



TOWN OF EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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PUBLIC NOTICE EXETER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Monthly Meeting

The Exeter Conservation Commission will meet in the Nowak Room, Exeter Town Offices at 10 Front Street, Exeter on **Tuesday, February 13th, 2018 at 7:00 P.M.**

Call to Order:

1. Introduction of Members Present
2. Public Comment

Action Items

1. Donation of 4.85 acres of undeveloped land at Map 22/Lot 10 by Dan and Jennifer Cole. The property is located east of Newfields Road on the Squamscott side of the railroad tracks.
2. HB 1104, NHDES Wetland Rule Proposed Revisions
3. Committee Reports
 - a. Property Management
 - b. Trails
 - c. Outreach
 - d. CC Representatives Report on Other Committees
4. Approval of Minutes: January 9th Meeting
5. Other Business:
6. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled (3/13/18), Submission Deadline (3/2/18)

Work Session

1. Work Session immediately following the meeting to establish the Commission annual priorities and goals

Bill Campbell, Chair

Exeter Conservation Commission

February 9th, 2018 Exeter Town Office, Exeter Public Library, and Town Departments.

**TOWN OF EXETER
PLANNING DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM**

Date: February 9th, 2018
To: Conservation Commission Board Members
From: Kristen Murphy, Natural Resource Planner
Subject: February 13th Conservation Commission Meeting

1. Cole Property Donation

The Commission is required to hold a public hearing to gauge public opinion on the acquisition of lands. Before you is consideration of the donation of approximately 4.85 acres of land at Map 22/Lot 10 by the Cole family. The property is east of Newfields Road on the Squamscott side of the railroad tracks and has been discussed in NP session. The deed has been reviewed by legal council and the Cole family. The Town will cover the expense of title insurance but the Commission will need to cover title search and recording fees. To cover these costs, I recommend the Commission approve up to \$400 from the Conservation Fund. Since it is a donation and these costs are administrative legal counsel has determined it is not necessary to post a notice in the paper.

Proposed Motions:

- *I move that we make a recommendation to the BOS to accept the proposed donation of approximately 4.85 acres for conservation purposes as presented by the Cole family (Tax map 22, lot 10), and authorize the Chair to sign necessary documents on behalf of the Commission.*
- *I move to approve the expenditure of up to \$400 from the Conservation Fund for administrative fees associated property*

2. NHDES Env-Wt Wetland Rule Proposed Revisions

NHDES is proposing a variety of revisions to its wetland regulations. The proposed revisions can be found [HERE](#). It includes a summary, details for each section as well as the BMP update that Alyson sent around. NHACC has concerns and will be working to encourage revisions to the bill. See Barbara's comments below. This information is presented both FYI and in the event you wish to submit comments to the amendments separate from NHACC.

NHACC does not support the reduction in permit review timelines proposed in HB1104. We were ok with the amendments that were proposed in the public hearing last week, but this amendment again reduces the time line and the ability to review permits carefully and with necessary data and information. The changes from the last draft are as follows:

1. Reductions for wetlands permitting timelines are back in the bill. For projects less than one acre, the timeline for initial review has been reduced from 75 days to 50 days. For timelines greater than one acre, the timeline for initial review has been reduced from 105 days to 75 days. If the Department decides to hold a hearing, it must now do so within 30 days (there previously was no timeline) and the timeline for issuing a decision is reduced from 60 days after the close of the hearing to 45 days. These reductions are less dramatic than in the original bill as introduced, which reduced the less than 1 acre timeline to 30 days and the greater than one acre timeline to 45 days.
2. The language for the Certified Application Preparer Program has been tweaked to make clear that permitted septic system designers are included in the certified professionals category, give DES flexibility to include additional professionals in the certified professionals category, and make clear that minimum impact projects includes, at a minimum, all projects that DES has designated as minimum impact in its rules.
3. This draft repeals DES' ability to give the Conservation Commission an extension of their 40 day timeline. The desire here is to prevent the Conservation Commissions from delaying the process.
4. The AOT reduction has been changed to reduce the timeline from 50 days to 40 days (as opposed to 30 days).

We are opposed to new draft of the bill and NHACC will be working with the Senate to change the bill back to the version that was acceptable at the public hearing.

3. Work Session: Annual Priority Setting

Given there are no external projects, Bill would like to get through the main meeting and then take time in a work session for you all to develop annual goals/priorities. I have included the master plan action agenda with CC specific tasks.

Support

	SUPPORT Action	Town Lead	Town Support	Timeframe
3	Identify new facilities or programming, using the findings of the UNH Needs Assessment and Planning Report (2014-2015) as a starting point. Estimate costs and feasibility of providing these new facilities/ activities.	Parks & Rec Dept, Town Manager, Natural Resource Planner	Conservation Commission, Selectboard	Mid Term
7	Develop a public awareness campaign to educate residents and businesses about water quality and state and federal mandates that require the Town to improve and monitor it. Include such topics as: what the mandates require the Town to do (new programs, infrastructure projects, etc.), the impact of lower water quality on the quality of life in Exeter, and how residents and businesses can contribute to improving water quality.	Dept of Public Works, Natural Resource Planner	Conservation Commission	Short Term
8	Sponsor and support events that bring residents and businesses together and celebrate the local community.	Town Manager	All Departments	Ongoing
9	Continue to support quality public education opportunities through the endorsement of the SAU16 Joint Board Strategic Plan. Identify specific strategies in the Strategic Plan where other municipal departments can provide support and incorporate these in department work plans.	Town Manager	All Departments	Ongoing
10	Continue to provide “wrap around” support for critical public meetings like on-site child care, refreshments, recordings, and/or printed summaries.	Town Manager	All Departments	Ongoing

Prepare

	PREPARE Action	Town Lead	Town Support	Timeframe
3	Based on most recent data available, inventory properties most vulnerable to sea level rise, storm surge, and other natural hazards. Where possible, estimate the time horizon for impacts. Develop outreach methods to education private property owners about the risks and ways they can minimize impacts to their properties.	Town Planner, Natural Resource Planner	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Short Term

4	For areas identified most vulnerable to sea level rise, storm surge, and other natural hazards, evaluate town land use policies for these areas and consider alternatives to minimize risk in each area. These might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquiring property to minimize the impact of sea level rise, chronic flooding, marsh migration, etc. to public and private property. • Limit redevelopment after flood or storm damage. • Decisions where to extend (or not extend) infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.) 	Town Planner, Natural Resource Planner	Conservation Commission, Planning Board, River Advisory Committee	Mid Term
5	Based on findings of the land use policies evaluation, implement new land use policies and regulations to reduce risks from sea level rise, storm surge, and other natural hazards.	Town Planner, Natural Resource Planner	Selectboard, Planning Board, Conservation Commission	Mid Term

Steward

	STEWARD Action	Town Lead	Town Support	Timeframe
1	Identify properties that would less likely be developed based on regulatory requirements and determine whether this affects their prioritization level.	Town Planner, Natural Resource Planner	Conservation Commission	Short Term
2	Review criteria for acquiring land for conservation and consider adding criteria related to sea level rise, marsh migration, chronic flooding, storm surge, and other impacts of climate change and natural hazards.	Natural Resource Planner	Conservation Commission, River Advisory Committee, Selectboard	Mid Term
3	Based on revised criteria and assessment of natural resources already under regulatory protection, prioritize parcels of interest for conservation purposes. Consider available and future funding sources and other tools available to protect land. Develop a 10-year schedule for implementation.	Natural Resource Planner	Conservation Commission, Selectboard	Mid Term
4	Commit resources for a new staff person to support Historic District Commission and Heritage Commission, and move historic preservation actions forward.	Town Planner, Town Manager	Selectboard	Short Term
5	Inventory and prioritize historic resources (within and outside of historic districts) that need improvements.	TBD	Historic District, Heritage Commission	Short Term
6	Estimate costs and develop a 10-year plan of historic resource improvement projects. Identify potential funding sources and partners to augment town resources.	TBD	Historic District, Heritage Commission	Mid Term

	STEWARD Action	Town Lead	Town Support	Timeframe
11	<p>Review and update the Trail Maintenance Plan (2009).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify recommendations that have not been completed. Determine which recommendations are still relevant and which are not. Identify new recommendations as needed. Develop a 10-year schedule for maintenance, improvements, or future assessments. 	Natural Resource Planner	Conservation Commission	Short Term
12	<p>Establish a “Friends” group of volunteers for individual town conservation properties to support and help with maintenance schedule.</p>	Natural Resource Planner	Conservation Commission	Short Term
13	<p>Prioritize town conservation properties in need of invasive species management. Estimate costs and develop a 10-year schedule for management strategies.</p>	Natural Resource Planner	Conservation Commission	Mid Term
14	<p>Review and revise existing forest management plans (Henderson-Swasey (2011) and Oaklands (1993)).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify recommendations that have not been completed. Determine which recommendations are still relevant and which are not. Identify new recommendations as needed. Develop a 10-year schedule for maintenance, improvements, or future assessments. 	Natural Resource Planner	Conservation Commission	Short Term

Connect

	CONNECT Action	Town Lead	Town Support	Timeframe
8	<p>Prepare a town-wide Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan that looks at both walking and biking as modes of transportation beyond recreation. Identify improvements to existing amenities and areas where new amenities could be feasibly installed to promote walking and biking. Use the concurrent parking study (or parking management plan if already developed) for Downtown to inform the plan.</p> <p>Destinations/Routes to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All public schools Epping Road to Downtown Lincoln Street/Train Station to Downtown Portsmouth Avenue to Downtown All surrounding residential areas to Downtown <p>Prioritize improvements/new projects and develop a 10-year schedule for implementation.</p>	Town Planner, Dept of Public Works	Planning Board	Short Term

Communicate

4	Continue to organize community forums to discuss issues important to Exeter. Ensure that events, especially large ones, provide options for food and child care.	TBD	Selectboard, All Boards, Town Departments	Short to Mid Term
6	Develop language to be included in municipal RFPs that requires the inclusion of diverse and effective public engagement processes as part of municipal planning, design, and construction processes.	Town Manager	All Departments issuing RFPs	Short Term

Conservation Commission

1/09/18

Draft Minutes

Call to Order:

1. Introduction of Members Present

Present are Sally Ward, Todd Piskovitz, Marie Richey, Andrew Koff, Dave Short, Alyson Eberhardt, Anne Surman, Kristen Murphy, and Bill Campbell. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Campbell at 7:00pm in the Nowak Room of the town office building.

2. Public Comment

Action Items:

1. Event Request: Snowshoe Hullabaloo (Ri Fahnestock, Sarah Sallade)

The race participants will be parking on public works, and they are working on securing those permissions. Otherwise, the race is the same as has been done in past years. Ms. Eberhardt asked who usually does the pre-race inspection and the follow up. Ms. Murphy said that usually a member of the commission does. The event is on February 24th. Mr. Short volunteered to do so.

MOTION: Ms. Eberhardt moved that the race be approved. Mr. Short seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

2. Committee Reports

a. Trails

i. Summer Trail – Fest Planning Sub Group

In the summer, there will be a 10-year anniversary of these events being held. So, they would like to meet with members of the commission to have a discussion about planning some kind of event, to get feedback. Ms. Eberhardt volunteered to help. The commission also thought that Mr. Guindon might like to help. Mr. Koff suggested involving the trails committee with a representative.

b. Property Management

i. Seedling Plantings

These would be in the Henderson Swasey forest. They could either plant in large or small sections. Chairman Campbell said that it might fit in well with the PEA work day. The seedlings are only about 6-12 inches long. He suggested having about 50 seedlings and 12 volunteers to plant. They would also need soil and a supervisor. Ms. Murphy had suggested the McDonald property as another place for plantings. Even though it's an easement, they could possibly secure permission. Also, the property is on a steep bank, so it may be difficult to plant.

Mr. Koff also pointed out that if nobody is taking care of the seedlings, they may die. Ms. Richey said she read through the species in the different packages, and was not enthusiastic about any of them.

They did not seem to fit the area. Mr. Short said he would donate whatever amount of soil they would need. Ms. Eberhardt suggested utilizing the UNH Extension's soil sampling lab to test the soil and see if they need additives. Ms. Richey said that the ability to make their own package would be ideal. Ms. Eberhardt suggested using specific locations in the interior. It was suggested that the commission go with 3 tree species and 1 shrub variety. The overall goal is to fill the empty space so that invasive species do not take over. Ms. Richey also brought up the concern with deer. Mr. Short suggested that they get species that deer typically don't target.

As for water, they probably would not require much to begin with because of the seedling's small size. They would also be able to pick fairly damp places. Mr. Short said that it would be good to start out with seedlings because the maintenance effort would be much lower than with older trees. He also suggested that the commission wait to buy until February, which would give them time to come up with recommendations of seedling types.

MOTION: Mr. Koff moved to approve no more than \$200 for seedlings and supplies this spring, to come out of the conservation land management budget. Ms. Richey seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

ii. Harvest Path and Opening/Invasive Baseline Map

Ms. Murphy that the mapping by Charlie Marino of the Harvest Path was a great idea to document invasive species there. The commission had no other comments.

iii. PEA Climate Action Day Activity Request (4/27)

They had a good event last year, and the kids that took part enjoyed the day. Last year, they cleared brush and spread it out to prevent erosion at a site. The commission is looking forward to doing it again this year.

iv. Draft CC Submission for Town Report

Chairman Campbell asked the commission to, if they had any comments or found any mistakes, let Ms. Murphy know. The report is due on Thursday to be finalized. Ms. Eberhardt said that on the second page, she was unclear about the use of the word "coverage". Chairman Campbell also asked the commission to look at the Natural Resource section of the master plan, as comments for that are due on Friday.

c. Outreach

i. Winter Outreach

1. Full Moon Snowshoe

Ms. Murphy suggested a property like Morrissette, because there is parking which is plowed, and because it is a smaller loop. It is usually intended to bring attention to the Raynes property, because the commission would like to bring a warrant article to attention next year to fix the barn. Ms. Richey said that if it was in the budget, they could invite people from White Pine to do outreach on conservation commission land. It could involve any number of programs. She said she would figure out what the cost would be. Southeast Land Trust was also brought up. Mr. Short said that maybe it would be a good idea to have a demo of the Snowdog during the event. Ms. Eberhardt also suggested

connecting with the local YMCA, or having them co-sponsorship in some way. They could also connect with Exeter's parks and rec department. March 2nd would be the date, which is a Friday night at the end of February vacation for schools. Ms. Richey volunteered to be there on the day of. The commission also would like to have a fire so that participants can warm up and drink hot chocolate.

2. Raynes Open Barn

Ms. Ward said that she would be able to help Ms. Raub with this idea. Ms. Murphy suggested having it each month on a consistent weekend. They could begin in the 3rd weekend of January. The weather is one concern that the commission had.

d. CC Representatives Report on Other Committees

3. Approval of Minutes: December 5th Meeting

Mr. Campbell suggested that on page 1, the word buffer needs to be added in the 3rd paragraph. Ms. Eberhardt said that her name was spelled wrong as well.

MOTION: Ms. Richey moved to approve the minutes as amended. Ms. Eberhardt seconded the motion. Mr. Piskovitz abstained from the vote because he was not present at the last meeting, and it passed 6-0-1.

4. Correspondence and Other Business:

a. NHACC Survey

Ms. Murphy said the NHACC wanted to receive responses to the survey, and also a list of members on the back with the offer to be added to their e-newsletter list. They would put together one response and submit it. The first question was the conservation commission's goals. One of the goals suggested was buying land to conserve. Of course, one hurdle to doing this is limited finances. The commission agreed that they needed to work on setting more goals and becoming more plan-oriented. Chairman Campbell brought up the suggestion of putting paper copies of trail guides into the new Chamber of Commerce office. There is also a section to list general activities. Ms. Richey suggested that outreach shouldn't be a goal of the commission, but instead they could partner with other people who use the land to do their own outreach events.

As for what NHACC can do to help them reach goals, Ms. Eberhardt said that it would be useful to get more information on their role as an advisory board. Chairman Campbell pointed out that the RSAs define their role, which is primarily to make recommendations. Ms. Murphy said that the commission is expected to be the voice of conservation, but the planning board can choose whether or not to follow their recommendations. Another issue is precedent and looking at things holistically. Ms. Murphy emphasized the importance of the master plan and natural resource survey. The commission wanted to submit the addition of the Raynes Barn to the state historical register as an achievement for the NHACC website.

Mr. Short wanted to know how other conservation commissions have dealt with having a structure to protect, such as the Raynes Barn. The commission would be interested in more guidance from NHACC. The commission then made decisions on whether they would be interested in the e-newsletters.

c. Request for Position on Use of Motorized Winter Trail Groomer in Henderson Swasey and Oaklands

Bob Kelly, a member of the trails subcommittee, said that the trails in the town forest in the winter are set depending on who uses the trail first, such as hikers vs cross-country skiers, and that this may not be the best set up for other people with different uses. He suggested using a motorized sled which smooths out the trail, and would make it useful for everybody. He said that the sled would cost about \$3,000-\$3,500, and said that various people would be willing to chip in for private ownership. The private owners would operate the sled to take care of the trails in the town forests. The sled can also be used for other purposes on other trails. The town can then choose to buy one on their own later or not.

The town of Merrimack has used this before, with great success. The sled would need to be used with at least a few inches of snow so that it properly compacts. As for insurance liability, there is an RSA that prevents the town from liability. The trail would be able to have turns to fit any circumstances; biking, walking, snowshoeing, and skiing. Ms. Richey asked if all of the trails are used, or if they only needed to groom some of them. Mr. Kelly said that the vast majority of trails are used by at least somebody during the winter season.

One concern was that the Henderson Swasey deed says there are to be no snow traveling vehicles, which the motorized sled may fall under. Also, maybe people would see the tracks from the motorized sled and think that snowmobiles are okay to use. There was some confusion if the commission would need to own the sled in order to use it as "maintenance". They would be able to use it freely in the Oaklands because there is not specific language within the deed. The intent of the motorized sled would be to clearly define the trail for everybody to use. Mr. Campbell suggested borrowing the sled from Merrimack, and trying it out with the Oaklands town forest. There was also the concern that the compacted trail would turn into mud later in the season. Mr. Kelly said that the trails would actually turn into ice before that could happen. They will also need to make sure the easements are in alignment.

MOTION: Ms. Eberhardt moved that, contingent on all permissions being secured, that the use of a Snowdog be allowed in the Oaklands town forest to groom a loop trail. Mr. Short seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

d. Other Business

Ms. Eberhardt brought up a meeting with the Rockingham Planning Commission about an event to highlight sustainability initiatives in Exeter. The event will be on 2/06/18, from 4:30-7:30pm in the town hall. The conservation commission will have the opportunity to be there and table at the event. She asked if the commission would like to do that, though herself and Mr. Piskovitz will already be in attendance. It would be a good way for people in the town to learn about the commission. The event should relate to climate change and what they have done towards resiliency. Mr. Short suggested having a sign-up sheet to help with some future events.

5. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled (2/13/18), Submission Deadline (2/2/18)

Non-Public Session:

Non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (d) for the consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property

The committee went into non-public session at 9:21pm.

Committee returned from non-public session at 9:35 pm.

Mr. Koff motioned to seal the minutes of the non-public session, seconded by Mr. Piskovitz. Roll call vote to seal the minutes passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted by recording secretary Samantha Cave.