

**Town of Exeter
Swasey Parkway Trustees Meeting
Nowak Room
June 15, 2026
6:00 PM
Approved Minutes**

**JOINT MEETING WITH SELECTBOARD
FOR COASTAL RESILIENCY PROGRAM**

Members Present: Chair Dwane Staples, Vice-Chair Dave Short, and Darius Thompson

Others Present: Select Board Representative Niko Papakonstantis, Dan Chartrand, Molly Cowan, Nancy Belanger and Julie Gilman

Staff Present: Kristen Murphy, Conservation & Sustainability Planner, Town Manager Paul Cohen, and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy

1. Call Meeting to Order/Introductions

Chair Staples called the meeting to order at 6:49 PM and introduced the members who were

2. Coastal Resiliency

Conservation & Sustainability Planner Kristen Murphy discussed the Coastal Resiliency grant received for the Parkway. She noted that Melissa Roy and Steve Cronin participated with the Select Board, herself, and the Trustees.

Consultant Nick Messing did a presentation on the findings of the Coastal Resiliency Program to date. He discussed goals and concerns with flooding and coastal storm impacts at the Parkway. He discussed community input from two workshops and options for lower cost interventions by restoring and enhancing natural solutions and phased approaches with a much higher cost, estimated at \$2 million dollars, for near and long term adaptations specific to the Parkway.

Mr. Messing described the project timeline which began with an assessment in July of 2025 and then with workshop #1 in December of 2025 with public input. He described the three conceptual design plans and the holding of workshop #2 in March of 2026 leading to the final report in April of 2026.

Mr. Messing described feedback from the first workshop and noted the question was asked what level of investment they would like make in the Parkway and he described approximately half interest in moderate investment. Priorities were walkability and accessibility. Parking and drivability were low priorities.

Mr. Messing noted there was no survey or site-specific water level data and described public Lidar data and nearest tidal stations and FEMA maps. He noted a NH Coastal Flood Risk Model later in the spring. He described future design and low intervention focused on vegetation such as invasive species identification and tolerant species to water rise.

Mr. Messing described moderate measures of intervention such as a raised multi-use path in place of the discontinued roadway to the turnaround river sidewalk. He discussed removal of the small 3-4' dam and drainage at natural low points which could be treated before discharge. He noted the 24' widened path would be in the area of the Farmer's Market.

Mr. Messing described high intervention measures such as intentionally creating two low areas adjacent to Norris Brook and a center boardwalk. He displayed a rendering of the floodable areas and reroute of the multi-use path and boardwalk.

Mr. Messing reviewed the input from the second workshop which had concerns with the cost and protecting memorial benches. The consensus was general support to do something for resilience. He noted there will be more feedback from the public in the future and research on funding sources. He noted that NH DES is working on more sophisticated SLR data. There was interest in broader resilience for the downtown and adjacent parcels.

Selectwoman Gilman asked about king tides and the sea wall. Chair Staples noted that raising the wall would affect other properties and he and Mr. Cronin had discussions about impact to other areas. Chair Staples noted that the projected data shows that in 100 hundred years the Parkway may not exist because of sea level rise.

Selectman Chartrand stated that Norris Brook is not going anywhere and water will come from Norris Brook.

Selectwoman Belanger asked where public input sessions took place and noted the importance of getting information to the residents at 222 Water Street who access the Parkway quite a lot and she expressed concerns with bikes and pedestrians sharing a multi-use path. Ms. Murphy noted that Tony Trechara of the Housing Authority was part of the contacted groups.

Chair Staples noted that a lot more data is needed before they do anything down there. He noted concerns with the infrastructure beneath the Parkway and questioned how long it would last and if in the future a barge would be needed to make repairs.

Mr. Thompson noted it was bigger than just the Parkway and would like to see collaboration with other towns.

Selectman Papakonstantis asked what action they were looking for. Ms. Murphy noted the goal is to get the public thinking about SLR risks and to decide the best approach from the options to retreat or resist. She noted finances would need to be considered including analysis in the CIP and the next Master Plan update, to incorporate that thinking into future planning.

Selectman Chartrand agreed there is an educational component.

91 Comments were open to the public at 7:22 PM and there were none.
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93 **3. Adjourn**

94 ***Mr. Thompson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 PM. Mr. Short seconded the***
95 ***motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

96 Respectfully submitted,

97 Daniel Hoijer
98 Recording Secretary