

Exeter Conservation Commission
Nowak Room
Town Hall
10 Front Street
February 10, 2026
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, Andrew Koff, Keith Whitehouse, Nick Campion, Valorie Fangor, Alternates: Kyle Welch, Sean Torres, Michelle Crepeau, and Bill Campbell (virtual)

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

Action Items

1. Fort Rock Riders Trail Discussion

Dan Longcope, Alex Dardinski (Stratham), Toby Ferdyn and Jonathan Everett of Fort Rock Riders (FRR) presented heat mapping of the trails from STRAVA and recommendations. The maps show the amount of use on the trails. They noted some trails need maintenance and some are not easily accessed. They asked if the Commission wanted to see recreational use in areas where it may soon be lost. Mr. Torres noted it did not need to be one or another and many trails work well with conservation networks that are not overly dense, or overly sparse. Mr. Torres noted STRAVA heat maps pick up more bike usage than walkers and hikers. Mr. Whitehouse recommended working with other groups so that it is not exclusively riders. Toby noted FRR is enjoyed by many other groups.

They had five maintenance bridge building days and that work will be ongoing. They recommended overhaul of the two bridges off the Watson lot (the Forest Ridge Trail) using pressure-treated lumber. Ms. Murphy advised that as these are in prime wetlands they would need to file a permit by notification with the state and wait ten days to hear. Each permit is \$25. They asked if there were any restrictions on materials and she indicated she did not believe so.

43 MOTION: Chair Short motioned to expend \$25 for the permit for the Swamp Bridge. Mr. Madison
44 seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

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46 MOTION: Chair Short motioned to expend \$25 for the permit for the Crooked Bridge. Mr. Madison
47 seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

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49 They forecasted that with the loss of the Rugg property that will likely drive more users south and
50 questioned if the current conditions could handle that traffic. They discussed parking areas and access
51 from those and looked at barriers to accessibility. They recommended their priorities for repairs and
52 future opportunities. They noted the eroded trails on BLT and Demoralizer. They recommended
53 eliminating the parallel trails and having one while the discontinued trails have a chance to stabilize.
54 Another area was identified for rerouting where there is a steep climb and stream. They noted that they
55 would use the wildlife heat map to limit impact on the most sensitive western side. Mr. Torres noted he
56 would like to see Hamburger Hill rolled into this. He expressed concerns with losing town trails to
57 erosion and people continuing to do their own thing.

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59 They recommended flagging and walking the identified areas with the Commission and setting up
60 volunteer build days.

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62 Chair Short noted that he liked the bridge redecking plan. Mr. Welch cautioned that the support system
63 may be discovered to need work come spring. Chair Short agreed it is frozen now but that is the best
64 time to do the work on the decking. Chair Short noted that on Dean's Dream the planks are broken up
65 and almost gone. Mr. Koff noted that was private property. Ms. Murphy noted the state property as
66 well and that it was worth looking into those and having conversations with private property owners.
67 Mr. Campbell agreed that he didn't want to see a situation like the Ruggs if another owner sells. Ms.
68 Murphy noted it was a good opportunity to approach owners.

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70 Chair Short noted he was in favor of flagging and walking #5 and #6. He noted not a lot of work can get
71 done but it was a good time for planning. Mr. Campion agreed that the decking makes sense and
72 commended their plan. Mr. Mattera noted he loved the strategic design, it was really well done, and
73 taking the wildlife heat map into consideration and chunking off priorities. Mr. Campbell stated that the
74 presentation was one of the best things he has seen come to Conservation in 35 years and if they can
75 pull off some of it does a lot of credit.

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77 Chair Short recommended doing their homework and coming back to the Board to walk the flagged
78 areas. He recommended initial focus on #5, 6 and 7.

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80 Mr. Whitehouse recommended looking at Conservation properties, especially the river corridors. Ms.
81 Murphy noted the existing 2011-12 plan and Ms. Crepeau recommended a site walk. Mr. Whitehouse
82 noted they could walk on conservation property without trespassing issues. Mr. Koff noted funds would
83 be needed to take action and current use land change tax or a bond are possibilities. Ms. Murphy noted
84 the 2012 Natural Resources Inventory and ranking for aquatic mitigation grant funding. Mr. Mattera
85 noted the 2021-22 Coastal Watershed resource has specific municipal maps. Mr. Torres noted there are
86 smaller parcels SELT won't take on. Mr. Campbell would like to be involved.

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2. Stone Property – Gas Line Maintenance (Brian Chaput of Unitil/Granite State Gas Transmission)

Brian Chaput presented the request for work on town property to pressure test the high-pressure gas line. He provided a handout of the proposal to use timber mat for laydown areas and explained how approximately 66,000 gallons of water would be used to test and then be hauled off by Clean Har. He noted the work would take five to six weeks on site depending on delays they would hope to start earlier in the season but have to rebuild the main line vale in East Kingston first. He noted the impact outside of the easement area is for the timber mat laydown and four 21-gallon frac tanks, about 32'x140.'

Ms. Murphy asked if there is an agreement for the town to sign off on. Mr. Chaput indicated he usually gets Conservation to sign off on it citing the original 1955 deed which allows maintenance. Mr. Koff asked if it was within the easement area and he noted it is a step outside the easement at 25 Powdermill Road. Mr. Koff expressed concerns with the condition of the group. Mr. Chaput noted wetland areas and explained why the upland option B works best for access. Ms. Murphy noted there was a wetland map but no parcel-by-parcel inventory and noted an area with beaver impoundment to the south which Mr. Chaput noted VHB was asked to look into.

Mr. Koff raised concerns with the mowing which takes place in October. Mr. Chaput noted mats would be over vegetation for five to six weeks and he will let them know the start and end dates.

MOTION: Chair Short motioned that the Conservation Commission has reviewed the proposal and finds that the work is in compliance with the terms of the conservation deed (as proposed). Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

3. ESRLAC vacancies

Ms. Murphy noted there were two members and Mr. Clement was not renewing. She asked if anyone was interested to let her know.

4. Solid Waste Facility in Epping – Correspondence

Ms. Murphy noted the plans for expansion of the solid waste facility and correspondence between towns. Ms. Roy and Mr. Papakonstantis are preparing a letter to send the state before the deadline. The Epping Planning Board will determine if there is regional impact and if so would notify towns like any other abutter and there is opportunity for Exeter to encourage them to do that.

5. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

i. Raynes Farm

131 Mr. Whitehouse reported that Steven will be done in late May or early June. He recommended
132 hiring a regular carpenter to do the stairs. The estimated cost is \$4,500.

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134 b. Outreach Events

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136 i. Raynes Barn Full Moon Snowshoe Event Report

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138 Mr. Whitehouse reported the event went well and there were about 70 people, 50 with
139 snowshoes.

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141 ii. Art in the Barn Event Planning

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143 Ms. Crepeau noted the committee met and is looking at September 26th and October 17th. They
144 will meet again in March but no date has been set yet.

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146 iii. Rain Barrel Program – Distribution Date: April 18

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148 Ms. Murphy noted April 18th is distribution day. Mr. Whitehouse said he could help.

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

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152 Ms. Crepeau noted that the Tree Committee is considering an Arbor Day.

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154 3. Approval of Minutes

155 December 9, 2025 Minutes

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157 MOTION: Chair Short motioned to approve the December 9, 2025 minutes. Mr. Madison seconded the
158 motion. A vote was taken, Mr. Mattera abstained, the motion passed 6-0-1.

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160 January 13, 2026 Minutes

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162 Mr. Whitehouse recommended an edit to line 123 Sinclair. Mr. Mattera noted he was present but listed
163 as not present.

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165 MOTION: Chair Short motioned to approve the January 13, 2026 minutes as amended. Mr. Madison
166 seconded the motion. A vote was taken, with one abstaining due to absence, the motion passed 6-0-1.

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168 4. Correspondence

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170 5. Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 10, 2026, Submission Deadline: February 27, 2026

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172 7. Adjournment

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174 ***Chair Short motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 PM. Mr. Koff seconded the motion. A vote was***
175 ***taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

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177 Respectfully submitted,

178 Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary

179 Via Exeter TV

180 Webinar ID: 82066428861