



TOWN OF EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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PUBLIC NOTICE EXETER CONSERVATION COMMISSION Monthly Meeting

The Exeter Conservation Commission will meet virtually (see connection info below* and details attached) on
Tuesday, July 14th, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.

Call to Order:

1. Introduction of Members Present
2. Public Comment

Action Items

- Committee Reports
 - a. Property Management
 - i. Managing Multi-Use Activities at Raynes Farm
 - ii. Outdoor Events at Raynes Farm
 - b. Trails
 - i. Trail Passport Supplies – Expense Request \$160
 - c. Outreach Events
 - i. Virtual Bird Walk at Raynes
 - ii. Pollinator Pathways partnership consideration
- Approval of Minutes: Jun 9th, 2020
- Correspondence
 - a. Gateway Project Update
 - b. Stone Leighton Mowing
- Other Business
- Next Meeting: Date Scheduled (8/11/20), Submission Deadline (7/31/20)

Exeter Conservation Commission

Posted July 10th, 2020 Exeter Town Website www.exeternh.gov and Town Hall Kiosk.

*ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION:

Virtual Meetings can be watched on Channel 22 and on Exeter TV's Facebook and YouTube pages.

To participate in public comment, click this link: <https://exeternh.zoom.us/j/85160434896>

To participate via telephone, call: +1 646 558 8656 and enter the Webinar ID: 851 6043 4896

Please join the meeting with your full name if you want to speak.

Use the "Raise Hand" button to alert the chair you wish to speak. On the phone, press *9.

More instructions for how to participate can be found here: <https://www.exeternh.gov/townmanager/virtual-town-meetings>

Contact Bob Glowacky at rglowacky@exeternh.gov or 603-418-6425 with any technical issues.

**TOWN OF EXETER
PLANNING DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM**

Date: July 10th, 2020
To: Conservation Commission Board Members
From: Kristen Murphy, Natural Resource Planner
Subject: July 14th Conservation Commission Meeting

Multi-Use Management at Raynes:

Our current management plan for Raynes discusses a mixed use scenario. Farming, however has always been the primary use and other uses were defined as not to interfere with this use. When we entered into a new lease agreement with the current farmer, we negotiated a late season mowing schedule to accommodate the breeding season for grassland birds. Over time we have been working toward a goal of increasing public awareness and use at Raynes Barn. If the vision of property management becomes unclear, these uses have potential to conflict. I wanted to take an opportunity to discuss this vision, and re-establish clear definitions of the Commissions goal and priorities. This will help the decision making process moving forward. We discussed this at length at the Raynes Farm Stewardship Committee (minutes attached) which can be viewed [HERE](#).

Outdoor Events at Raynes Farm:

In December 2019, Ben Anderson was approved to hold an outdoor event at Raynes Barn in August. The event included a band framed by the doorway, with an audience seated on the grass berm in front. He inquired through the Stewardship Committee whether there would be support for holding event like this more frequently. We met onsite, measured the area and discussed the plan in more detail. Based on the space available that is visible to where the band would stage, the space will accommodate 217 people given 6' separation. He suggested we consider 100-150 range, mandatory tickets so attendance can be controlled, no food/drink, social distancing required. He was able to hold such an event outdoors at his place and said there was compliance with these conditions. Given the current situation, it would be helpful to know 1) is the CC is supportive of moving forward with Ben's single event proposal, 2) is the CC willing to consider other outdoor events (this or otherwise) and under what conditions?

Committee Reports

Trail Passport: Our [trail passport program](#) developed years ago is in need of replacement supplies as several posts have been vandalized. Cost for replacement/repair is \$160 for new rubbing signs, posts, and trail markers.

Virtual Bird Walk: [Video has been released.](#) [Exeter Outdoors Episode at Raynes Farm.](#)

Pollinator Pathways: Initiated by the Kingston CC, this program is growing regionally. The goal is to educate residents to convert a small area of their yards to be pollinator friendly by planting native plants. They track the properties in town that have made this commitment and have really had wild success. They have reached out to see if we were interested in partnering. Your packet contains a list of responsibilities for being a partner, many of which we already do.

Correspondence:

Gateway: During the Planning Board application review, one member Pete Steckler submitted a letter to the board discussing the evaluation of impacts to natural resources. His letter is attached. I have also attached the minutes from the Planning Board that include the follow-up work that Brendan Quigley did which starts on line 180. The Planning Board moved to require 3rd party review of the wetlands. I have corresponded with NHDES on the matter and can update the board at the meeting.

Stone/Leighton: At the last meeting concern was expressed by a resident that these properties were not being mowed annually and had woody/invasive encroachments. I spoke with Mrs. Marston who mows the property and they confirmed their intent to mow this year.

RAYNES FARM
LONGRANGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Prepared November 2007
Revised January 2015

Heritage and Historical Development:

The Wiggin Barn and farmland were deemed eligible for the State Register of Historic Places for their significance in agriculture. The barn and its ancillary structures and the surrounding hay and cornfields document nineteenth and twentieth century trends in local farming and land-use practices. The primary period of significance documents the height of cattle and dairy farming in the second half of the nineteenth century, during the productive life of Chase Wiggin. During this era, the property was highly significant locally, both as a large farm, and as the location of Exeter Cattle Market, which may have had regional significance. The barn was updated in the mid-twentieth century, when the milk house and silo were constructed for modern dairy farming practices by John C. Raynes, who purchased the property from Albert and Catherine Violet in 1946. John Raynes continued the agricultural use of the site until it was purchased by the Town of Exeter Conservation Commission in May of 2002.

The large barn and silo surrounded by open farmland is a long-standing community focal point, an important historic landscape in the town of Exeter. Still in agricultural use, this property is one of the most intact farm landscapes remaining in Exeter. The way the barn and silo are sited on a curve in the road surrounded by the open fields is a visual agricultural landmark, and the site is popular with photographers.

Historically, the homestead and barn property contained 104 acres of land on both sides of Newfields Road. A number of subdivision actions over the road reduced the Raynes farm land, as we know it today, to 48.6 acres. The homestead, now a private residence, is located on the west side of the road on 5.4 acres.

The property, bisected by an early railroad bed and an active rail line, and the location of the early "town landing" is also locally important within the contexts of railroad and river transportation.

This property is also important for its association with the life of Chase Wiggin, who made a significant contribution to the local and regional economy by establishing a large cattle market that helped supply the Boston market and benefited farmers from the community and throughout the state, and northern New England region. The barn and land retain integrity for this period of occupancy.

The Wiggin Barn, erected in 1860, is architecturally significant as the only hundred-foot barn in the town of Exeter, the largest surviving historic barn in the community. It is important as a well-preserved example of mid-nineteenth century barn design and construction. An assessment of its statewide importance was conducted at the time of acquisition and the property and barn was determined eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places.

Conservation and Preservation Actions:

The Town of Exeter purchased the Raynes Farm in 2002 with Exeter Conservation Funds and a state Land Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) grant. The 48.6-acre parcel located on Newfields Road, is held by the Town, and managed by the Conservation Commission. LCHIP has been granted certain rights as defined in the Stewardship Agreement and Executory Interest Deed and therefore also have authority over certain actions as defined in those documents.

Raynes Farm Management and Oversight:

Soon after purchasing the farm, an oversight committee was established by the Conservation Commission. Membership would consist of a minimum of two representatives from the Conservation Commission, one member from the Exeter Historical Society, one member from the Public Works Department, the tenant farmer and two private citizens. Farming on the property continues through a lease with a local farm. The Conservation Commission feels it is important to provide the tenant farmer with a voice in the overall vision and management of the farm, and asked Nathan Merrill (one of the owners of Stuart Farm) to serve on the Stewardship Committee. This is an important piece of the relationship which keeps communication open and helps

ensure a successful long-term arrangement for operation of the Raynes Farm. To avoid a conflict of interest, the tenant farmer would not vote on matters regarding the lease.

The “Raynes Farm Stewardship Committee” (RFSC) oversees the use of the farm, helps identify and prioritize preservation and public use objectives, and advises the Conservation Commission on actions that need to be taken. The Chairperson of the Stewardship Committee also serves as the primary contact person for inquiries regarding the property, particularly in maintaining the Town’s relationship with farmers who lease the farmland and barn.

The RFSC should meet at least annually prior to August 1st to review the monitoring report, the farmer-Commission lease agreement, and the Management Plan (which guides policy decisions on property uses). Any suggestions for changes agreed upon by the Committee should be submitted to the Commission for their approval. The Raynes Farm Stewardship Committee will inspect the condition of the barn itself and forward any recommendations for maintenance needs to the Conservation Commission annually no later than August 1st. This will allow incorporation into the LCHIP annual report as well as the town budget process.

The Conservation Commission is the responsible party for monitoring the Raynes Farm annually in compliance with the LCHIP regulations. By incorporating the RFSC review of the barn into the annual inspection process it will help to ensure the Management Plan and annual monitoring reports include current conditions of the barn. A copy of the complete monitoring report should be shared with the Stewardship Committee each year.

Concept:

The following development plan outlines the vision, objectives, usage and plan specifics for the property. They were established in consistency with the LCHIP Project Agreement, the Conservation Easement Deed and the Warranty Deed of Executory Interest. The development plan consists of the Vision and Objectives narrative, Appendix A (Project Priorities), Appendix B (Vision and Usage Plan), and Appendix C (Completed Projects).

Vision:

To preserve and protect the Raynes farm and Wiggin Barn for the Town of Exeter and its citizens to enjoy and use for agricultural, recreational and educational purposes in accordance with the established Raynes Farm Management Plan.

Objectives:

1. To preserve and utilize the Raynes Farm as active farmland in agricultural production using best management practices.
2. To preserve the Raynes Farm and barn as a significant historical and archaeological site.
3. To retain the Raynes Farm as a scenic vista and natural area enhancing the aesthetic quality and visual character of the Town.
4. To protect the unique and fragile saltwater marsh of the Squamscott River.
5. To assess and maintain the wildlife habitat the Raynes Farm provides, with its special combination of river frontage, salt marsh, fresh water wetlands, actively managed open fields and woodlands.
6. To provide the citizens of Exeter with appropriate access and use of the conservation land and the riverfront.
7. To provide educational activities to for school groups, historical organizations and other interested parties.
8. To provide a venue at the farm and barn for public usage events that benefit the Raynes Farm through awareness and fund raising.
9. To provide a secure storage and viewing area for historic items such as wagons, farm equipment and other items that have a historic time fram connection to the period of the farm and barn.
10. To actively pursue alliances with organizations and individuals who support the presence of the Raynes property in the Town of Exeter.

Guidelines:

The actively managed farmland provides a unique scenic quality quite different from un-managed open lands. This landscape defines this special parcel of land. The historic barn on the edge of the road adds to this defining quality. The farmland has been in agricultural production for centuries, making it one of the key historic elements of the property. The high-quality agricultural soils found on the farm require active management to remain productive, economically viable and scenic. For these reasons, the Conservation Commission, with town meeting authorization and the approval of the Board of Selectmen, have entered into an agreement with a local family farm (Stuart Farm, LLC) to use the land as active farmland. The agreement contains specific arrangements for the use of the farm and includes but is not limited to management for hay, row crops such as corn and raising farm animals. Since

farming the land is the first objective of the Management Plan, other objectives of the Plan, should be implemented as to not interfere with the active farming.

The Raynes Barn should be preserved as a classic example of a 19th century barn with 20th century improvements. The timber-frame barn is the largest of its type remaining in Exeter, and the mid-20th century modifications in the lower level for then-modern milk production remain fairly intact. A fund to maintain the barn should be established and overseen by the Commission to finance the upkeep of the barn. The use of the barn is to be under the control of the Commission with guidance from the Stewardship Committee. Subject to its physical condition and safety, uses could include utilization by the farmer as specified in the agreement with the Commission. No materials or equipment can be stored in the barn without written approval of the Conservation Commission.

Subject to the physical condition and safety of the barn, public usage would be on a controlled basis, with specific permission for each event. Public usage events would include, but not be limited to school groups, Historical Society visits, artist uses, music events, farm to table dinners, outdoor events such as skiing and snowshoeing and other similar gatherings. The Stewardship Committee hopes that different types of educational activities can take place at the farm. For example, elementary school children from around the area could visit the farm for historic, environmental, or agricultural lessons. Seacoast School of Technology Building Trades students could come study the timber framing in the barn, or even help with maintenance or future improvements at the barn, such as building new doors or installation of new clapboard siding. Given safety considerations and the historic character of the barn, commercial events such as weddings, parties, and other social gatherings, not relating to or benefiting the farm and barn, should not be permitted. Educational signs and displays should be created for informing the occasional tour group from local schools or historical societies.

The barn retains many remnants of its evolution from a 19th-century stable and loose hay storage all on the main level (manure was stored in the basement) to a mid-20th century dairy operation with baled hay and equipment stored on the main floor, a tower silo for silage, and livestock housing, milking facilities, and milk room all located on the ground level. Other historical features of the farm such as the cemetery site and the cattle underpass should be maintained for their historical value.

The Commission shall maintain the LCHIP sign provided by the State. The Commission must approve the installation of any additional signage and it must conform to the Town's regulations.

The Commission has developed a trail system that allows public access without interfering with the farming activity. Access is provided at the opening in the stonewall at the northern end of the property, allowing for limited parking on the old Newfields Road right-of-way. The trail system should be maintained to stay on the perimeter of the property. Trails should maintain adequate signage to inform users as to parking, specific areas not to be used and the general rules of the Property. No wheeled

or motorized vehicles shall be permitted on the trails or land, except those specified in the agreement between the farmer and the Commission.

The Stewardship Committee's objective of assessing and preserving wildlife habitat is driven primarily by a desire to protect the increasingly endangered rural, undeveloped habitat that is home to many species of flora and fauna in coastal New Hampshire. Management of the Farm for wildlife shall be done in accordance with the goal of encouraging active farming. Hunting shall be permitted as allowable by State laws and regulations. Any lease between the farmer and the Commission should contain specific agreements regarding any wildlife management policies. The Commission should conduct a yearly review of the flora and fauna to ensure proper stewardship of the property. All changes in wildlife management activities should be done while working closely with the farmer so as to not diminish the agricultural activity on the farm.

Planning Horizon: The plan envisions a graduated time line based on funding and details yearly requirements, immediate-need projects (less than 2 years), planning for mid-range projects (2 to 5 years) and concept planning for long-range projects (5 to 10+ years).

Needs Statement: To implement the plan, it will be necessary to acquire funding and active support from the Town of Exeter administration, Conservation Commission and the town citizens. Preservation needs are elaborated in the project plan and will be included as appropriate in the Town's Capital Investment Plan and the operating budget.

Funding Possibilities: While the majority of funding is expected to come from Town of Exeter budgets, the committee will also look to grant funding and volunteer gifts and volunteer donations, gifts in kind and volunteer work.

APPENDIX A
Development Plan Maintenance, Repair and Development Actions
(updated November 2016)

Annual Maintenance and Monitoring Requirements Needs (yearly):

- 1) Mow and clear brush around the barn yearly following the growing season.
- 2) Conducted the required property monitoring and reporting for this property in compliance with the LCHIP agreement.
- 3) Annual inspection of the barn structure by a person familiar with facilities inspections.
- 4) Inspect the catch basin on the north side of the barn and clean when needed.
- 5) Include approximately- \$1500 in the annual budget request to address minor maintenance repairs.

Highest Priority (less than 2 years):

- 1) Design and repair stone foundation wall and sill at northeast side of barn.
- 2) Provide interim repairs of deteriorated clapboards until such time that a major clapboard repair project is funded.
- 3) Repair and/or replace missing and deteriorated floor boards in the barn so that the barn is safe for public use.
- 4) Accomplish miscellaneous repairs: Secure truss cross braces, tighten cables, repair broken windows, paint east side door, secure east side entrance door.
- 5) Apply to the State of New Hampshire for inclusion of Raynes Farm and Barn on the State Register of Historic Places. Update the 2002 NHDHR Historic Inventory and the 2002 Historic Structures Report as the basis for the submission.
- 6) Apply for grant funding to accomplish repair projects including a grant application for NH LCHIP funds.
- 7) Prepare a Draft Budget Plan: This will provide the Town and residents with a realistic cost analysis of what maintaining and operating the farm under this management plan will cost and facilitate efficient annual budget planning.
- 8) Survey and remove invasive plant throughout the property. This will include removing the scrubby brush that surrounded the old farm equipment removed in 2010.

Moderate Priority (2-5 years):

- 1) 1) Replace all deteriorated clapboards with highest priority given to the east side of the barn.
- 2) 2) Apply No-Char to barn interior.
- 3) Repair and repaint the barn exterior.
- 4) Remove and replace sill at silo connector. This may require removing the silo connector which would include coordination with LCHIP.
- 5) Replace sill at northwest gable end.
- 6) Conduct invasive plant monitoring program every two years to minimize the spread of invasive plants (*Reoccurring Activity*)

Lower Priority (5-10+ years):

- 1) Rebuild the milk room.
- 2) Conduct a structural analysis of the barn to insure that the use and loading of the barn is within safe limits. This should include hiring a structural engineer to set a #/sq foot load allowance.

APPENDIX B
Farm and Barn Vision and Usage Plan
(updated November 2016)

Vision Expansion and Process: The following is a list of vision and usage suggestions derived from various Conservation Commission, and Raynes Stewardship Committee meetings. It is intended to refine and develop the suggestions into a timeline action plan.

- Start with small accomplishable events and build upon successes.
- Repeat and expand the past uses such as the snowshoe event, artist event and similar uses.
- Arrange for a small band or folk concert events.
- Develop a farm/barn use policy that addresses the how and what (application, permissions, insurance, etc.)
- Develop a logistics plan that addresses parking, bathroom facilities, handicap access, security, etc.
- Promote the farm/barn through various media, ENL, website, Facebook and other social media.
- Develop a list of support people, establish partnership with support organizations, and promote a Friends of Raynes.
- Join barn preservation associations such as the Barn Alliance and promote the Raynes Barn in their media.
- Include the vision and processes actions in a action plan within the Development Plan; similar to the present plan's Project Priority List
- Develop a budget to support the vision implementation.
- Consider charging a small, reasonable fee to become a Friends of Raynes Farm member, and actively sought membership? We could offer a few perks as an incentive to join (i.e. free t-shirt, free note cards, a "Friends of Raynes Farm" appreciation day/event at Barn?). This could help shine a light on the property/efforts, provide a small source of revenue, but most importantly, help build a nice database of supporters who we could email, mail, etc. updates about upcoming events, volunteer-days, projects, etc.

APPENDIX C

Completed Projects (updated November 2016)

1) Barn Repairs:

Phase 1: - **Completed: 2004** Included the rebuilding of the north wall sills, installation of a catch basin along the north wall that passes through the lower level of the barn, installation of granite support posts and repairs to structural members.

Phase 2: Restoration **Work Completed: December 2006** and included:

- Temporarily removing existing milk room to permit sill repairs.
- Replacing deteriorating sills on milk room side of barn from milk room to wood framed wall (at other access door section) as per original drawing
- Repairing rotten vertical beams at new sill as required.
- Repairing vertical beam and re-engaging tendon into mortise as noted in original drawing.
- Replacing damaged floor joist as shown on original drawings
- Removing and replace existing broken girder beam as noted in original drawing.

- 2) Electrical Work: Basic service and lighting. **Completed: Summer 2006.**
- 3) Install multiple fire extinguishers and no smoking signs in the barn. **Completed: Summer 2007**
- 4) Barn doors: Tracks and rollers were replaced for the north-west gable end doors. The south-east gable end man door was restored for pedestrian access to the barn from the rear (to avoid people walking along the hazardous blind corner in Newfields Road to get into the barn). **Completed: Summer 2007**
- 5) Install a car and bus parking area at the north end of the property along Newfields Road opposite the former Raynes home. **Completed: Summer/Fall 2007**
- 6) Mark / delineate and restore the cemetery plot. Add a sign or historical marker. **Completed: Eagle Scout Kyle Scoggins, 2010.**
- 7) Removed dilapidated farm equipment. **Completed: Fall 2010**
- 8) Installation of cables in the wall, north and south of the barn along Newfields Rd.
- 9) Roof repair/replacement: The funds for replacement (\$33,000) were approved in the 2014 CIP. **Completed June 2014.**
- 10) A site plan was completed and recorded at the registry of deeds (D-29789)
- 11) Develop hiking trails that connect the parking lot with the barn and cemetery as identified in the Trail Management Plan. **Completed: Summer 2011**
- 12) Repair barn doors and replace missing window panes to ensure a weather -tight closure. SST constructed the door. **Completed: Summer 2015**
- 13) Stabilize failing NW sill: **Completed: 2015**

Priority Setting: Project needs will be evaluated annually. At each review meeting, priorities will be recommended by the RFSC and approved by the Conservation Commission.

Project Funding: Phase 1 restoration was accomplished using a combination of Town funds, LCHIP funds and donations. The Phase 2 restoration was accomplished by funding acquired through a Town Warrant Article, Conservation Commission funds and LCHIP funds. Roof replacement in 2014 was completed with a combination of Conservation Fund dollars and a portion within the building maintenance operating budget request. Requests for future projects will be submitted in the town's CIP process and operating budget process.

Raynes Farm Stewardship Committee
Meeting of June 30th, 2020
Draft Minutes

Members present: Sally Ward, Bill Campbell, Ginny Raub, Nick Campion, Kathy Norton, Ben Anderson.

Staff present: Kristen Murphy

Sally Ward called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Minutes:

Draft minutes from January 28th were reviewed. Kristen proposed a spelling correction to Frank Whittemore's name and revise the word expanding to "expand" under Other Topics. Mr. Campbell motioned to approve as amended. Ginny Raub seconded. Roll Call vote with Ginny, Bill, Nick, and Ben aye, and abstentions from Kathy and Sally. Motion passes.

LCHIP Application:

Sally informed the committee given the financial uncertainties presented by the pandemic, in addition to needing to update our budget for the Raynes repairs, it is unlikely we could secure a match either in kind or through warrant article for a grant application so we opted to not move forward with an LCHIP application at this time.

Upcoming Activities:

A subset of the committee has been working on interpretive signs for the historic items within the barn. Ginny added that she is working to refine the signs and to set up the interior with a walking tour of the items so its organized in a sequential approach. She is working with Jen Brackett Piskovitz who will donate the artwork and Ginny will donate the printing costs. Bill suggested the committee inspect inside the barn to develop a plan. Kathy and Sally both offered to help.

Sally is working to schedule an organization/clean-up day for inside the barn this fall.

Kristen created a bird virtual walk with Carlos Guindon and Exeter TV and will be sharing that through the website and social media.

Mowing:

Sally discussed what she believed the Committee intended for mowing.

For year round mowing: It included

- gravel road to the barn and a width along the stonewall parallel to Newfields Road to accommodate the parking with support from DPW
- cutting back Autumn olive around the field perimeter.
- DPW cutting around the barn
- Trail from the parking lot to the trail in the woods

Outside of the growing season, we would also like to keep clear the path to the cemetery.

Kristen will need to confirm property ownership in association with the former railroad bed.

Bill suggested the northern edge may be a good area to focus. Kristen, Bill, Sally and Kathy will go take a look. Kathy said she paid for David O'Hearn to mow both sides of the stone wall from the parking lot north to the woods edge and that the work has been completed.

We learned after the fact that mowing had begun prior. She spoke to Darren Davis to understand the need for mowing before the July 15th lease terms. Darren explained there was a need to cut early due to the dry conditions. They had invested a significant amount of cost by adding wood ash in late fall and was concerned that by July 15th the hay would be so dry it would be unusable and that investment would be lost. He committed to coordinate any future changes with the Town prior to mowing. Typically waiting until July 15th is not a concern for them but this was a unique circumstance. There was a portion of hay that remained and Carlos Guindon confirmed that there were two active bobolink nest sites within the unmowed section. After inspecting the site, Darren called Kristen to confirm he would be able to leave that portion on the highest part of the field unmowed until July 15. He was supportive of having an annual conversation about mowing needs prior to the mowing based on seasonal conditions. The committee discussed various options for balancing haying, habitat management and recreation onsite. Ultimately the Committee believed a meeting early in the season would be advantageous to all and will recommend that to the Commission.

Outdoor Events:

Ben had received permission from the Conservation Commission for an event at Raynes for the first or second weekend of August. He felt with the strong desire for people to gather as communities reopen, there is an opportunity to bring more attention to Raynes. His original proposal was having an outdoor band in the barn doorway area and an audience on the berm. Given the circumstances he has seen a strong desire for people to do this and asked about the potential to host the event multiple times while ensuring total numbers of people are appropriate for the space and people remain socially distanced. Following the request given the challenges with mowing, he opted to initiate the events across the street at his property and tickets sold out very quickly. Ginny inquired what State standard this type of events need to follow. Ben said according to the State and the Town, this activity would follow outdoor dining meaning people need to be outdoors and remain 6' apart. Nick suggested a layout for an event at Raynes with blankets set on the berm properly distanced that people could purchase in advance. Sally expressed a concern about liability. Ben stated he shared that concern very much and his approach was to be sure there was plenty of space and a hard limit on numbers with mandatory tickets. Ginny suggested eliminating serving food or beverages. Ben suggested pre-marking spaces poses a challenge because you don't know in advance how many people are in a household. He also said food and beverage sales helps to offset expenses and it may not be feasible without that. Sally suggested revisiting the idea after the weekend Word Barn Meadow events have occurred, after Sally, Ben and Kristen meet onsite to evaluate space, and that the Commission should discuss the event (even if a single event) given the changed circumstances. Nick said waiting too long may be a missed opportunity to capitalize on a demographic that is eager to gather. Ginny said lead time for musicians is needed. Kristen added once there is a refined proposal, in addition to the Commission, we need Town manager to review. Sally concurred.

Meeting adjourned at 11:06.

Ideas for Engagement with Pollinators

1. Elementary schools/education outreach (one-time or ongoing)
2. Ice cream social
3. Pledge cards
4. Garden Designs/sketches (“cheat sheets”)
5. Container recommendations
6. Tri-fold display
7. Library display dedicated to pollinators
8. Throw out seeds (packets) during parades
9. Container pots & plants
10. Election/polling display
11. Seed giveaways
12. Town-wide photo contest
13. Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts collaboration
14. Create a large Pollinator Pathways map of the town (on an easel) and invite people to place a dot or sequin on their property to indicate they took the “Pollinator Pledge”
15. Invite residents to get on the monthly email list [email pollinatorpathwaysnh@gmail.com]
16. Host a “Pollinator Conversations” event at a resident’s yard and point out native plants
17. Start a Pollinator Club for pre-k and kindergarteners. Invite them to fields, meadows and pollinator gardens in town to find butterflies, moths, bees, beetles. “Kids in nature”
18. Host more than one program/year (e.g., Pollinator Conversations walk around a wildflower meadow or town park)
19. Encourage your garden club and friends of the library to sell native plants
20. Host a native plant sale
21. Ask the library to purchase and recommend helpful books (we can provide a list, but “Bringing Nature Home” by Doug Tallamy is a great start)
22. Exhibit and/or place posters/flyers/banners at town hall, the library, post office
23. Write an article for the town newsletter or website
24. Encourage residents to become Monarch Waystation ([application via Monarch Watch](#)), and place habitat signs on their property



Partner Roles & Responsibilities

Pollinator Pathways NH will provide 1-1 training & a Toolkit to the Liaison

Collaborate with Pollinator Pathways NH

- Identify a Partner liaison
 - Provide feedback in meetings (4x/year)
 - Respond to occasional emails (~1-2x/month)
- Announce partnership to residents
- Like / follow us on Facebook (if you have a presence)
- Share what works for you with other Partners / towns
- Secure support from volunteers to educate residents, do programs, etc.

Educate residents

1. (If on Facebook) Share our Facebook posts as appropriate: [@PollinatorPathwaysNH](#)
2. Promote upcoming programs (we have an “Event promotion cheat sheet” for guidance)
3. Share handouts & resources with residents (our recommendations provided on a thumb drive)
4. Host and promote 1 or more Pollinator Pathways programs per year (we can provide content ideas and suggest potential speakers, as well as an “Event promotion cheat sheet”)
5. Secure at least one monarch habitat area in town, certify it with www.monarchwatch.org and place a “Monarch Waystation” sign on that property ([Apply here](#)).

See “Ideas for Engagement” for optional activities to engage your community.



Facebook [@PollinatorPathwaysNH](#)
[Small Changes for Small Creatures](#)

Exeter Conservation Commission
June 9, 2020
Virtual Meeting
Draft Minutes

Call to Order

1. Introduction of Members Present (by Roll Call) and New Members Welcome

Present at tonight's meeting were Chair Andrew Koff, Dave Short, Treasurer, Kristen Murphy, Sally Ward, Clerk, Bill Campbell, Carlos Guindon, Trevor Mattera, Lindsey White, Alternate, Nick Campion, Alternate, Donald Clement, Alternate and Kristen Osterwood, Alternate

Members present indicated there was no one else present in the room with them during this meeting.

Absent: Alyson Eberthardt, Ginny Raub, Julie Gilman, Select Board Liaison, Daryl Browne, Select Board Alternate Liaison

Mr. Koff called the meeting to order at 7 PM and indicated Alternate Lindsey White is voting.

Mr. Koff recognized Todd Piskovitz for his five years of service to the Board and thanked him for his service to the Town and the Commission. Mr. Piskovitz was thoughtful, had good discussions and will be missed.

Mr. Koff recognized new alternate members Nick Campion and Kristen Osterwood.

Mr. Campion has been with Danvers Parks & Recreation for six years and Somersworth Recreation prior to that. Mr. Campion also serves on the Raynes Farm Stewardship Committee. Mr. Koff noted it is great to have another event organizer in the midst.

Ms. Osterwood serves on the Exeter Sustainability Committee, moving here in 2018 from Pennsylvania. Ms. Osterwood is originally from Maine and grew up hiking and camping in New England. Ms. Osterwood was in engineering working at Unitil and as a sustainability analyst on Energy Way.

Mr. Koff thanked them both for joining and noted both had great backgrounds and are real assets the Commission was lucky to have such a diverse group of wetlands scientists and biologists.

Mr. Koff read the meeting preamble indicated that an emergency exists and the provisions of RSA 91-A:2 III (b) are being invoked. As federal, state and local officials have determined gatherings of ten or more people pose a substantial risk to the community and the meeting imperative to the continued operation of Town and government and services which are vital to public, health, safety and confidence. This meeting will be conducted without a quorum physically present in the same location and welcome members of the public accessing the meeting remotely.

2. Public Comment

None.

Action Items

1. Election of Vice-Chair

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned to appoint Trevor Mattera as Vice Chair of the Exeter Conservation Commission. Ms. Ward seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Ward – aye, Campbell – aye, Guindon – aye, Mattera – aye, White – aye, Koff – aye, and Short – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

2. Discussion of deed/stewardship fee/baseline on proposed conservation land in association with Gateway at Exeter LLC mixed use development on Epping Road (Tax Map 47, Lots 6 and 7) (Brendan Quigley)

Mr. Koff indicated the Commission will be reviewing the proposed deed, stewardship fee and baseline documents for Map 47, Lots 6-7 which is a mixed-use development on Epping Road.

Ms. Murphy indicated the project was before the Commission last fall and again last month. The Commission will evaluate whether to support passive recreation on the property with no negative impact and what types, establish the baseline report, determine an appropriate stewardship fee, and location of access. Ms. Murphy indicated she met and walked the boundary and interior of the parcel with Bill, Drew and Carlos, and reviewed the deed, baseline and management plan and made recommendations to the full Commission at tonight's meeting. Mr. Quigley received a copy.

Ms. Murphy indicated an old skidder trail was present which is one possibility for a trail, where there has already been impact vs. a loop around the perimeter. Mr. Campbell noted there are ten vernal pools on the property. Mr. Guindon questioned the main access area and would like to discourage ATVs with larger roads. Ms. Murphy pointed to a potential access point on the map noting the thought about the trail from the subcommittee was it would not connect to the Little River Conservation area. No sign of ATV use, however hunting does take place on the parcel and on the adjoining parcels. .

Ms. Murphy said the subcommittee felt it was important for the CC to be involved with the design, location, width and surface material. They felt they would need some to either construct the trail jointly or have the developer install it at their expense because relying solely on volunteer labor may delay construction and if it's not done early there could be impacts to sensitive areas.

Tom Monahan who was on the call noted he was proud to donate 43 acres to the Town of Exeter and Conservation Commission.

Mr. Clement noted the parcel is flat and wide with good access. There is nothing wrong with having one way in and one way out.

Mr. Koff noted a zig zag structure/gate could encourage walking and exclude bikes and motorized vehicles as intended.

MOTION: Mr. Campbell motioned prior to issuing a certificate of occupancy, a trail open to foot traffic only would be installed at the applicant's expense following review and approval by the Conservation Commission of the location, length, width and surface materials. To prevent vehicular and bike access from the property to the mitigation parcel, the logging access road will be gated with a barrier open to pedestrians only. Ms. Ward seconded the motion.

Mr. Clement questioned whether "wheeled vehicles" covered a broader spectrum? Mr. Short added motorized addresses snowmobiles as well.

Mr. Koff recommended amending the last sentence of the motion to read "to prevent any wheeled and/or motorized access from the property to the mitigation parcel."

Mr. Campbell asked if that wording might unintentionally exclude wheelchair use. Mr. Koff questioned whether the parcel should be handicapped accessible and recommended keeping wheeled but excluding wheelchairs noting it would be a separate discussion for the developer to investigate the feasibility of handicapped accessible portion of the trail.

Mr. Quigley indicated both non-motorized and excluding mountain bikes specifically and questioned where those appear in the preservation documents. Mr. Campbell indicated it should appear in the deed. Ms. Murphy added when the development gets approved the Planning Board will establish conditions of approval for the development plan to connect the Conservation parcel with the development.

Ms. Murphy indicated the applicant could explore ways to prohibit vehicular access with the developer to be responsible to design an access point which would exclude motorized and wheeled vehicles.

Mr. Koff recommended amending the original motion by keeping up to the last sentence and doing a separate motion that bikes be limited through the deed, so it says foot traffic only.

Mr. Campbell accepted the change to his motion. Ms. Ward seconded the amendment and asked to reread the motion with the last sentence eliminated.

REVISED MOTION: "Mr. Campbell revised his motion to state prior to issuing a certificate of occupancy, a trail open to foot traffic only would be installed at the applicant's expense following review and approval by the Conservation Commission of the location, length, width and surface materials."
A roll call vote was taken Koff – aye, Short – aye, Ward – aye, Campbell – aye, Guindon – aye, Mattera – aye and White – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Mr. Koff noted Gove Environmental had prepared the Baseline Document report and Management Plan.

Mr. Quigley noted he reviewed the suggested changes proposed by the committee had no objections to the Natural Features section and details in the deed. Mr. Quigley noted it wasn't clear if both documents, including the Management Plan, were required and offered to work out the content with Ms. Murphy.

Mr. Campbell asked about the deeded right of way in the document and where it goes and comes from and Mr. Quigley noted there were six parking spaces and trail access through the wetland and that it referred to the proposed deeded access. Mr. Quigley noted this was not establishing a public access but establishes the right of the Town of Exeter agents to have access through Little River to do monitoring etc.

Mr. Guindon noted there was little evidence of invasive species, only some glossy buckthorn and multi flora rose. Brendan Quigley indicated he saw some phragmites shown of Photo 16 at Bloody Brook

Mr. Quigley questioned who the listed contact person should be, Ms. Murphy specifically, by her title or the Town of Exeter. Mr. Clement noted that in his experience on the Select Board as personnel and positions come and go it is always best to list the Town of Exeter.

MOTION: Mr. Koff motioned that the Conservation Commission was comfortable signing off on the final documents after review and drafting by the subcommittee. Ms. Ward seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Koff – aye, Short – aye, Ward – aye, Campbell – aye, Guindon – aye, Mattera – aye, and White – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Mr. Quigley will work to finalize the documents.

Mr. Koff said the subcommittee felt the Stewardship Fee should be a one-time payment and noted there is additional protection and lower legal risk with DES able to enforce any non-compliant behavior.

Mr. Campbell indicated the document they reviewed showed a yearly range could be from \$400-\$1,500. \$400 which at 25 years would be \$10,000. He also suggested the fee should cover expenses like kiosk, trail maintenance and gates, so perhaps the \$5,000 to \$10,000 range. Mr. Koff noted the gate would be off the conservation area so it only needs to cover monitoring. Mr. Guindon added and maintenance and invasive species control, and felt \$8,000.

Mr. Mattera questioned whether there was a parcel and associated fee that could be used as a precedent and Ms. Murphy noted 80 Epping Road is smaller and collects \$1,000 annually and is a conservation easement vs this which would be owned outright by the Town of Exeter and that we do not have a parcel similar to this. Hourly rates for monitoring range from \$12-\$15 per hour, however with DES support there is no comparison.

Mr. Quigley said given the requirement to install the trail, he and Mr. Monahan were thinking more in the \$5,000 range. Mr. Koff suggested that given the trail would be on the logging road, construction would be minimal. Mr. Short proposed \$7,500. Ms. Ward agreed. Mr. Mattera agreed that at the \$7,500

rate a 5% return would be enough to cover monitoring expenses and the \$5,000 range may not cover expenses.

MOTION: Mr. Mattera motioned to require a one-time stewardship fee of \$7,500 paid by the applicant and deposited to the Conservation Fund for stewardship. Mr. Guindon seconded the motion.

Mr. Quigley questioned whether the fee might be paid over two years. The Commission noted that was acceptable.

AMENDED MOTION: Mr. Mattera amended the motion to include the payment would be spread over two years if the applicant desired.

A roll call vote was taken Koff – aye, Short – aye, Ward – aye, Campbell – aye, Guindon – aye, Mattera – aye and White – aye. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Mr. Koff led discussion on deed review and asked if hunting would be acceptable on the parcel? Ms. Ward expressed concerns with the proximity to the development. Mr. Koff proposed a safety zone could be established to protect the residential use and be a part of the management plan. Ms. Ward asked what the state law was with regard to discharge of hunting rifles near residences and Mr. Clement noted there is no discharge permitted within 300’ of a residence and 150’ of a road. Shot guns used in hunting have a limited range although there have been instances where that has been violated. Mr. Mattera noted whether or not to mark the safety zone could be part of another discussion.

Ms. Murphy noted once the Commission approved the recommendation it would go to Town Counsel and then the Select Board.

MOTION: Mr. Campbell motioned the Commission has reviewed this proposal and recommend acceptance of the conservation easement for a portion of Tax Map Parcel 47-7-1 pending review by Town Counsel. Mr. Koff seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Koff – aye, Short – aye, Ward – aye, Campbell – aye, Guindon – aye, Mattera – aye and White – aye.

3. Committee Reports

a. Property Management

i. Stone/Leighton Correspondence

Ms. Murphy noted email correspondence was received concerning the Stone/Leighton parcel on Powder Mill Road. A gentleman’s agreement has been in place for years concerning haying of the open grassland field by the heirs of the property’s family. An abutter raised concerns the field was not hayed in the past couple of years.

Ms. Murphy indicated the deed does not obligate any individual to do annual haying or mowing which is a fair expense. Ms. Murphy will contact the people who were doing the haying to see if they are still interested before budget season begins.

Mr. Clement indicated as far as best management practices it should remain a field, it makes Powder Mill Road look attractive and is a great place for the Bobolink. Ms. Murphy indicated if the Stone heirs are no longer interested in haying it could be added to the annual budget.

ii. Invasive Plant Management Update (Carlos)

Mr. Guindon indicated Kristen helped him begin removal at the Rose Farm and edge of Henderson Swasey. There is a lot of garlic mustard. Mr. Guindon worked with Paul Friedrichs at Landing I on the north side of the gas line. There was a lot of poison ivy. The other side of the gas line was heavily infested.

Mr. Guindon worked at Raynes Farm today and noted a lot of garlic mustard and knotweed along the stream. Mr. Mattera and Mr. Short indicated they would help with that.

Mr. Koff thanked Mr. Guindon for an amazing, tremendous amount of work.

Ms. Murphy noted the weed wrench came in and she will make arrangements to drop it off to Mr. Guindon.

iii. Raynes Field Perimeter Maintenance

Kathy Norton emailed about hiring David O'Hearn to mow along the stone wall near the parking lot entrance to improve visibility on Newfields Road. Ms. Norton was willing to spend her own money and it would be nice to send a thank you note for the \$300 donation. Ms. Ward will provide a notecard.

Ms. Murphy noted last year \$1,250 was approved for brush removal around the field which did not get done and was returned to the budget. There is another \$1,000 in contract services. The mowing proposal is \$1,575 at \$65/hr.

MOTION: Ms. Ward motioned to approve \$1,000 from Contract Services and \$275 from the Mowing budget line item for 19 hours of field perimeter maintenance. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Koff – aye, Short – aye, Ward – aye, Campbell – aye, Guindon – aye, Mattera – aye and White – aye. Motion passed 7-0-0.

b. Trails

Mr. Koff indicated Everett Evans installed the Irvine sign and thanked him for his craftsmanship. The sign is located on the backside of the Country Club access. Mr. Koff will provide the information to Ms. Murphy to add it to Trail Finders.

Mr. Koff indicated he would like to send a gift card to Mr. Evans and Mr. Thunberg each for \$30.

MOTION: Mr. Guindon motioned to approve spending \$60 for gift cards as thanks for the craftsmanship as a gesture of thanks for their service to the Town. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Mr. Koff – aye, Mr. Short – aye, Ms. Ward – aye, Mr. Campbell – aye, Mr. Guindon – aye, Mr. Mattera – aye and Ms. White – aye. Motion passed 7-0-0.

i. Trails for People and Wildlife Tool

Mr. Murphy indicated NH Fish & Game and partners have put together a trail management guide and GIS tool (available on Grant View). Ms. Murphy attended the workshop and provide a link to the video which is about 40 minutes. The document and mapping tool has potential to assist with sensitive areas and impact locations. The tool will identify in red zones what could be a sign of impact to lessen impact on wildlife.

ii. New trails and Trail Closure Update (Bill & Dave)

Mr. Campbell noted Mr. Guindon, and Ms. Murphy started a new trail at the kiosk which comes out by the skateboard park.

Mr. Short indicated three more trails were closed. Ms. Murphy will get more signage.

iii. Trail Challenge

Mr. Murphy noted she has been adding more trail networks to the Trail Finder program. Ms. Murphy put together a challenge to encourage more use of some of the lesser known parcels. The challenge is for the first person to send a photo of all eight wins an “I hike Exeter” sticker. Ms. Murphy indicated it is a clickable flyer which pulls up Trail Finder pictures, maps, and parking. Ms. Murphy will post it to the website.

c. Outreach Events

i. Raynes Virtual Bird Walk

Ms. Ward indicated the Sky Watch event was postponed to October.

Mr. Guindon indicated the Bobolink was the highlight of the Virtual Bird Walk and is posted on Facebook.

d. Tree City Subcommittee Report

Ms. Ward noted planting was done May 21st. The Chinese Elm was planted on Lincoln Street by the playground as an Arbor Day event this year. The flag and sign are mounted at the triangle by Water and Summer Street and outside Town Offices.

e. Sustainability Advisory Committee (Kirsten O.)

Ms. Osterwood indicated she is working with Mr. Sharples on a greenhouse gas inventory with a UNH fellow and intern and Unitil and will have an update at the next meeting.

7. Approval of Minutes: May 12, 2020

Ms. Ward recommended edits to the section on Tree City.

MOTION: Mr. Campbell motioned to accept the May 12, 2020 minutes as amended. Mr. Koff seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Koff – aye, Short – aye, Ward – aye, Campbell – aye, Guindon – aye, Mattera – aye and White – aye. Motion passed 7-0-0.

8. Correspondence

9. Other Business

Mr. Guindon attended a webinar concerning multi-state connectivity with the coastal area to the White Mountains and will send the information. Ms. Murphy noted she printed a summary in the memo to highlight bits and pieces and will discuss it at the next meeting.

10. Next Meeting: Date Scheduled: July 14, 2020, Submission Deadline: July 3, 2020

Adjournment

MOTION: Chair Koff moved to adjourn at 9:43 PM. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Hoijer
Recording Secretary

JUNE 23, 2020

Mr. Langdon Plummer, Chairman
Exeter Planning Board
10 Front Street
Exeter, NH 03833

Re: Gateway at Exeter Development, case #19-16

Dear Chairman Plummer,

I am writing to provide my findings from an initial site walk to review the proposed Gateway at Exeter Development, case #19-16. I visited the site with Gwen English on 5/31/2020 at 7:00AM to 8:30AM. I reviewed as much of the site as possible during that time, but due to a lack of reference marks, the size of the site, and dense vegetation I was not able to review the entire property or the entire extent of the proposed development during this initial site walk. My observations are described below and broadly fall under the categories of (1) an uncategorized vernal pool associated with Wetland Impact Area 'A', (2) multiple observations on-site of an iris species similar to that described as a State Endangered species by the NH Natural Heritage Bureau that requires further coordination with the State, (3) abundant regeneration of swamp white oak, and (4) lack of clearly marked and referenced wetland boundaries to appropriately evaluate wetland locations and wetland impacts as a result of the proposed development.

Upon entering the site directly across the street from the Mobil station, I immediately encountered a classic vernal pool feature a stones-throw away from Epping Road. This wetland area is represented on the proposed development plans (sheet 6 of 30) as Wetland Impact Area 'A' (see photos 1 and 2 below). This pool was nearly dry because of the unusually dry spring, but approximately 8-inches of water remained with abundant amphibian activity, including the unidentified tadpole shown in photo 2. Tadpoles are difficult to identify and require a microscope for identification by their mouthparts, so I was not able to identify the amphibian species during the site walk. Based on the wetland flags observed at this site, seasonal water elevations likely fluctuate approximately three to four feet, and the pool clearly dries out regularly and therefore would not support amphibians that require permanent standing water (i.e. non-vernal pool species). Further evaluation of this pool must be completed, including the evaluation of secondary vernal pool indicators given that egg mass identification is not possible at this point. I strongly recommend a third party evaluation of this pool given that the applicant's team considers wetlands on-site of low value and has not called out this wetland for its notable value and high potential as a vernal pool.

In reviewing other wetland areas on the site I encountered multiple locations of an iris, similar to that flagged as the slender blue bearded-iris (*Limniris prismatica*) by the NH Natural Heritage Bureau as a species "critically imperiled due to rarity and vulnerability" in the state of New Hampshire and a species of concern globally (see photos 3 and 4). Locations of the iris observed are in areas to be directly and indirectly impacted. Additional coordination is required with the NH Natural Heritage Bureau to confirm the identification of the iris observed (note that the habitat that the iris was observed in matches that identified by the Natural Heritage Bureau, and past observations of the slender blue bearded-iris occur immediately adjacent to the site. In addition to coordination with the NH Natural Heritage Bureau, I

strongly recommend that a qualified botanist completely inventory the site for slender blue bearded-iris and other rare, threatened, and endangered species as part of a third party review.

During the May 28, 2020, planning board meeting there was also mention of a nearby swamp white oak basin swamp, an exemplary natural community flagged by the NH Natural Heritage Bureau that might occur on the site due to close proximity. While I cannot fully recall how the applicant's team represented the presence of swamp white oak, they represented that its presence is limited on site, if at all present. During my site walk, I observed abundant swamp white oak regeneration and some mature trees, indicating that the pre-harvest condition of the forest included mature swamp white oak, possibly in abundance. The wetlands I observed on site were of high quality, despite post-harvest conditions, and included indications of highly variable water levels based on micro-topography. These characteristics differentiate these wetlands from "low value" forested wetlands as represented by the applicant's team.

Finally, the site lacked clearly marked and referenced wetland flagging to evaluate wetland boundaries and wetland impacts proposed. Given the lack of clearly marked and referenced wetland boundaries, it was unclear if the applicant fully captured all of the wetland resources observed during my site visit. There were areas of wetland boundaries observed with no wetland boundary flags in sight. Before a conditional use permit for the wetlands conservation overlay district can be evaluated further, wetland boundaries must be clearly marked and referenced (both in the field and on the plan set) to fully evaluate wetland impacts. Given that this project proposes to directly impact nearly three acres of wetlands, a remarkable area of high value aquatic resources providing ecosystem services to a large portion of the Town of Exeter further down the watershed, I strongly encourage a third party review of the wetland delineation and wetlands functional assessment by a qualified third party reviewer.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the site in the field and to offer my comments to the board.

Sincerely,



Peter Steckler



Photo 1: Vernal pool (unconfirmed), Wetland Impact Area 'A'.



Photo 2: One of many unidentified tadpoles observed in the unconfirmed vernal pool within Wetland Impact Area 'A'.



Photo 3: Area noted as “Standing Water” on lot 47-7 with occurrences of a wetland occurring iris circled in red, potentially the State Endangered slender blue bearded-iris (*Limniris prismatica*), pending confirmation. These irises were observed in multiple locations across the site in areas to be directly and indirectly impacted by the proposed development.



Photo 4: Close-up of an iris observed, potentially the State Endangered slender blue bearded-iris (*Limniris prismatica*), pending confirmation.

**TOWN OF EXETER
PLANNING BOARD
June 25, 2020
VIRTUAL MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES**

Zoom ID: 865 4385 1931

Phone: 1 646 558 8656

I. PRELIMINARIES:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT BY ROLL CALL: Chair Langdon Plumer, Vice-Chair Aaron Brown, Pete Cameron, Clerk, Gwen English, John Grueter, Jen Martel, Molly Cowan, Select Board Representative, Pete Steckler, Alternate and Nancy Belanger, Alternate.

STAFF PRESENT: Town Planner Dave Sharples

II. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Plumer called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM and read out loud the meeting preamble which indicated that an emergency exists and the provisions of RSA 91-A:2 III (b) are being invoked. As federal, state and local officials have determined gatherings of ten or more people pose a substantial risk to the community and the meeting imperative to the continued operation of Town and government and services which are vital to public, health, safety and confidence. This meeting will be conducted without a quorum physically present in the same location and welcome members of the public accessing the meeting remotely.

III. OLD BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 14, 2020

Mr. Cameron motioned to approve the May 14, 2020 minutes, as amended. Vice-Chair Brown seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Plumer – aye, Brown – aye, Grueter – aye, English – aye, Cameron – aye, Martel – aye, Cowan - aye. With all in favor the motion passed 7-0-0.

May 28, 2020

Mr. Grueter motioned to approve the May 28, 2020 minutes, as amended. Ms. English seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Plumer – aye, Brown – abstained, Grueter – aye, English – aye, Cameron – aye, Martel – aye, Cowan - aye. With all in favor the motion passed 6-0-1.

41 June 11, 2020

42

43 *Vice-Chair Brown motioned to approve the June 11, 2020 minutes, as amended. Mr. Cameron*
44 *seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Plumer – aye, Brown – aye, Grueter – abstained,*
45 *English – aye, Cameron – aye, Martel – aye, Cowan - aye. With all in favor the motion passed 6-0-1.*

46

47 **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

48

49 **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

50 1. Continued public hearing on the application of Gateway at Exeter, LLC for a proposed lot line
51 adjustment and subdivision at 170 Epping Road. The lot line adjustment will transfer 2.10 acres of land
52 from **Tax Map parcel #47-7** into two lots in conjunction with a mixed-use development being proposed
53 for the site.

54 C-3 Epping Road Highway Commercial zoning district

55 PB Case #19-15

56

57 2. Continued public hearing on the application of Gateway at Exeter, LLC for a site plan review and a
58 Wetlands Conditional Use Permit for the proposed construction of a mixed-use development at 170
59 Epping Road (**TM #47-6 and #47-7**). The proposal includes a 224-unit multi-family residential complex, a
60 two-story 48,560 square foot mixed-use building that may include a 20,040 YMCA daycare facility,
61 office/retail space and possibly a restaurant, along with associated site improvements.

62 C-3 Epping Road Highway Commercial zoning district

63 PB Case #19-16

64

65 Mr. Sharples indicated Planning Board Cases #19-15 and #19-16 are for a lot-line adjustment and
66 subdivision with CUP. The applicants appeared on May 28, 2020 meeting and were subsequently tabled
67 to allow the development team adequate time to review plans and documentation. Shared parking
68 analysis has been done and is enclosed. A memo that includes potential transportation
69 requirements/changes is provided. Applicant is requesting several waivers. The applicant appeared
70 before the Conservation Commission at their June 9, 2020 meeting to discuss recreation and deed
71 stewardship. Jen Mates of DPW has remaining comments regarding corridor study and internal traffic
72 movement concerns. Pete Steckler did a site walk and sent in a memo regarding his findings.

73

74 Jim Petropulos indicated he will talk about changes in the resubmittal and likely about traffic. A lot of
75 information was covered at the last meeting which was beneficial to us. Heard concerns with parking
76 and shared parking notions. The building was reduced in size, by approximately 10,000 square feet.
77 Lessened in retail component. Were able to pull 20 feet away from Epping Road. Currently requires 568
78 spaces, providing 408 spaces. Concerns relative to drop off area. Provided area for that. Took another
79 look at parking analyses. Ran numbers for shared parking with updated software. Peak demand is 318
80 spaces according to software. Indicates sufficient parking. Have made changes to accesses and exits,
81 with two curb cuts, added one way exit at uppermost part to Epping Road. Is a TIF district. Have
82 pending improvements for road. Have some phasing plans for building. Will hold off on commercial
83 building until those improvements are made.

84

85 Mr. Petropulos indicated delivery spaces were added and moving spaces. Four were added to
86 accommodate concerns. Comments regarding landscaping incorporated. Added landscape island. Still
87 have waiver before you regarding that. Submitted colored scheme for curbing. National Heritage
88 Bureau (NHB) report was submitted. Wetlands permit submitted as well. Is some wetland impact.

89

90 Stephen Pernaw indicated they did standard predictions. Building downsized so traffic numbers will be
91 lower. DOT projects section of highway carries 13,000 cars per day. Estimated 384 trips during peak
92 hour period. Three-day traffic count by DOT, noted there will be impact but should be comparable to
93 day to day basis. Left turns can be tricky. Traffic signals not warranted here. Looked at need for two
94 lanes. Should probably be left turn pocket as depicted. Arriving at site should be right turn lane. Will be
95 taking another look at these.

96

97 Mr. Pernaw continued, discussing shared parking. ULI model predicts demand of 271 at peak. We've
98 added cushion to the peak demand. Confirms adequate parking with reduction of square footage. Been
99 in touch with District 6. Will have scope meeting in Concord for final study.

100

101 Mr. Grueter asked about the original study in 2019? Looked at this in 2016. Were looking at 120
102 assisted living units, now have 224 apartments. Mr. Pernaw indicated they were brought on to the
103 project later. Mr. Sharples indicated this was initially design review. Were concerned about traffic
104 generation back then with that projected use.

105

106 Mr. Steckler noted the model from Urban Land Institute, clarify methodology. Don't see this area as
107 urban. Stephen Pernaw indicated it is the name of the lead organization. Came out with updated model
108 this year. Can make adjustments. Model is compatible with this area. Demand is comprised of four
109 different uses. Most cars are leaving towards end of day. Pattern sticks no matter what area you're in.
110 Accounts for variations with traffic. Did not take credit for walking trips.

111

112 Mr. Cameron noted the traffic study at Raynes Farm was that study factored in at all?

113

114 Stephen Pernaw noted it accounted for two other projects south of the site, with Raynes Farm being
115 one of them.

116

117 Mr. Sharples indicated four buildings were proposed, built one and are working on the second. Plan is
118 to continue building (Raynes Farm).

119

120 Ms. Martel noted the comment on the ULI study. Appreciate seeing that information. Question about
121 study by VHB Jason Plourde. How are improvement measures implemented and when do we hear
122 about DOT feedback?

123

124 Jason Plourde prepared peer review of study in December. It was a different build program then.
125 Comments were based on that full build. Looked at delays. Vehicle queuing and volume to capacity
126 ratios. This development creates higher demand for vehicles than capacity could handle. May create
127 unsafe turning gaps. Mentioned exclusive turn lanes that would be needed. If increase traffic in

128 intersection is 100 plus cars or more must pay closer attention to that intersection. Study area
129 should've been expanded. Get input from DOT. Is controlled access right of way. Need to coordinate
130 with DOT about proposed access. Mr. Plourde indicated a lot will be answered in scoping meeting, will
131 involve applicant, DOT and municipality.

132
133 Ms. English asked about the letter from Town engineers and possibly eliminating the south driveway –
134 could that work? Mr. Plourde indicated in Epping Road strip management ordinance, guideline says
135 abutters consolidate access points on property lines. Try to control access so cars have control point to
136 access Epping Road. Working to see what corridor would need to look like. If can control access would
137 fall in line with zoning ordinance and provide safer access and exits by possibly warranting traffic signal.
138 Not sure about numbers right now with less building.

139
140 Ms. English expressed concerns about a left out of southbound exit and making a right only? Stop light
141 would be safest way to control. Mr. Plourde indicated he liked that drive being exit only with daycare
142 right there and also like drop off only.

143
144 Chair Plumer asked what will be needed to know regarding traffic to vote? That meeting will be critical.

145
146 Mr. Steckler indicated Jen Mates wanted a south driveway to be right turn only. Any thoughts on that?

147
148 Stephen Pernaw indicated the layout of site is important to have left turn departure to get back on 101.
149 Don't want to encourage U-turns. Mr. Petropulos noted if that was right only, it would have to have
150 paved access to get out of main driveway. Moved building 20 feet away but that space would get used
151 addressing that. Could probably rework that system to circumnavigate.

152
153 Stephen Pernaw noted it also needs to be determined if a traffic signal is warranted. Just have to wait
154 on that situation. Is a minimum criteria before can be considered. DOT will look at any signal this close
155 to interchange. Mr. Sharples noted that's why we've encouraged DOT's cooperation and involvement.

156
157 Ms. English asked about the number of parking spots at peak demand, 271, and parking that isn't
158 needed and whether that will be eliminated? Still a bit concerned about drop off at YMCA. Maybe use
159 this extra space to expand on the drop-off area.

160
161 Mr. Petropulos indicated a waiver is still required. Can look at improving circulation if had an overage in
162 parking. Will be no commercial building until road improvements are made. Will be no second curb cut
163 until then.

164
165 Ms. English indicated she preferred as little pavement as possible but in this case, it is needed for safety.

166
167 Ms. Martel expressed concern with drop off. Kids get out on wrong side of road with bus. May need
168 one more pass not totally comfortable with circulation.

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170 Mr. Cameron asked Mr. Plourde if he will submit something to account for what was learned today. Mr.
171 Plourde indicated there will be a scoping meeting with Mr. Sharples.

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Mr. Steckler indicated he would want to hear an opinion about right-turn only.

Mr. Plourde indicated reducing turning movements could be good but must look at ramifications. Second access is left out. Just don't know impact after square footage reduction.

Mr. Plourde noted some spaces could be dedicated strictly for daycare if there is an overage of parking.

Mr. Quigley wants to address the memo from Mr. Steckler's site walk. Often helps focus the questions. Letter gave impression that there are deficiencies with his work. NHB reporting identified endangered plant in exemplary natural community. Iris observed in front ponded area. That is where it was determined to be and NHB signed off on that. Pointed out iris elsewhere. Investigated and found seven irises without flowers. Easy to distinguish between slender iris. All identified. Were standard Blue Flag Iris. Plan to update NHB with this information. Swamp White Oak and oak basin swamp are important. That tree alone isn't a protected species. It is a species within that basin swamp. During winter the area was surveyed for significant trees. No Swamp White Oak seen at that time. Have been looking there since before logging. Red maple is dominant. Confident that this tree with the swamp does not exist on this site. Regarding potential for vernal pool breeding habitat out front of site, did not deploy in the smaller area, (minnow traps) captured green frog tadpoles. Were not wood frog. Similar area was completely dry this week. Appears likely to be a number of green frogs that tested the waters. Reviewed those two front areas in the past. Only pulled a single fairy shrimp for that smaller area. Not evidence of breeding. Frogs seem to maybe not use this area.

Mr. Quigley noted vernal pool issue has been reviewed by authorities on several occasions prior. Proximity to road is important to note. Property has been personally flagged twice and been re-verified. Always been consistent. Don't think my wetland delineation has ever been terribly inaccurate. Harder to re-flag the area now.

Mr. Steckler noted the point was not to question delineation. Flagging was difficult to see. Is essential to understand impacts to vote for CUP. Project has enormous impact on wetland areas. Approximately three acres of high-quality wetlands with a lot of micro topography. Wetlands need to be identified and probably warrants 3rd party review.

Mr. Quigley noted the Iris on site had wide leaves and rounded seed pods. Blue Flag Iris flowers always vary but these two features stand out. Mr. Steckler questioned coordinating with NHB about Iris occurrences. Mr. Quigley noted he is satisfied and NHB is as well. As a matter of due diligence will share that information with them and coordinate plant surveys based on suitable habitats. Habitat for Iris is typically wetter. Removing trees made these wetlands a bit wetter overall. Have additional info to prove is not protected Iris.

Chair Plumer indicated the site walk was not coordinated as the Board usually has. Tough to notice all features. Mr. Steckler noted potential vernal pool at front could have been excavated. Curious how Mr. Quigley determines that. Can use secondary indicators to determine, not just egg masses. Mr. Steckler indicated he believes 3rd party review is warranted.

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Mr. Petropulos noted the site was inspected by Conservation and NH Department of Environmental Services and other agencies. Walked entire site for feedback. Believe 3rd party services have already been done.

Mr. Quigley indicated it doesn't matter much if it is an excavated area. More in terms of quality. Were big piles of dirt on the side. Small wetland impact in that area. Not impacting basin. Would never use secondary indicators to identify where I've seen no egg mass for two years. Would find that bad practice.

Vice-Chair Brown indicated Kristen Murphy could comment. Ms. Murphy indicated she received a copy of Mr. Steckler's letter and shared it with the Conservation Commission. Was new information to the Conservation Commission. Checked in with Mr. Quigley. Felt the wetlands were strongly identified based off his descriptions. Did not see Swamp White Oak herself. Did site walk with Carlos Guindon there who had high knowledge of that species and did not find any. Did notice fairy shrimp. Believe that is primary indicator but no way to determine with tadpole species. No request on behalf of the Commission yet.

Ms. Martel noted minimal impact comment. Looks to be catch basins out letting to this basin. Make sure is being treated. Mr. Petropulos noted driveway impacts finger along this basin. No discharge going here whatsoever. Bigger area has outlet pipe if it ever overflowed. No discharge there either.

Ms. English asked if Mr. Guindon saw Mr. Steckler's pictures from the site walks to help identify? Looked to me to be protected Iris. Ms. English noted she realizes it is a challenging site. Didn't see typical wetland flags to use as markers for delineation. Was difficult to identify. Wish we could look at it again together.

Ms. Murphy noted the letter from Mr. Steckler was provided to Conservation Commission and haven't met as a Board since.

Mr. Steckler noted site inspections are not intensive 3rd party reviews. Part of it was to evaluate mitigation for back area. Typically note the role of any of those organizations. Ms. Murphy indicated we do look at wetland plans but most of members are not wetland scientists. Allowed to request 3rd party review if see fit.

Ms. English noted observed impact is visible on this project. Most of building seems to be on wetland or wetland buffers. On the fence about third-party review.

Ms. Martel asked if 3rd party review would be on the whole site? If they determine to be vernal pool how would that change the decision-making process?

Mr. Steckler indicated approximately three acres of wetland is lost. Worth due diligence. Not sure how changes decision-making process for others. Not sure if would be in favor of this. Not convinced there isn't an Iris or Swamp White Oak (protected species) on this property.

260
261 Chair Plumer asked to consider the total acreage of site as we look at this. Not sure of effect of roadway
262 on this either. Not sure a 3rd party will help answer those. Mr. Cameron asked what it would start with?
263 A critique of applicant or a brand-new review? Chair Plumer indicated this has been done before.
264 Consists of wetland scientists meeting with applicant to confirm or deny the findings of the applicant.
265 Mr. Sharples noted that was correct but in a general sense. Need to set a scope at this Board.
266
267 Vice-Chair Brown noted 3rd party review if we choose, scope is up to us. Our Board member had letter
268 addressed piece by piece and has not backed off on claims. Out of respect for Board member we should
269 have a 3rd party review. Not comfortable in one certain area. Corridor developed. Landowners prefer
270 residential uses. Might be delayed and commercial is being shrunk. Think traffic study has to be
271 complete.
272
273 Mr. Steckler indicated as far as review; the Board can't evaluate wetland impacts because it is unclear
274 where wetlands are on site. Did see some flags but not many. Think 3rd party review could just reflag
275 site and have applicant work with 3rd party review. Think vernal pool needs to be assessed. Also
276 evaluated NHB's report as well to verify species' presence (if applicable). Would suggest it receive
277 functional evaluation as well.
278
279 Mr. Grueter agreed 3rd party review is probably necessary.
280
281 Mr. Sharples noted if the Board wants that he will coordinate it. Reflag wetlands, in area of disturbance,
282 review vernal pool assessment in front part, evaluate NHB report, evaluate functions and values
283 assessment.
284
285 Mr. Steckler asked if 3rd party review would work with reflagging wetlands?
286
287 Ms. Murphy indicated an evaluation at this time of year will only determine presence of egg masses.
288 Challenging to make vernal pool determination.
289
290 Mr. Quigley noted wanted to say the same. Review on delineation, fine with that. Would be difficult to
291 reflag. Normally find minor differences in these reviews. Ms. English agreed it is the wrong time of the
292 year to look for vernal pools. Ms. Martel asked if the entry road could be moved away from the
293 potential vernal pool, would that satisfy?
294
295 Mr. Petropulos noted he doesn't believe there is a vernal pool. Feel alignment across from Mobile is
296 important so don't think we can move it. Ms. Murphy noted DES regs indicated that fairy shrimp is
297 partial to definition of being vernal pool. DES may be able to weigh in on this. Feel it is Mr. Quigley's
298 responsibility to raise these issues to DES. Conservation Commission is also willing to initiate with them.
299
300 Mr. Steckler noted CUP Criteria #13 notes no negative impact. Feel this is where need for 3rd party
301 review is warranted. Encourage to include functional assessment in scope. Agree with Ms. Murphy.
302

303 Ms. Cowan Indicated you have to accept whatever decision is made after this review. Feel DES has
304 already weighed in. Mr. Sharples indicated the board may want them to attend the next meeting.

305
306 Mr. Quigley indicated the status of two species seem abundantly clear, when I present to NHB have that
307 information. Would like to leave that part out of review. Ms. Steckler indicated he did not want to
308 leave it out. Mr. Cameron asked to outline the scope again.

309
310 Mr. Sharples noted the scope of 3rd party review would be:

- 311
312 1. Reflag by applicant in disturbed area with consultation with 3rd party review.
313 2. Vernal pool assessment.
314 3. Evaluate NHB report and status of protected species.
315 4. Evaluate functions and values assessment.
316 5. Attend Planning Board meeting.

317
318 Ms. Murphy noted she had nothing to add to that.

319
320 **Mr. Cameron motioned to allow 3rd Party Review under defined scope outlined above. Mr. Grueter**
321 **seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Plumer – aye, Brown – aye, Grueter – aye, English –**
322 **aye, Cameron – aye, Martel – aye, Cowan - aye. With all in favor the motion passed 7-0-0.**

323
324 Mr. Sharples indicated the Board expects more information about the areas such as traffic and internal
325 circulation. Commercial being delayed would be a problem as noted by Vice-Chair Brown.

326
327 Ms. English asked if there was a limit on clearing and Mr. Petropulos noted on several plans erosion
328 control and grading is shown.

329
330 Mr. Sharples indicated the second meeting July 23rd is off. July 9 seems too soon for 3rd party review.
331 The 13th is set aside for CIP. There are a lot of projects waiting. Mr. Grueter indicated the Board should
332 probably have that meeting. Vice-Chair Brown agreed. Chair Plumer announced the Board will meet on
333 the 23rd of July.

334
335 Mr. Petropulos indicated he would like to receive all comments as soon as possible.

336
337 Mr. Grueter indicated concerns with architectural design. Should look like a gateway to Exeter. Mr.
338 Grueter indicated he doesn't think it does.

339
340 **Vice-Chair Brown motioned to table Planning Board Cases #19-15 and #19-16 to July 23rd at 7 PM. Mr.**
341 **Grueter seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Plumer – aye, Brown – aye, Grueter – aye,**
342 **English – aye, Cameron – aye, Martel – aye, Cowan - aye. With all in favor the motion passed 7-0-0.**

343
344 **V. OTHER BUSINESS**

345

346 Vice-Chair Brown indicated the Board will have the ability to meet in person soon. Mr. Sharples agreed
347 there has been talk of reopening Town Offices. The Governor has relaxed the orders. Have heard that
348 in-person process is better than online.

349

350 Mr. Grueter asked if someone could opt to attend virtually? Mr. Sharples noted he could work with IT
351 on that. The Select Board would be involved as well.

352

353 Ms. Martel noted there may be members of the public not comfortable with attending and phone-in
354 could be an added option.

355

356 Ms. Cowan noted she was not in favor of meeting in person at this time. This platform works best for
357 people at risk. Mr. Sharples indicated if someone didn't feel comfortable then can continue this way.

358

359 **VI. TOWN PLANNER'S ITEMS**

360 **Field Modifications**

361 **Announcements**

362 Mr. Sharples announced the MUND project received the Project of the Year Award. Hopeful it will get a
363 project under it in the future.

364 **VII. CHAIRPERSON'S ITEMS**

365 **VIII. PB REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT ON "OTHER COMMITTEE ACTIVITY"**

366 **IX. ADJOURN**

367 *Vice-Chair Brown moved to adjourn at 10:24 PM. Mr. Grueter seconded the motion. A roll call vote*
368 *was taken, Plumer – aye, Brown – aye, Grueter – aye, English – aye, Cameron – aye, Martel – aye,*
369 *Cowan - aye. With all in favor the motion passed 7-0-0.*

370

371 Respectfully submitted,

372 Daniel Hoijer,

373 Recording Secretary