

1 **TOWN OF EXETER**
2 **PLANNING BOARD**
3 **NOWAK ROOM – TOWN OFFICE BUILDING**
4 **10 FRONT STREET**
5 **MARCH 23, 2023**
6 **DRAFT MINUTES**
7 **WORK SESSION**
8 **LAND USE REGULATIONS**
9 **7:00 PM**

10 **I. PRELIMINARIES:**

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12 **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT BY ROLL CALL:** Chair Langdon Plumer, Pete Cameron, Clerk,
13 Jennifer Martel, Gwen English, and Nancy Belanger Select Board Representative

14
15 **STAFF PRESENT:** Town Planner Dave Sharples

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17 **II. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Plumer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and introduced the
18 members.

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20 **III. OLD BUSINESS**

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22 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

23
24 January 26, 2023 and February 9, 2023 - *Tabled*

25
26 **IV. NEW BUSINESS:**

27 There being no public hearings scheduled, the Board conducted a work session on land use
28 regulations.

29 Mr. Sharples presented the first segment of the Exeter Planning Series – Envisioning Exeter’s
30 Future. He noted the first part would be to look at the benefits of undeveloped land.

31 Mr. Sharples noted some benefits include: flood protection, air and water quality, wildlife
32 habitat, absorption of pollutants, recreation, biodiversity, temperature regulation, low cost to
33 the tax base, minerals and other provisions and emotions in the social emotional aspect.

34 Mr. Sharples reviewed aspects of flood protection noting how vegetation stores water so that it
35 reduces flooding and uptakes water from the soil. There are little or no impervious surfaces
36 other than some bedrock.

37 Mr. Sharples reviewed the benefits to air and water quality. He noted pollutants are absorbed
38 and nitrogen and phosphorus. Soil absorbs and binds harmful elements. Ammonia is usable by
39 plants for growth. Carbon is reduced in the atmosphere.

40 Mr. Sharples noted that much wildlife depends on large swatch of unfragmented land. Mr.
41 Sharples cited on example, the Northern Long Eared Bat and how there is no logging between
42 May 15th and August 15th. Mr. Sharples noted biodiversity adds resilience and helps maintain
43 balance.

44 Mr. Sharples talked about recreation: hiking, biking, bird watching, snowshoeing, and kids
45 playing which can all improve physical and mental health. Chair Plumer added hunting and
46 fishing.

47 Mr. Cameron talked about destruction by careless recreation and the importance of not
48 degrading the undeveloped land. Mr. Sharples agreed that the land must be respected and use
49 being sustainable.

50 Mr. Sharples discussed how undeveloped land and shade trees can regulate temperature. It
51 can be 20 to 45 degrees cooler in the shade. Trees along streams and vernal pools will reduce
52 the water temperature so that cold water species can spawn, such as Trout and Salmon.

53 Mr. Sharples talked about the tax base and how undeveloped land doesn't add much to
54 municipal costs such as police, fire, school, traffic, plowing, sanding and lawsuits but does
55 generate regular taxes, excepting current use which is somewhat less.

56 Mr. Sharples noted everyday items and materials all come from the environment. As an
57 example he showed a pen which would take many years to break down in the land fill but
58 comes from compounds made from the environment. Mr. Sharples indicated the number of
59 square miles on the Earth's surface and how many were water compared to the number of
60 people on the earth and how many acres would be afforded to produce what each of us need.
61 He noted a parking lot doesn't provide that.

62 Mr. Sharples spoke about the connection people feel to land, and how it relieves stress and
63 improves wellbeing. People can get upset when that connection is disturbed by development.

64 Mr. Sharples concluded that the next segment will review the benefits of developed land.

65 Mr. Sharples asked if anyone was able to answer the question posed at the last meeting which
66 was what is the tallest building in Exeter and how tall it is. He noted it was a tie between the
67 Exeter Hospital and PEA Library which are about 80.'

68 Mr. Sharples asked if anyone knew the densest subdivision in Exeter, not including mobile
69 home parks, and will provide the answer at the April 27th meeting. Ms. English noted the
70 presentation made her think of the documentary the Biggest Little Farm which took an old
71 dried up peach farm transformed over seven years with the environment balanced out.

72 **VI. OTHER BUSINESS**

- 73 • Master Plan Discussion
- 74
- 75 • Land Use Regulations Review
- 76
- 77 • Field Modifications
- 78
- 79 • Bond and/or Letter of Credit Reductions and Release
- 80

81 **VII. TOWN PLANNER’S ITEMS**

82 Mr. Sharples reported a letter was received from NH Department of Transportation (DOT) relative to the
83 Gateway Development approved on 08/20/2020. He noted at the time there was a traffic impact
84 analysis done by third party peer review – Jason Plourde of VHB. Condition #13 concerned a letter
85 about the access points from NH DOT prior to signing the final plans. At the preconstruction meeting
86 the applicant did not have conditions #13 and #14. Mr. Sharples noted he contacted District 6 and was
87 told they were not sending a letter because the urban compact area is not in their jurisdiction. The final
88 plans were signed. After two years had passed Mr. Sharples reported receipt of a letter from District 6
89 stating that they did not support the project. Mr. Sharples met with a couple of representatives on
90 Tuesday to discuss the TIF District and Mr. Sharples requested they look at Exit 9. They had previously
91 requested a corridor study, which was done by VHB and provided to DOT with not much traction. Mr.
92 Sharples impressed upon DOT his safety concerns with the current and future uses. Mr. Sharples noted
93 the frustration is the right of way (ROW) is DOT’s.

94 Chair Plumer asked if Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) is involved, and Mr. Sharples indicated
95 they are and that road safety audit funds might open the door for additional funding which were
96 submitted on those and some others.

97 Mr. Cameron asked if there was any incentive to get DOT to do something and Mr. Sharples indicated
98 that discussions kicked off at Tuesday’s meeting to start.

99 **VIII. CHAIRPERSON’S ITEMS**

100 **IX. PB REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT ON “OTHER COMMITTEE ACTIVITY”**

101

102 **X. ADJOURN**

103 Mr. Sharples noted the next meeting is April 13th.

104 ***Ms. English motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 PM. Ms. Belanger seconded the motion. A vote***
105 ***was taken all were in favor, the motion passed 5-0-0.***

106 Respectfully submitted,

107 Daniel Hoijer,
108 Recording Secretary
109 Via Exeter TV