

Exeter Conservation Commission
Public Library
4 Chestnut Street
Upstairs Meeting Room
November 12, 2025
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 Connor Madison, Trevor Mattera, Keith Whitehouse, Valorie Fangor, Nick Campion, and Alternate Kyle Welch

Staff Present: Kristen Murphy, Conservation and Sustainability Planner

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

2. Public Comment

Keith Whitehouse wanted to raise awareness about 23 Water Street, which is going to be Pairpoint Park and offered to answer questions and get feedback. Mr. Campion asked if they have a design or a design concept and Mr. Whitehouse indicated a conceptual, and funds are being raised for the design. He noted the public land should be open to the public so work needs to get underway. Mr. Campion asked if he anticipated funds in the budget and Mr. Whitehouse noted it was a tight year, but they have a donor who wants things to get going.

Action Items

1. Major Impact Standard Dredge and Fill Wetland Permit Application for 28,418 sq. ft. of permanent wetland impact and 875 sq. ft. of temporary wetland impact for Dade Auto Holdings at 146 Portsmouth Ave. for a commercial auto dealership located at Tax Map 51-1.3-3, 3-4 (Cindy Balcius, SRE Inc.)

Chair Short read the Public Hearing Notice and summary. He noted they were before the Commission for a conceptual on 12/13/22, to discuss wetland impacts on 8/13/24 but requested a postponement. On 8/15/24 there was a letter to NH DES with concerns, and a site walk on 10/8. They requested a two-day extension for the November meeting to return with answers. On 11/1 Ms. Balcius indicated by email that they would not return until December or January. In August 2025 there was a DES application and extension requested. Ms. Murphy spoke with the chair and expressed concerns on 8/29/25. Ms. Murphy received a request on 10/14/25 after the agenda was already set and agreed to attend the November 12, 2025 meeting. The Chair notified the state on 10/17/25.

44 Cindy Balcius of SRE noted she requested more information from the state and decided to change
45 engineering group and Altus came on board. She noted she had a death in the family and everything
46 was submitted and she tried to address all concerns. She noted originally 34,500 SF of impact was
47 proposed then reduced to 28,418. She explained the silty clay soil needs surcharging. 7,636 SF of
48 temporary impact will be for outside the steel sheet piling retaining wall which is long enough to keep
49 surcharging. She worked with Altus and Miller engineers for 875 SF of impact for the steel retaining
50 wall. She noted Dan is open to a proposed conservation easement of 1.65 acres which can be
51 connected to existing conservation. She explained the wide strip of fill was eliminated to surcharge and
52 the 7,000 SF of impact shown in red. She stated that prime wetlands are only shown at the very tip of
53 the property, in green, as located on the Town of Exeter prime wetland delineation. The plan has town
54 setbacks, tidal buffer, tideline and shoreland impacts. They will keep the sediment control plan during
55 construction and surcharging.

56
57 Corey Belden of Altus Engineering explained the preliminary stages of design but noted they will need
58 Alteration of Terrain (AoT) and site plan review so will be back for those. The slope was explained on
59 the back side as 1.5 to 1. He explained the intent to use drain mat with bottom drains and preload in
60 the front wall, the use of crushed gravel, Geotech fibers and buildup, preload the backside and monitor
61 settlement; to get the water out and come up use wick drains through matting with a slow process of 1"
62 per month of draining water. He explained they will drill the sheet pile wall in front, then the crushed
63 stone layer, use of tie backs, connect, stability and be ready to go. He noted there would be minimum
64 impacts on wetlands for the side of the wall.

65
66 Ms. Murphy asked the orientation, and he noted Portsmouth Ave is on the right of the map and
67 wetlands to the left.

68
69 Ms. Fangor expressed concerns with the very big size of 28,000 SF of impact to wetlands. She asked
70 about parking calculations and noted Volvo has an 18,000 SF building and wanted 72 spaces, Kia has a
71 9,000 SF building and uses 161 spaces. Mr. Belden noted display, and storage uses for their product
72 which are not the same as retail with employees. He guessed the dealership would have 20 employees
73 and maybe 10 visitors at a time. He noted Volvo leases property offsite to store vehicles. Ms. Fangor
74 noted she would rather keep the offsite location than add it to wetlands. Mr. Belden noted they need
75 additional space and the dealership and manufacturer dictates to the owner what the inventory should
76 be.

77
78 Ms. Fangor asked about looking for options like pulling back some of the parking. Mr. Belden noted they
79 will come back for site plan review.

80
81 Chair Short asked how they would get auto transports to the site and noted Stratham had a problem
82 with a couple of dealerships that would park in the middle of the road. Mr. Belden showed the turn
83 route on the plan. Chair Short stated that he had difficulty seeing the truck make that corner. Mr.
84 Belden noted they ran the truck turning radius.

85
86 Ms. Fangor questioned the wetland classifications and noted in the 2024 plan there were two areas
87 shown as prime wetlands but on this application a little green zone. Ms. Balcius noted they have not

88 changed but she is looking at a different map for function and values. Ms. Fangor asked about the NH
89 Coastal Viewer for Sea Rise. Ms. Belden noted it was submitted by separate pdf for 50-year storm and
90 does not impact the site.

91
92 Mr. Madison asked about stormwater to the adjacent site and noted it appears the parking spots are
93 built where the basins were going to be a month ago. Mr. Belden noted it is a big fill site with two
94 discharge pipes into an existing pond which extend out and they are considering a storm tech infiltration
95 system to build over and work with the pipe to subsurface system in new location (fill area) under the
96 parking lot. He noted he did stormwater sizing qual volume but has not run hydro cad to compare
97 predevelopment and may need to slow the discharge rate but there will be AoT requirements for
98 drainage for the site.

99
100 Mr. Madison asked if there was just infiltration and Mr. Belden explained the infiltration and discharge
101 line and flow back to the wetlands.

102
103 Mr. Madison asked why start with dredge and fill rather than AoT and Mr. Belden indicated they were
104 playing catch up. Impervious coverage for the site is 33.9%.

105
106 Mr. Madison noted the amount of impervious is of concern and Ms. Fangor and Ms. Murphy expressed
107 concerns with identifying water quality. Ms. Balcius noted stormwater and water quality are part of the
108 treatment process and this needs AoT and site plan review.

109
110 Mr. Mattera asked if there were alternatives to having impervious surface. Mr. Belden noted there
111 were a lot of tools and methods but long-term issues with porous pavers and maintenance. It isn't
112 recommended in drive aisles which are used by heavy vehicles. Mr. Belden noted there were options in
113 the inventory storage areas.

114
115 Ms. Murphy asked about getting an extension from the state to accommodate the catch up in
116 permitting. Ms. Balcius noted she can't execute until she gets AoT. Ms. Murphy noted it seems out of
117 sync and could be a challenge if there are changes later. Ms. Balcius noted it has been a year. Ms.
118 Murphy asked if it was possible. Ms. Balcius indicated she did not think it was in this case and did not
119 think the footprint of impact would change, the pavement might have a combination of porous pavers
120 and what not, but when they go to site plan review, they could amend it, they do it all the time.

121
122 Ms. Murphy asked if there was a more efficient design, such as considering both properties together.
123 Ms. Balcius explained the treatment of stormwater with Volvo and grabbing some of that stormwater
124 and redirection of current stormwater flow into the system. Ms. Murphy asked about looking at all the
125 parcels and see what the least impactful alternative is. Ms. Balcius noted she met with Army Corp. of
126 Engineers and DES right away. Mr. Belden noted the building is going in a parking lot. They are
127 capturing a lot of runoff for the two lots and a third small lot.

128
129 Chair Short noted there were a lot of loose ends and if an extension were possible, he would like to see
130 them come back with complete answers to these questions. He noted the Commission does not
131 typically approve or disapprove of a preliminary design.

132 Mr. Madison noted he would like to see the local permit first.
133
134 Mr. Chartrand stated that after hearing their deliberations there were enough concerns to not
135 recommend it at this point, the impacts are huge.
136
137 Ms. Murphy recommended sharing what the Commission's concerns are.
138
139 Ms. Balcius stated that we have addressed everything, and tonight's concerns have not been mentioned
140 before, and the 40 days is almost out.
141
142 Ms. Murphy noted there was not an engineer present before. Mr. Chartrand stated there was not the
143 level of detail in that meeting that there is tonight and Altus coming on board has added more detail.
144
145 Ms. Fangor stated that she could not personally approve because it is so massive and impervious cover
146 is so big that she believes it would affect water quality.
147
148 Ms. Balcius asked if there was any interest in keeping discussions on the proposed easement. Chair
149 Short appreciated the intent but noted it would not drive their decision and recommended getting an
150 extension from the state. Ms. Balcius noted DES needed a response tomorrow. Ms. Murphy indicated
151 she can document the state in a memo.
152
153 MOTION: Mr. Madison motioned and Ms. Fangor seconded to deny as concerns have not yet been
154 addressed.
155
156 The Commission discussed those concerns. Mr. Madison expected a more final stormwater design. Ms.
157 Fangor had concerns with impervious cover. Mr. Madison added avoidance and minimization. Mr.
158 Chartrand asked about the size of fill.
159
160 Ms. Murphy asked about surcharging during phases and noted it is unclear what is happening during
161 each phase and doesn't feel like a phased plan. Mr. Belden noted they have to meet water quality
162 standards. Ms. Balcius noted the steel retaining wall will contain everything. Ms. Murphy noted the tie
163 into the center and that it does seem to work for her and asked what protected the runoff. Ms. Balcius
164 indicated a sediment erosion control sock and Ms. Murphy asked where. Mr. Belden noted along the
165 top. Ms. Murphy noted the contours depicted in phases and Mr. Whitehouse asked about yards of fill.
166
167 Mr. Madison reread the motion:
168
169 MOTION: Mr. Madison motioned that the Commission has reviewed the application and recommends
170 the application be denied as it does not meet state permit rules with regard to the following:
171 1. Site is in preliminary stormwater treatment system design and there are concerns with stormwater
172 quality throughout each phase of construction;
173 2. Concerns with the site sign in regard to avoidance and minimization of wetland impacts; and
174 3. Concerns regarding the overall impervious surface amount and the impervious surface site
175 percentage.

176 Ms. Fangor seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

177

178 Ms. Murphy indicated she would prepare a letter to the state.

179

180 2. Committee Reports

181

182 a. Property Management – Raynes Farm

183

184 Ms. Murphy noted the contractor is making progress and she has filed an extension with L-CHIP but
185 has not heard yet. The scaffolding will remain for the final coat of paint. ADA ramp, grading and fill
186 are needed. She found a foldable ADA compatible ramp for \$150.

187

188 MOTION: Chair Short motioned to approve the purchase of a foldable ADA compatible ramp for
189 \$150 to come from the conservation administration fund. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A
190 vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

191

192 b. Trails

193

194 Chair Short noted an Exeter resident, Dan L., has organized 8-1 guys to help with bridge building and
195 held four sessions and spent a couple hundred hours and donated \$700-\$1,000 in materials and a
196 lot of bridges were replaced or upgraded.

197

198 c. Outreach Events

199

200 Ms. Murphy noted a public information session on 12/1 at 6 PM at Seacoast School of Technology in
201 the dining room for the coastal resilience grant for the Parkway. They are coming up with three
202 options. Please reach out to her to help.

203

204 Ms. Murphy noted Window Dressers last day for ordering is 11/30 and January will be the
205 community build and volunteer signs ups are for the 15-22nd at town hall.

206

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

208

209 3. Approval of Minutes

210 October 14, 2025 Minutes

211

212 Chair Short recommended edits to line 183.

213

214 MOTION: Chair Short motioned to approve the October 14, 2025 minutes as amended. Mr. Whitehouse
215 seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

216

217 4. Other Business

218

219 5. Correspondence

220 6. Next Meeting: Wednesday, 12/9/25, Submission Deadline: 12/1/25

221

222 7. Adjournment

223

224 ***Chair Short motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 PM. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A***
225 ***vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

226 Respectfully submitted,

227 Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary

228 Via Exeter TV