

Exeter Conservation Commission  
Nowak Room  
Town Hall  
10 Front Street  
December 9, 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, Andrew Koff, Keith Whitehouse, Valorie Fangor, Nick Campion, Alternates Kyle Welch, Michelle Crepeau, Bill Campbell, and Dan Chartrand, Select Board Representative

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. Alternate Michelle Crepeau was activated.

2. Public Comment

Silas Richards requested in the spirit of the pedestrian and bicycle plan of the Master Plan that the Commission consider working with property owners and collaborating to get connectivity with trails into different parcels and noted the danger of the 101 Interchange at Epping Road.

Chair Short recommended that Mr. Richards sketch out his plan and contact him to get on the agenda to present it to the Commission.

**Action Items**

1. Trail Maintenance Update and Future Project Discussion (Toby, Dan and Dave S)

Dan L. of Fort Rock Riders discussed the maintenance and repairs done by the mountain biking group Fort Rock Riders, including building bridges on trails, and advocating for the requirements of the Commission to use the property. He brought to the attention of the Commission that once the Rugg property is developed the intensity of use will likely increase elsewhere. He noted there are many trails that have not been attended to for many years and have condition issues. He described the success he has had with fundraising on the group's Facebook page which funded the purchase of snow dogs (winter tool), maintenance and funded some bridge building days. He showed a map which included hot spots where the use was most often. He would like permission and collaboration to develop trails.

44 Dan proposed making the trails accessible and inclusive on public land for everyone from riders, to dog  
45 walkers and hikers. He noted there were also parking challenges.

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47 Dan noted there are sections of trails that get closed, rerouted and given time to regenerate.

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49 Mr. Welch noted that a small portion of riders want the more advanced trails. Chair Short noted it is like  
50 a ski trail and they can't all be black diamond. Alex with FRR noted that he would like to see a diversity  
51 of trails. Mr. Chartrand thanked them for their valuable work on the property and for being inclusive.

52  
53 Jonathan, who noted he was a neighbor pointed out the top and bottom left on the map. He noted the  
54 bottom left is private property. He questioned how they could bring some of the density in that heat  
55 map to the center and take advantage of the public land.

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57 Ms. Fangor asked if they had a top 10 wish list they could bring in. Dan indicated accessibility to the  
58 tunnel would be one priority. Ms. Fangor indicated more detail of what they have in mind would be  
59 helpful.

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61 Mr. Koff indicated he was open to rerouting potential in some areas and agreed the parking issue is real  
62 on Watson Road and would also like to see specific ideas of specific segments they would like to  
63 develop.

64  
65 Chair Short indicated the scope has two points, one is the maintenance of existing trails and the next is  
66 the rerouting idea which would need to be coordinated closely with the Commission.

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68 Mr. Campbell agreed that they should let the Commission know what the projects are and  
69 communicate. He noted he appreciated the work FRR has done.

70  
71 Chair Short asked the estimated out of pocket materials for the latest round of work and Dan indicated  
72 \$2,000 with hundreds of man hours. Dan noted he would put something together for the next meeting  
73 and asked what the deal breakers are, the cans and cannots.

74  
75 Mr. Campion indicated uncharted growth, rogue trails and cataloguing expansion. He agreed that  
76 maintenance was separate from closures and reroutes.

77  
78 Ms. Murphy noted she has seen a lot of trail growth since 2008 and erosion on trails that are not  
79 designed for the kind of use they are getting. She asked them to consider where the right place is to  
80 keep protection of natural resources which is the main goal of the easement, rather than recreation.

81  
82 Ms. Murphy noted that there were trails that were approved by the state and she can work to get that  
83 information but any new work around the wetlands would need similar permitting in addition to  
84 considering where wildlife would be and whether they can handle the intense use. She noted there are  
85 riskier areas where resources are.

Mr. Chartrand commented on parking and encouraged the Commission to hear Silas' emerald necklace approach to connectivity.

Dan noted the main concerns are wetlands. Mr. Chartrand noted also the state approval and avoiding natural resource areas. Ms. Murphy noted the intensity of use, the denser use creates a loss of habitat use and so it is important to identify areas that can stand the intensity and leave the less dense areas alone.

Mr. Koff noted he would be opposed to the spaghetti nature of trails used in other places because of the density and impact.

Mr. Madison agreed that prioritizing the list of repairs is important and keeping communication and consultation with the Commission open.

Ms. Murphy encouraged them to track their volunteer hours and expenses, which will provide a full picture of the cost to maintain the property the way it is. Mr. Chartrand indicated it would also qualify as in-kind contribution for grant funding.

## 2. Committee Reports

### a. Property Management – Raynes Farm

#### i. Stone Property Mowing

Ms. Murphy noted the Stone property which is off Powdermill Road has been mowed to convert the triangular piece to a pasture and she has reached out for haying with no success. She recommended having a contract with Kevin Breen up to \$1,200 under contract services and using some of the remaining stewardship funds.

#### ii. Raynes Fire & Safety Review

Ms. Murphy shared concerns the fire department had with events. She noted the Deputy Chief put together some analysis and a list of what needs to happen before events are held. She provided the highlights. The number of people went up to 100. She noted the busiest was the pumpkin catapult and the most were 38 people in the barn. She noted 50 people on the main floor is the maximum, 25 on ground floor and those numbers must be visibly posted.

Mr. Whitehouse noted that the mowing around the barn needed to be kept up and they discussed storage of fuel away from the barn. He noted Steven needs 25 days more to finish. Ms. Murphy will put together some estimates for mowing and the porta potty. Chair Short question if the landscaper who does Swasey might be interested in taking care of it.

Ms. Murphy noted the monitored fire alarm was funded through ARPA and is in process but not complete.

Ms. Murphy noted life safety equipment which needs to be installed and maintained such as fire extinguishers, emergency lights and exit signs. She will get an estimate for egress doors.

Ms. Murphy noted that push bars were not practical on the barn door so they would need to commit to keeping doors open during the event. Steven worked to get doors to open outward rather than inward. There are two remaining steps:

- Develop an operating plan to be approved by Chief Pizon; and
- Develop an emergency plan to be approved by Chief Pizon.

Ms. Murphy noted some of the items will need to be budgeted for.

#### b. Outreach Events

Raynes Farm Solstice Event – 12/21 begin at sunset and go until 6:30/7 PM.

Mr. Whitehouse noted that he got guidance from Chief Pizon on the outdoor event with tour of barn and the doors will be open.

Ms. Murphy asked if that was contingent on fire monitoring system being operational and he indicated no and noted the four emergency lights were fairly inexpensive. Ms. Murphy will check to see how many are required on each floor.

Chair Short asked about funding for snacks.

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to approve up to \$100 for refreshments for the event to come from the Conservation Land Administration Fund. Chair Short seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

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

### 3. Approval of Minutes

November 12, 2025 Minutes

MOTION: Chair Short motioned to approve the November 12, 2025 minutes. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

### 4. End of Year Expenses

Ms. Murphy provided the balance of the Conservation Land Administration fund \$850 and noted there was \$638 in contract services left.

173 MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to allocate up to \$1,430 to meet the requirements of the fire management  
174 plan for the Raynes Barn property for safety requirements. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A  
175 vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

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177 5. Correspondence

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179 6. Next Meeting: Wednesday, 1/13/26, Submission Deadline: 12/1/25

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181 7. Adjournment

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183 ***Chair Short motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 PM. Mr. Madison seconded the motion. A vote***  
184 ***was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

185

186 Respectfully submitted,

187 Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary

188 Via Exeter TV

189 Webinar ID: 832 5770 8361