

Exeter Conservation Commission

April 8, 2025

Nowak 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: Chair Dave Short, Vice-Chair Conor Madison, Andrew Koff, Trevor Mattera, Keith Whitehouse, Valorie Fanger, Alternate Michele Crepeau, and Alternate Sean Torrez

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. Tree Committee Report (Eileen Flockhart)

Mrs. Flockhart from the Tree Committee reported that the Exeter had been a Tree City for the sixth year and received a growth award. Chair Short asked the criteria for the application, and she noted the size of the community, the amount spent per resident, protection, planting, maintenance, volunteers, education, community connection and involvement. She thanked Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Kristen Murphy, schools and their green teams. Mrs. Flockhart noted they had a table set up at the March election and 14 people signed up to help with the tree survey which can be done on their phone. Residents can help identify trees in public spaces and neighborhood parks, report any trees with issues, and trees that need replacing. The goal is to plant 8-12 trees, some at the new playground next fall. Residents will see the cloned disease-free Elm trees planted along the river with little black collars. Mrs. Flockhart said she would like to see less asphalt and more trees. Ms. Murphy reported that Raynes Farm Stewardship Committee plans to plant a tree at Raynes Farm, and it will be part of the bench and barn completion celebration. Chair Short noted that Public Works does a great job with planting and know what they are doing, which is always a concern of his. Chair Short noted there could be a commercial program to award business owners for doing a good job with planting and maintaining trees such as getting rid of what he called mulch volcanoes.

2. Site Plan Review and Wetland Conditional Use Permit for a 6,200 SF. addition for Dade Auto Holdings Realty Trust (d/b/a Volvo Cars of Exeter) at 140 Portsmouth Avenue (Tax Map Parcel #52-108 and #51-1. Planning Board Case 25-2 (Corey Belden, Altus)

Chair Short read out loud the public hearing notice.

Corey Belden of Altus Engineering presented the wetlands conditional use permit application. He noted there is 6,200 SF in the back in a paved area and no increase to impervious surface area on the site planned. In 2020 or so they did a parking lot expansion and stormwater treatment pond. There will be an increase in flow to the pond from roof drains from the addition and new building. He described 165 SF of disturbance in the wetland buffer to remove the 6" drain line and put in something larger. He was unsure if it was exempt but noted potentially 210 SF of disturbance of existing pavement to regrade the parking lot, all within the 75' buffer, none in the 40' no-cut buffer. The existing facility has solar extending to the new roof of the addition.

Mr. Koff asked where the stormwater from the parking lot goes today, and Mr. Belden pointed out the areas on the plan noting that the back area sheet flows to the woods. Mr. Koff asked if the size of the pond needed to be increased. and Mr. Belden indicated that hydrocad modeling was done and the pond is pretty deep and can handle the additional flow. The outlet structure will be raised 1.'

MOTION: Chair Short motioned after reviewing the wetland CUP application the Commission is in support of the application as proposed. Mr. Mattera seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

3. Event Request for Raynes Barn for a Farm to Table event in May 2025 (Ben Anderson)

Ben Anderson of the Word Barn presented the event request to have a farm to table dinner at Raynes facilitated by a Concord couple with a food truck. Mr. Madison asked if there was a fee and Mr. Anderson indicated the fee for the dinner would be between \$50-\$90 and proceeds would go to Raynes Farm through the Commission. There would be acoustic fiddle music. Ms. Murphy noted they would have to secure the appropriate permits.

Mr. Whitehouse asked how many people would attend and how the event would be promoted. Mr. Anderson indicated 30 people at a long communal table. He indicated the Word Barn would promote the event through social media.

MOTION: Chair Short motioned that if all the required permits were obtained, that the Commission support the event request as proposed. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

4. 2025 Trail Committee Meeting

Mr. Torres reported that the Committee would like to get going with the trail work in May or June and will put together a list of projects for the next meeting. He noted six regions with needs were identified. Mr. Torres noted that the road at Oaklands from the parking lot to Newfields Road needs some material and he has found some fieldstone that could be donated. Ms. Murphy noted that projects would need to come before the Commission for approval if the trail were realigned or there were a new crossing,

the state permit by notification would also need to be filed and take about five days. Mr. Torres noted he would like to have a stockpile area for stone. Chair Short noted there is an area in the parking lot facing the trail on the left side which is open and ideal for the stockpile. Mr. Torres recommended 6-7 stone water bars by the culvert. Chair Short recommended he provide a few photos to the Commission at the next meeting of examples.

Mr. Torres noted there are companies that will sponsor a work day. He noted a bobcat could be brought in to help with moving material. Ms. Murphy noted the deed language allows for vehicles to be used to maintain trails. Mr. Whitehouse cautioned that the equipment not bring invasives into the area.

Chair Short reported that Tobey posted in Fort Rock Riders and Trail Forks that the trails would be closed due to rain and mud, to biking until it dries out.

5. Letter of support for the GBPP Stewardship Grant

Ms. Murphy reviewed the grant application for the Irvine property for mowing and \$1,700 for invasives removal.

MOTION: Chair Short motioned to authorize the chair to apply for the Great Bay Protection Stewardship Grant. Mr. Koff seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

6. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

i. Raynes Farm Stewardship Committee Meeting Report: ADA parking, pollinator garden, pumpkins with LSS

Mr. Whitehouse reported that the Committee met last Monday and picked a spot for the ADA parking spots (4) and will get DPW out to take a look. It made need grading. This will complete the L-Chip match so they can pay Steven. Mr. Whitehouse reported that they picked a spot for the pollinator garden on the Exeter side of the barn and will pull out the poison ivy. Mr. Whitehouse noted that they are working with the green team to plant a pumpkin patch and will till up the Newfields side and harvest the pumpkins in the fall. Mr. Koff asked about doing the pumpkin toss again.

Mr. Whitehouse noted that a spot was picked for the service berry tree on the hill.

Ms. Murphy noted this was the 60th anniversary of the Conservation Commission and recommended that someone involve Mr. Campbell with the history component and maybe the bench, tree, and Styrofoam recycling unit could be part of the anniversary celebration.

MOTION: Chair Short motioned to support the proposed ADA parking, pollinator garden, pumpkin patch and tree to go on top of the knoll. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

7. Outreach Events

i. Potential Full Hike at Raynes, April 10th

Mr. Whitehouse indicated that he was not available on the 10th. The Commission agreed not to have the hike in April. Ms. Murphy noted that Mr. Campion put together an event idea form and she will share that with the Commission.

ii. Hike Exeter Challenge – Kyle Welch - Tabled

iii. Alewife Festival

Mr. Koff indicated there was a planning meeting. He will do the groundwater modeling and rainscape and bring a tent and table. Ms. Crepeau will contact RJs about bringing battery powered lawn equipment. Ms. Murphy noted that she has the educational materials.

iv. 4/15 Town wide Trash Clean Up

Ms. Murphy noted the table will be downtown to pick up supplies or participants can pick them up at public works. She noted public works will pick up items if the location is provided.

v. 4/19 Exeter High School Trail Day, 9:30-11:30

Ms. Murphy noted that the High School has an easement on the property and trail maintenance is needed. Mr. Mattera indicated he is available. The time is 9:30 to 11:30 and they will meet at the High School by the tennis courts.

vi. 4/22 SST Morrisette Clean Up (rain date 4/23)

Ms. Murphy reported that the Seacoast School of Technology will be doing trail clean up at Morrisette trail. They will likely pick the garlic mustard along the route from the YMCA to the river and skate park.

vii. 4/26 Styrofoam Collection Event 9 AM to 11 AM

Ms. Murphy reported that a Styrofoam collection event is happening on the 26th from 9-11 AM and collected Styrofoam will be brought to Gilford. The event is open to any community. Ms. Murphy reported that the warrant article to purchase a densifier for the town was approved in March by 76% of the voters and will be contingent on receiving the \$50,000 grant.

viii. 5/31 Great Bay Trout Unlimited River Festival at the YMCA (9-12 clean up Little River/Morrisette Clean Up 12-4) request for CC Collaboration and Tabling

Ms. Murphy reported that Great Bay Trout Unlimited will be having a clean up event at Morrisette and adults will have waders to wear to clean up the river area. They want to know if the Commission with partner to promote the event.

The Commission discussed the difficulty of removing some of the large downed trees in the river which block the route for kayakers. They can remove sections but must slowly release impounded water.

The Commission supported partnering to promote the event.

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

Ms. Murphy reported that the Energy Committee will still be doing the Window Dressers program for window inserts. Chair Short asked if they would lose their funding with the budget cuts from the state and she indicated no, they are a non-profit not dependent on state funding.

7. Approval of Minutes

March 11, 2025 Minutes

Ms. Crepeau and Chair Short recommended edits.

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

Next Meeting: 5/13/25, Submission Deadline: 5/2/25

9. Adjournment

MOTION: Chair Short motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 PM. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary
Via Exeter TV

Zoom Webinar ID: 822 0314 1636