

Exeter Conservation Commission
August 12, 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 Connor Madison, Nick Campion, Keith Whitehouse, Alternate Michele Crepeau, Alternate Kyle Welch, and Select Board Representative Dan Chartrand

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

There was no public comment outside of agenda items.

Action Items

1. Wetland Dredge and Fill application for the Bank Stabilization along the Exeter River at River Run at Exeter, Tax Map 104/79 (Tracy Degnan-RCCD, George Holt-Aries Eng.)

Chair Short read out loud the public hearing notice.

George Holt of Aries Eng. Presented the project for bank stabilization along the Exeter River. He noted it was similar to the project approved in 2023 by Jones & Beach which proposed gabion baskets to stabilize three areas where his proposal is for four areas. They proposed bedding rip rap and this proposal is for sheet piling wall in the ground flush to the bed of the river. It will allow a work area. He showed the four areas on the plan and noted erosion is threatening the mobile homes, he showed the area by activity center which had work recently and a detention pond. He noted this would add Area C adjacent to a couple of properties that are threatened. He described the pockets for soil to allow vegetation to grow and a cross section. He noted the structure would be anchored in place. He provided copies of the Geotechnical Report. He noted photos from 1962 show the river has migrated 30' toward homes in certain areas.

Mr. Madison asked about the footpath in the 2023 proposal and Mr. Holt indicated no walkways. He showed the proposed ramp coming down to the work area. He noted Area B will be stabilized where it currently is. He will send photos he took of Area C today.

Mr. Holt described Area D and noted concerns with a gully, and some discharging. Mr. Whitehouse noted three intersections discharge to the gully as well as snow plowing and described the gully expanding over the past 12 years. Mr. Holt noted there is some homework to be done there and that Tracy is working on a GIS to show infrastructure.

Mr. Holt described other permits including historic review and Army Corp. He had a site walk with Eben Lewis of DES and submitted the application at the beginning of the month.

Ms. Murphy noted due to the increase from the CUP approved in 2023 he would have to come back. The application is on the website and would be presented to Conservation for a recommendation before going to the Planning Board for approval.

Ms. Murphy asked about environmentally friendly alternatives to the plastic mesh erosion control using a more natural material. Mr. Holt noted he can look at that and explained the longevity of plastic as about 75 years versus steel which is 100.

Mr. Holt described 18,000 SF of impact. There would be no decrease to riverbank capacity.

Chair Short asked if there would be further erosion and Mr. Holt said yes, it is a natural geological purpose and there are other areas not encroaching on dwellings.

Chair Short opened public comment at 7:29 PM.

Susan Hanson of 137 Linden Street showed her home on the plan and expressed concerns with the dam, flooding and erosion.

Wendy of 135 Linden Street noted she and her husband Fred had concerns for wildlife, the dam removal, and flooding the mobile homes at Sherwood.

Mr. Holt noted they are going to be protecting four small areas and that will not influence the hydrology of the river or the storage area for flooding. The intent is to keep buildings from going into the water.

Chair Short noted the scope is slightly larger but a huge improvement over what was initially improved.

Chair Short motioned to send a letter to DES stating that the Commission has reviewed the application and has no objection as proposed. Mr. Madison seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Murphy noted the Pickpocket Dam Feasibility Study was available on the town website and has no impact to this area being discussed here.

2. Expense Approvals

Chair Short motioned to approve reimbursement to Kristen Murphy of \$190.05 for trail paint to come from the Conservation Land Administration account. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Budget Planning

The Board discussed the proposed 2026 budget and donations to ESERLAC and SELT. Ms. Murphy noted that typically they provide \$150 to each of those and \$850 to NHACC. The donation request from ESERLAC noted other communities contribute \$300 annually.

Chair Short motioned to approve the contribution to ESERLAC of \$300 for dues in the budget. Mr. Madison seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Murphy indicated \$50 would be remaining.

Mr. Whitehouse motioned to approve \$50 contribution to SELT. Mr. Madison seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Murphy recommended the 2026 budget be level funded but asked the Board about the \$4,500 needed for the Raynes Farm stairway, mowing around the barn, which is \$300 each and the \$175 porta potty rental. Ms. Murphy noted the interns did a great job this year but felt there could be a year off and free up \$2,500. \$1,000 could go to contract services. She noted the Ryder property is \$100,000. The budget is due on Friday.

Mr. Madison asked about pushing forward with Raynes Farm barn repairs. Mr. Whitehouse agreed that they should do what they can for Raynes, but some savings could come from volunteer work with mowing. Ms. Murphy noted they could use the barn without the interior stairway, and some trusses need work. Some weight was eliminated with the concrete removal. She noted access to the barn is critical and to not have overgrowth. Chair Short noted construction needs to be finished with the floor and exterior. There have been extensions already. Mr. Whitehouse recommended an event/fundraiser for the staircase.

Mr. Campion asked about partnering with Recreation to generate revenue, such as a barn dance. Ms. Murphy noted disc golf had been successful in the past but have to coordinate haying with use of the fields.

Mr. Campion asked if \$4,500 would be too small for a warrant article. Ms. Murphy noted any separate warrant article would be a challenge to get through this year. Select Board Representative Chartrand agreed noting the town is bracing for tax impacts for the town and school and there are so many unanswered questions on recent impacts.

Ms. Crepeau asked if some of the training line could be used toward events.

Chair Short summarized that there would be no interns next year and money would be moved to Conservation Administration.

Chair Short motioned to approve the level funded Conservation Commission budget request be submitted by Ms. Murphy on Friday with the shifting priorities. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Committee Reports

a. Property Management – Intern Update

Ms. Murphy reported the interns were here for five weeks, Jack who has his degree and Catherine who is a UNH senior. The monitoring was done on all but three properties, one was being hayed and another in construction. There is a whole list of action items from the monitoring. They did trail work, three bridge repairs, and provided positive feedback.

Ms. Murphy noted the green trail was refreshed but not by them and the Commission extended thanks to whoever did it.

b. Outreach Events

Mr. Whitehouse recommended having an event in September/October. Ms. Murphy noted it was the 60th year for Conservation and there would be a tree from the Tree Committee and dedicated benches. Mr. Chartrand noted Raynes is one of the few town properties that allowed dogs. Ms. Murphy recommended a Halloween parade for dogs. Chair Short requested ideas be brought to next month's meeting. Nick also has a google events page. Mr. Chartrand noted he liked the Halloween parade idea.

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

5. Approval of Minutes

July 8, 2025 Minutes

Chair Short motioned to approve the July 8, 2025 meeting minutes. Ms. Crepeau seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

6. Correspondence

7. Next Meeting: 9/9/25, Submission Deadline: 8/29/25

8. Adjournment

Chair Short motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 PM. Mr. Madison seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

174 Respectfully submitted,
175 Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary
176 Via Exeter TV
177 Webinar ID: 882 4057 9637