Exeter Conservation Commission
Nowak Room
Town Hall
10 Front Street
September 8, 2026
7:00 PM
Draft Minutes

Call to Order

1. Introduction of Members Present (by Roll Call)

Present at tonight's meeting were: Vice-Chair Conor Madison, Andrew Koff, Keith Whitehouse, and Valorie Fangor

Staff Present: Kristen Murphy, Conservation and Sustainability Planner

Acting Chair Madison called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and the members introduced themselves.

2. Public Comment

Action Items

1. Wetland and Shoreland Conditional Use Permit for the expansion of an existing parking lot for Service Credit Union at 109 Epping Road. Tax Map 55, Lot 67 (Tom Sokoloski, CWS, Mike Ward, Bohler).

Keith Ward presented the application for conditional use permits for wetland and shoreland for the 1.29-acre Service Credit Union property to add more parking and have a longer drive through/ATM que. He reviewed the existing 700 SF drainage and detention basin and pointed out jurisdictional wetlands on the plan. Tom Sokoloski of TES did the wetlands report. He noted no impact to the wetland, just the temporary impact to the buffer shown in light green and permanent impact to the buffer shown in dark green on the plan. There will be additional impervious surface of .2 acres and a retaining wall with total disturbance .8 acres. He referenced the stormwater design and explained they are removing the stormwater basin and will discharge to the wetland with a subsurface drainage plan. There will be 4,380 SF of temporary buffer impact and 1,558 SF of permanent buffer impact. He noted the stream within the 150' shoreland buffer and need for a local conditional use permit. He described erosion control and the landscape plan with seeding and additional landscaping. He noted the stormwater treatment would treat the whole site and be an improvement.

Acting Chair Madison noted everyone present was at the site walk. He asked if there would be a berm or direct discharge into wetlands. Mr. Ward indicated no berm. He noted stormwater would be filtered and treated before it reaches the wetland. There is no Alteration of Terrain but will be a state wetlands permit.

Tom Sokoloski noted the permit would not be by notification and that there were some changes in the rules. The replication wetland would be 1 and a half to 1. They are meeting the requirements of AoT but it is not required.

Mr. Koff asked if it is a closed system. Mr. Sokoloski indicated yes, a detention system.

Ms. Murphy asked if they did test pits to find depth to groundwater and Mr. Sokoloski indicated they want to be at the same elevation as the existing wetland mimicking drainage patterns.

Acting Chair Madison asked about armoring for the culvert coming out – yes and he noted special requirements in the 150' shoreland for planting/fertilizer. Ms. Murphy indicated the fertilizer use limits and required waiver from the Planning Board.

Mr. Sokoloski indicated a steep slope seed mix and Mr. Koff noted the presence of thick Bittersweet. Mr. Koff asked about whether there would be a lawn on the left because there is no delineation shown. Mr. Sokoloski referenced the legend with crosshatching. Mr. Koff commented that he had trouble believing the left side won't be mowed. He asked if there would be a berm and Mr. Sokoloski indicated there would be no maintenance of the wetlands and if they used a berm, they would need to maintain it.

Mr. Ward reviewed the criteria for the CUP:

It is permitted in the district
There is no alternative design – no other options.
Mr. Sokoloski submitted the wetland function and value report
The retaining wall will minimize impact, they are limiting grading
There is no adverse impact to individual heath, safety or welfare or hazardous materials.
The parcel is too small to increase the buffer elsewhere except the 1.5 to 1 replication area
He discussed restoration
They will get state permit

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned that the Commission has no objection to the wetland conditional use permit. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Ward reviewed the criteria for the shoreland CUP:

Not effect surface water quality, there are erosion controls
Not storing hazardous materials on site
Temporary grading, no damage to habitat or spawning ground
No impact to the perennial stream
Complies with Section 9.3.4 and 9.3.1

MOTION: Mr. Madison motioned that the Commission is in support of the shoreland conditional use permit as proposed. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Murphy noted they will still go before TRC.

2. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

i. Raynes Boardwalk Concept Update

Ms. Murphy reported no luck with the doodle poll and Mr. Koff recommended a site walk on Tuesday, September 15th at 5 PM. Mr. Whitehouse described the area and proposed planking over the wet area and new viewing platform. He hopes this would avoid a dredge and fill permit. Direct crossings are best and to stick to the uplands Mr. Madison advised.

Mr. Whitehouse described the 12' 4x4s under the 8' section and six to seven sections.

Mr. Koff asked if the area were flagged and Mr. Whitehouse indicated it has been walked on.

ii. Betsy Ross Flag & other interior requests

Mr. Whitehouse reported that a Betsy Ross flag was donated from the Custom's House in Newburyport and it is 12'x18' and will hang in the barn for the art show. They will take down the flag in the center so that the hay fork can be illuminated. The Commission indicated they were supportive.

b. Outreach Events

i. Art in the Barn Event (9/26) Planning

Ms. Murphy reported receiving 23 submissions. Mr. Whitehouse indicated the room needs cleaning and there needs to be help with setting up. There will be a reception before the event for the artists and then open to the public from 1-4 PM. Ms. Fangor will help with set up.

Mr. Whitehouse indicated there is a sign at Foy Insurance, for about a week before.

Mr. Whitehouse asked about a payment system. Ms. Murphy indicated the art would stay until the event was over and cash and check are preferred. Venmo could be a help. Ms. Fangor asked if they could partner with a business and about fees. Mr. Whitehouse noted there will be a craft fair in November and unsold art can be brought to that.

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

Ms. Murphy indicated the Commission was invited by the River Run Community to see the riverbank restoration area. They would meet at the community center.

Ms. Murphy reported Pickpocket Dam has the results of their Phase 1 Archaeological Study and are starting Phase 2.

Ms. Murphy reported the Tree Committee got a grant to plan 28 trees at 15 sites and will focus on the far end of Front Street.

Mr. Koff noted that the proposed Pedestrian Bike Committee was discussed at the Select Board.

Ms. Murphy displayed the plaque made for honoring Conservation members who served ten or more years. She indicated Doug Eastman helped her put it together and that it could be hung at Raynes Barn or at Town Hall. The Commission agreed to hang it at Raynes.

Mr. Koff noted the budget meeting on September 30th.

3. Approval of Minutes

August 11, 2026 Meeting & Site Walk

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to approve the August 11, 2026 site walk minutes. Mr. Madison seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Mr. Madison motioned to approve the August 11, 2026 meeting minutes. Mr. Whitehouse seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Correspondence

Ms. Murphy reported there was an inquiry about the Unitil Utility Corridor from Drinkwater Road through PEA to Gilman Lane and an expansion over the river and they wanted to know if the Commission needed a site walk. The Commission agreed that unless filling a wetland, which Ms. Murphy will confirm, then no. Ms. Murphy noted there would be culvert replacement.

5. <u>Adjournment/</u> Next Meeting: 10/13/26, Submission Deadline 10/2/26

Acting Chair Madison motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 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: 857 8989 5667