

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.

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

Chair Short read the public hearing notice out loud.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3. Treasurer's Report (Drew Koff)

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

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

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

#### 4. 2025 Annual Work Plan & Budget Planning

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

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

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

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

#### 5. 2025 Trail Committee Meeting

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

#### 6. Committee Reports

##### a. Property Management

##### i. Raynes Farm

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

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

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

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

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

#### ii. McDonnell Easement

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

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

### b. Outreach Events

#### i. Full Moon Snowshoe February Hike – February 12 and Hike on – March 14<sup>th</sup>

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

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

#### ii. Hike Exeter Challenge – Kyle Welch

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

iv. 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Tree Program

Ms. Murphy noted this will be the 34<sup>th</sup> year of the saplings being given to 5<sup>th</sup> Graders at the Lincoln Street School.

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

v. Alewife Festival

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. Approval of Minutes

February 11, 2025 Minutes

Mr. Koff recommended an edit.

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

8. Correspondence

a. No Dogs sign at McDonnell Conservation Area

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264 Chair Short recommended purchasing a couple of inexpensive signs.  
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266 MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to approve the expenditure of up to \$50 for no dogs signs. Mr.  
267 Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.  
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269 **Other Business**

270  
271 Next Meeting: 4/8/25, Submission Deadline: 3/28/25  
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273 **9. Adjournment**

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275 Mr. Whitehouse motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 PM.  
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277 Respectfully submitted,

278 Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary  
279 Via Exeter TV  
280

281 Zoom Webinar ID: 863 1945 5010