Exeter Conservation Commission
Nowak Room
Town Hall
10 Front Street
July 14, 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, Andrew Koff, Trevor Mattera, Keith Whitehouse, Valorie Fangor, Michelle Crepeau, Alternate Ethan Fishbaugh, Alternate Don Clement (remotely) 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 the members and alternates introduced themselves. He welcomed the Commission's new alternate member, Ethan Fishbaugh.

2. Public Comment

Amanda Kelly of Prospect Street discussed the benefit of having community gardens such as the Prescott Street neighborhood has. She noted she had a discussion with Ms. Murphy about town-owned parcels, parking, access and water. She provided a handout and noted she was willing to help. Ms. Murphy noted the Stone property off Powdermill Road has a field and mows late in the season.

Ms. Crepeau questioned who would oversee the gardens.

Mr. Koff asked if Parks & Recreation may have space and wanted to hear more about water supply. Ms. Kelly noted that they typically bring in a large cube-shaped tank filled by a water company and have a pump operated hose.

Mr. Whitehouse asked about the parcel by the Dan Healey Pool.

Action Items

1. Wetland Conditional Use Permit application from Stonearch Development LLC, for the construction of a proposed 8-unit residential single family condo development at 5 Brentwood Rd, Tax Map/Lot 62-111. Additional request to consider holding conservation interest in a 4.5acre portion of the land. (Christian Smith, Beals Assoc.)

Chair Short read the public hearing notice.

John Lordin of Beals Associates noted John O'Neill was present as well as Jack Hayes, the wetland and soil scientist.

Mr. Lordin discussed the proposed 2,900 SF lot line adjustment and seven units proposed on a cul de sac and one potentially off MacKay Drive. There would be a roadway, drainage and treatment as well as underground utilities.

Mr. Lordin discussed the need for the conditional use permit for grading in the wetland buffer behind the bio retention area. Mr. Madison noted the CUP is based on this plan and if it changed, they would need to come back and noted this is his preferred option. Mr. Koff questioned if there was a plan that showed buffer impact. Mr. Lordin showed the 75' setback which is for structures. Ms. Murphy noted the smaller buffer was not shown. Ms. Fangor asked the SF of impact and Mr. Lordin noted he calculated 11,500 SF based on the 75' setback. The setback for poorly drained soil is 40' and some is very poorly drained soil but the 40' would apply. Ms. Murphy noted the plans don't accurately reflect the situation.

Mr. Short noted there was a proposed open space easement of approximately four acres. Ms. Murphy explained the town regulations which allow a density bonus, but the easement must be held by the town or deeded to the town. Ms. Fangor noted that if there is no easement the additional unit goes away. Mr. Lordin noted the yield plan showed potential for seven units and with the open space density a bonus of one unit. Ms. Murphy noted the easement nearby at 80 Epping Road.

The Board discussed the pros and cons of easement versus ownership. Ms. Murphy indicated the town would be responsible and maintenance can be problematic. She noted dealing with multiple owners can be challenging. The Board discussed whether the parcel would need to be mowed. Mr. Hayes indicated it was not likely to need mowing as it will stay the way it is. Mr. Koff noted the Commission could decide when the final plan is approved.

Mr. Madison asked about the tree line and lawns. Mr. Koff asked where those lawns would end and Mr. Lordin showed the line from the house. Ms. Murphy indicated they would be 40' behind the house. Mr. Koff would like that indicated on the plan. Mr. O'Neill offered to place markers.

Michael Green noted that there is 7.9 overall acres and 4.5 proposed for open space so they are losing an acre.

Ms. Fangor asked about the proposed unit in the upper left and if that wouldn't reduce the conserved land. Mr. Chartrand questioned the Planning Board's reasons for preferring that design.

Mr. Clement spoke to the value of the parcel for groundwater recharge.

Mr. Mattera noted he was generally in favor of this kind of open space development.

Ms. Murphy asked the type of fence and Mr. O'Neill indicated vinyl.
Chair Short reviewed the CUP criteria:

- Use permitted in zone
- No alternative design
- Functions and Values, not detrimental to the wetland or greater hydrological system
- Design - minimize impact
- No hazard to individual or public health, safety
- Not increasing wetland buffers elsewhere (n/a)
- Restoration of temporary disturbance

Ms. Murphy noted she didn't hear about the restoration plan. Mr. Lordin indicated the slopes and seeding.

Mr. Koff asked about invasives and Mr. Lordin indicated that is part of the stormwater plan.

Chair Short continued with the criteria:

- Other Permits, NH DES RSA 485-A:17 and 483-A, Army Corp. Section 404 of CWA.

Ms. Fangor would like to see the 40' buffer delineated on the plan as well as appropriate buffers in different parts.

Ms. Murphy would like the preference explained to the Planning Board to adopt the plan presented to preserve buffers; and to delineate the lawn areas.

Mr. Chartrand agreed it was worth explaining that keeping as much as possible would assist with groundwater recharge.

MOTION: Mr. Madison motioned to prepare a memo to the Planning Board supporting the CUP application with the conditions stated:

- Show buffers on plans
- Delineated lawn buffers with markers
- Note the Commission's preference to adopt plan presented and preserve the open space to encourage groundwater recharge.

Mr. Mattera seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

2. NHACC – Lane Use Change Tax Discussion

Barbara Richter appeared remotely to talk about the pros and cons of funding the Conservation Commission using the Land Use Change Tax. She explained the basics of current use taxation per RSA 79-a for farm and forest properties and that 10 acres is the minimum. She noted 140 towns use LUCT to fund conservation.

Ms. Richter explained that a majority vote would be required for the warrant article to pass at town meeting. She noted the percentages should be specified, such as 50% or 100%. It can be created or rescinded, or changed, by town vote. She recommended being transparent about what the funds are used for and to note past successes with the bond, and to be prepared to discuss the tax impact of not having the funds go into the general fund.

Selectman Chartrand noted that the Select Board had a goal setting meeting, and he recommended restoring how conservation is funded but didn't talk about LUCT. In the past the Commission has put forth a warrant asking for $50,000.

Mr. Koff noted he liked the idea of not being subject to annual budget constraints. Selectman Chartrand noted that if LUCT falls off the Commission would not get anything. Ms. Crepeau agreed that other towns have so much land available. Mr. Chartrand questioned how much of the 2,677 acres in current use in 2025 is Academy forest property.

Ms. Richter discussed the benefit of having matching funds available and funds to purchase land easements as well as public education programs.

Mr. Koff noted the goal to carry a certain balance and if they get there it could be modified but the Commisssion can't purchase land or do anything without funds if an opportunity arises.

Selectman Chartrand stated that the budget process is a good process each year and would prefer to push for annual disbursement rather than LUCT and noted it is good public relations for whatever the Commission may be planning. He recommended going on the Select Board agenda to discuss it further and get a read for the best mode to recharge the Conservation Fund. Ms. Crepeau recommended a bond or annual amount but agreed it would take a long time to get to $500,000. Mr. Koff noted he could be a part of a presentation with the Select Board. Selectman Chartrand will talk to the Chair. Ms. Murphy noted that annual funding dropped off in 2023.

Ms. Richter noted that LUCT provides a nice balance with development pressures and conserving land that may have been lost.

Mr. Mattera indicated the importance of having funds to do good work and the mechanism of the irregularity of LUCT.

3. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

i. Raynes Farm

Mr. Whitehouse reported that Raynes was mowed, hayed and has a porta potty.

b. Outreach Events

i. Raynes Barn Re-Opening Event Planning (July 18th 10-1)

Mr. Whitehouse described the Re-Opening event and noted he posted flyers. Riverwood will bring their pet goats and work out a one-day risk policy with risk management. They are building a pen from pallets. There will be refreshments and activities for the kids at no charge. He asked for volunteers for Saturday from 9-1:30 to help with parking, refreshments, cooking and the kid's table as well as monitoring the occupancy limits for the barn's fire code. Selectman Chartrand and Ms. Fangor offered to help. Mr. Koff will help at 9 and come back later. Mr. Mattera is a maybe.

ii. Art in the Barn Event (9/26)

Mr. Whitehouse showed the 8x8 sheets that would be handed out to artists and returned once painted, for the fundraiser.

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

Ms. Fangor noted that Mr. Whitehouse received the John Markle award for volunteering.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. June 9, 2026 Site Walk

MOTION: Chair Short motioned to approve the June 9, 2026 meeting minutes. Mr. Koff seconded the motion. A vote was taken, Ms. Crepeau abstained, the motion passed 6-0-1.

b. June 9, 2026

MOTION: Chair Short motioned to approve the June 9, 2026 meeting minutes. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Correspondence

6. Adjournment/ Next Meeting: 8/11/26, Submission Deadline: 7/31/26

Chair Short motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 PM. Mr. Koff seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Hoijer, Recording Secretary
Via Exeter TV
Webinar ID: 882 3087 1156