

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.

48

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.

56

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.

60

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.

67

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 unchartered 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.

86

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

89
90 Dan noted the main concerns are wetlands. Mr. Chartrand noted also the state approval and avoiding
91 natural resource areas. Ms. Murphy noted the intensity of use, the denser use creates a loss of habitat
92 use and so it is important to identify areas that can stand the intensity and leave the less dense areas
93 alone.

94
95 Mr. Koff noted he would be opposed to the spaghetti nature of trails used in other places because of the
96 density and impact.

97
98 Mr. Madison agreed that prioritizing the list of repairs is important and keeping communication and
99 consultation with the Commission open.

100
101 Ms. Murphy encouraged them to track their volunteer hours and expenses, which will provide a full
102 picture of the cost to maintain the property the way it is. Mr. Chartrand indicated it would also qualify as
103 in-kind contribution for grant funding.

104
105 2. Committee Reports

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107 a. Property Management – Raynes Farm

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109 i. Stone Property Mowing

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

115
116 ii. Raynes Fire & Safety Review

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118 Ms. Murphy shared concerns the fire department had with events. She noted the Deputy Chief put
119 together some analysis and a list of what needs to happen before events are held. She provided the
120 highlights. The number of people went up to 100. She noted the busiest was the pumpkin catapult
121 and the most were 38 people in the barn. She noted 50 people on the main floor is the maximum,
122 25 on ground floor and those numbers must be visibly posted.

123
124 Mr. Whitehouse noted that the mowing around the barn needed to be kept up and they discussed
125 storage of fuel away from the barn. He noted Steven needs 25 days more to finish. Ms. Murphy will
126 put together some estimates for mowing and the porta potty. Chair Short question if the landscaper
127 who does Swasey might be interested in taking care of it.

128
129 Ms. Murphy noted the monitored fire alarm was funded through ARPA and is in process but not
130 complete.

131
132 Ms. Murphy noted life safety equipment which needs to be installed and maintained such as fire
133 extinguishers, emergency lights and exit signs. She will get an estimate for egress doors.

134
135 Ms. Murphy noted that push bars were not practical on the barn door so they would need to
136 commit to keeping doors open during the event. Steven worked to get doors to open outward
137 rather than inward. There are two remaining steps:

138
139 • Develop an operating plan to be approved by Chief Pizon; and
140 • Develop an emergency plan to be approved by Chief Pizon.

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

142
143 b. Outreach Events

144
145 Raynes Farm Solstice Event – 12/21 begin at sunset and go until 6:30/7 PM.

146
147 Mr. Whitehouse noted that he got guidance from Chief Pizon on the outdoor event with tour of
148 barn and the doors will be open.

149
150 Ms. Murphy asked if that was contingent on fire monitoring system being operational and he
151 indicated no and noted the four emergency lights were fairly inexpensive. Ms. Murphy will
152 check to see how many are required on each floor.

153
154 Chair Short asked about funding for snacks.

155
156 MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to approve up to \$100 for refreshments for the event to come from
157 the Conservation Land Administration Fund. Chair Short seconded the motion. A vote was taken,
158 all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

159
160 c. Other Committee Reports (River Study, Sustainability, Energy, Tree, Roundtable)

161
162 3. Approval of Minutes

163 November 12, 2025 Minutes

164
165 MOTION: Chair Short motioned to approve the November 12, 2025 minutes. Mr. Whitehouse seconded
166 the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

167
168 4. End of Year Expenses

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170 Ms. Murphy provided the balance of the Conservation Land Administration fund \$850 and noted there
171 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

180

181 7. Adjournment

182

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