly stewardship funds from Great Bay if the project has a
142 minimum cost of \$2,000. Ms. Murphy questioned if the cost can be combined, and mowing costs offset
143 the town match. She will bring more information to the next meeting. She noted the cost of brush
144 removal at the Irvine Property is \$1,700. The application is due April 17th.

145

146 Mr. Koff noted there are funds for training and maybe interns.

147

148 The Commission discussed 503B status versus 501C3 status as umbrellas. Ms. Murphy recommended
149 getting advice from a tax attorney. She noted the town adopted a donation policy. The Commission is
150 able to accept donations to the Fund up to \$10,000 and then has to go before the Select Board for
151 approval of higher amounts. She noted there were some grants for non profits.

152

153 The Commission discussed the cost for the stairway at Raynes and waiting for the location of the fire
154 suppression system and access to the electrical panel.

155

156 5. 2025 Trail Committee Meeting

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158 Kyle Welch and Sean Torres have been cataloguing the bridges at Henderson Swasey and Oaklands and
159 their state of repair. Mr. Torres noted there is quite a lot of stonework and recommended having a
160 foreman oversee the volunteer work. He noted that tractor services were offered at a cost of \$200. Ms.
161 Murphy noted that replacement in kind is considered maintenance, but any expansion or demolition
162 should go before the Commission. There could be three commission members and two others forming
163 the group. Ms. Murphy noted there was a trail plan done in 2009. Mr. Torres indicated it should be
164 updated every ten years. Ms. Murphy recommended tracking the budget component and volunteer
165 hours.

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167 6. Committee Reports

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169 a. Property Management

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171 i. Raynes Farm

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173 Ms. Murphy noted the ADA parking on the south side of the barn is part of the Town's L-CHIP
174 match. DPW would be doing the grading around the perimeter and stone dust pathway to

175 benches. Chair Short noted he was strongly opposed to using that area because of safety.
176 Going in is not a problem but exiting is unsafe. He requested a different location. Ms. Crepeau
177 noted that the lower level has to be accessible. Ms. Murphy indicated the steps to modify the
178 contract with L-CHIP are not simple and need to be done timely. Chair Short noted they need to
179 do it so that Stephen will get paid when he is completely done.

180
181 Mr. Campion recommended reviewing the land management document and coming up with a
182 solution.

183
184 Ms. Murphy recommended the sign be located in the back parking lot on the kiosk. The cost
185 would be approximately \$170.

186
187 MOTION: Mr. Whitehouse motioned to expend up to \$170 for the sign and the Stewardship
188 Committee would install it. Chair Short seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in
189 favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

190
191 ii. McDonnell Easement

192
193 Ms. Murphy reported that a property owner at the McDonnell easement area has concerns
194 about geocaching and with people parking in her driveway.

195
196 Ms. Murphy asked for volunteers to open and close the gate. Diane closes the gate each night
197 so volunteers are needed to open at 8 AM and can let Ms. Murphy know if they are interested.

198
199 b. Outreach Events

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201 i. Full Moon Snowshoe February Hike – February 12 and Hike on – March 14th

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203 Mr. Whitehouse indicated the event was successful with 51 people turning out. Mr.
204 Whitehouse noted that he and his wife paid for the porta potty expense but did not think one
205 would be needed for the next event on March 14th which takes about two hours. There could
206 be another in April. Mr. Whitehouse recommended use would be the key to maintaining the
207 barn. He recommended having a pumpkin patch and education and displays in the barn. Mr.
208 Campion noted there is a form to submit ideas and to describe the theme as educational,
209 agricultural, nature, etc. and type of displays, animals, trees, etc. He reminded to be sensitive to
210 the mowing and nesting birds.

211
212 Mr. Whitehouse noted the Full Moon hike was covered by Exeter TV and made the news report.

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214 ii. Hike Exeter Challenge – Kyle Welch

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216 Mr. Welch reported three hikers received their Hike Exeter sticker and there has been a lot of
217 activity on the Facebook site.

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219 iv. 34th Annual Spring Tree Program

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221 Ms. Murphy noted this will be the 34th year of the saplings being given to 5th Graders at the
222 Lincoln Street School.

223

224 MOTION: Mr. Whitehouse motioned to approve the expenditure of up to \$458 for the spring
225 tree program. Mr. Mattera seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the
226 motion passed 7-0-0.

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228 v. Alewife Festival

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230 Mr. Koff noted a planning meeting is coming up. Ms. Murphy noted she sent information to
231 past participants and May 10th is the preferred date.

232

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

234

235 Mr. Whitehouse indicated he would be interested in serving on the Stewardship Committee.

236

237 MOTION: Chair Short motioned to appoint Keith Whitehouse to the Raynes Stewardship
238 Committee. Mr. Madison seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion
239 passed 7-0-0.

240

241 Ms. Murphy noted the Sustainability Advisory Committee is interested in having a Styrofoam
242 collection event on April 26th and they are working out the details.

243

244 Ms. Murphy reported NH Fish and Game is offering training for the citizen's science counting fish
245 project at Great Bridge. Volunteers can sign up for the training at the library on April 19th at 10 AM.

246

247 Ms. Murphy announced that the Ryder property has been signed off on by all towns and is about to
248 close.

249

250 Ms. Murphy noted the Tree Committee will be coming to the next meeting.

251

252 7. Approval of Minutes

253 February 11, 2025 Minutes

254

255 Mr. Koff recommended an edit.

256

257 MOTION: Mr. Madison motioned to approve the February 11, 2025 minutes, as amended. Chair Short
258 seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

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260 8. Correspondence

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262 a. No Dogs sign at McDonnell Conservation Area

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Chair Short recommended purchasing a couple of inexpensive signs.

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to approve the expenditure of up to \$50 for no dogs signs. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

Other Business

Next Meeting: 4/8/25, Submission Deadline: 3/28/25

9. Adjournment

Mr. Whitehouse motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary

Via Exeter TV

Zoom Webinar ID: 863 1945 5010