



TOWN OF EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

10 FRONT STREET • EXETER, NH • 03833-3792 • (603) 778-0591 • FAX 772-4709

www.exeternh.gov

PUBLIC NOTICE EXETER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Exeter Conservation Commission will meet in the Wheelwright Room of the Town Office Building, Exeter on **Tuesday, December 9th, 2014 at 7:00 P.M.**

Call to Order:

1. Introduction of Members Present
2. Public Comment

Action Items

1. Shade Tree Management Proposal from the Exeter Country Club (*Al Lambert*)
2. Exeter Snowhounds Request for Annual Use of Snowmobile Trail (*Kristen for Tim Shepperd*)

Regular Business:

1. Committee Reports
 - a. Boundary Monitoring
 - b. Trails – PRIME WETLAND CROSSING and BOB KELLY'S repair request
 - c. Outreach
2. Approval of Minutes: November 18th, 2014
3. Treasurers Report
4. End of Year Expenditure Requests
5. Natural Resource Planners Report
6. Other Business
7. Next Meeting: Date and Agenda Items

Work Session

1. 2014 Work Plan

Kristen Murphy for Jay Gregoire, Chair

Exeter Conservation Commission

Posted December 4th, 2014: Exeter Town Office, Exeter Public Library, and Town Departments.

Exeter Country Club

Shade Tree Management Program

Fall/Winter of 2014-2015

A common misconception with turf grass management is that shade and trees promote healthy grass. This is not true. The minimum requirement turf plants need of direct sunlight on a daily basis is 6 hours. However more is always beneficial. Along with sunlight turf also needs a consistent flow of air. Large dense groupings of trees with low lying limbs and foliage create areas of stagnant air. This allows frost and dew to exist on the plants for longer periods of time promoting disease and saturation issues. Turf plants also use air flow for natural cooling purposes during times of heat and summer stress. Promoting air flow helps reduce canopy and soil temperatures. Many upscale golf courses will actually install permanent industrial sized fans around problematic greens with poor circulation. Our goal at Exeter Country Club is not to remove all trees but selective cut and prune trees to raise air flow and allow proper sun angles to turf. It is not always necessary to remove trees if the adequate environment can be accomplished by proper pruning. This if done correctly is also healthy for the tree. Removing low lying limbs, dead limbs and co-dominant growth will increase the trees life span, aesthetic appeal and eliminate safety hazards. Here is a detailed list of what we would like to work on moving forward at the golf course.

Behind 3 green- Remove all low lying limbs blocking sunlight and airflow to both 3 green and 4 tee.

Stand of trees between 3 green and 4 tee- Remove half a dozen oaks and pines to create more sun angles to 4 tee.

Back of 1 green to 5 Fairway- Selective cutting of trees for sunlight and airflow. This will indirectly improve pace of play and allow the area to be playable from a golfing stand point. Tree work was done here in the past but only small woody trees and brush were removed. This is not adequate for the health of 1 green and 5 fairway. Many healthy trees predominantly birches, maples, beeches and oaks will be pruned opposed to removed. Most Large pines in the area in question are dead or in the stages of dying creating a dangerous environment for the patrons of the golf course.

Stand of trees to left of 1 fairway to 9 ladies tee. Strictly pruning of all pines. No removal necessary. Low lying unhealthy limbs need to be removed for sunlight, airflow and playability. This will also improve the health of a handful of native apple trees located in the wooded area.

Right hand side of 6 green. 2 large pines blocking hours of morning sun need to be removed. Roots are also working their way into the greens complex competing with turf for water and nutrients. These areas of roots, pine and leaf litter also harbor destructive insects. This area creates optimal conditions for the Annual Bluegrass Weevil to hibernate. We have seen consistent damage to this green on the right side only.

Right side of 7 fairway- Removal of overhanging limbs and dead or dying trees. These limbs and trees are a safety hazard and are affecting the quality of turf in both the rough and the fairway. Most of this problem can be eradicated from proper pruning. There are many ornamental apple and pear trees that would benefit from the overcrowding of these limbs. Playability and line of sight would also be increased with this program.

Right side of 9 fairway- Select removal of dead trees. Thinning out of smaller trees, shrubs and brush 10-15 yards into the woods line. We would like to keep this a forested area to not disrupt the integrity of the hole. Selective thinning of the area will promote health through sunlight and airflow. Many of these trees are also near electrical power supply to irrigation pump house. Weather and strong winds will damage these lines in the future. Pace of play will be drastically improved when individuals can play out of the area and reduce time searching for lost and hidden golf balls.

The following is an interpretation of required review for the Fall/winter 2014-2015 Shade Tree Management Program.

As you are aware, there are several layers of authority that overlay the proposed project area. These include the NH Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act which is under the purview of the NH Department of Environmental Services, local zoning regulations for the Exeter Shoreland Protection District Ordinance which falls under the purview of the Exeter Planning Board, as well as 3 different types of Conservation deeds that apply to various parts of the property and are overseen by the Exeter Conservation Commission.

In order to determine the level of state review required, I recommend you contact NHDES's Eben Lewis who is the regional compliance inspector for our area to determine state level jurisdiction. His contact number is: (603) 559-1515. The most likely items (dependent on details) that may require state review are 1, 5, and possibly 6.

Local zoning ordinance regulation 9.3.4 defines a 75' natural vegetative buffer and requires a conditional use permit from the Exeter Planning Board for alteration of this buffer or managed woodland within 75 feet of the shoreline of the Exeter River, Squamscott River or their major tributaries. It is my interpretation that limbing of a tree here or there is not considered alteration of the 75' buffer and may occur without a conditional use permit provided the following: It is limited to a small enough number of trees so that it does not impact the tree canopy, it is completed in such a way to ensure the long term health of the tree, and finally that smaller trees, shrubs, and understory vegetation remain intact. Tree removal however does require a Conditional Use Permit from the Exeter Planning Board. Items 1, 5, and 6 have potential to require a Conditional Use Permit. See the aerial images and the zoning boundary in Attachment 1 for each of these activities.

In terms of the Conservation Commission jurisdiction, activities are regulated by the terms of the Conservation Easement Deed for the Exeter Country Club property (Book 2782, Page 392) and as well as a fairway easement over the Irvine Conservation land (Book 2782, Page 388). The Conservation Easement does include reserved rights to the Exeter Country Club to maintain and improve all existing and future golf course areas but requires review by the Conservation Commission to determine that the activity is consistent with purposes of this Conservation Deed (2B, and D). I do not have the authority to conduct this review on behalf of the Commission so I recommend that a representative of the Exeter Country Club present this information to the Conservation Commission at the December 9th meeting to enable their review of compliance with the purposes of the conservation deed. Please note however that item 2 appears to be included work within the area where the Fairway Easement was granted to the Country Club. This easement clearly states that removal of trees is permitted so as long as work is limited to the area described in Attachment 1, no additional review of this item is required by the Commission.

Attachment 1.

1. *Behind 3 green.* Remove all low lying limbs blocking sunlight and airflow to both 3 green and 4 tee. If the trees planned for limbing are within blue buffer around Wheelwright Creek but limited to a few larger trees leaving the buffer canopy intact, is performed to ensure the long term health of those trees, and includes leaving the younger trees and shrubs of the understory intact, it is my interpretation that this activity does not require a conditional use permit from the Planning Board and could occur following approval by the Conservation Commission. Should it be more intensive, altering the vegetative buffer, in addition to approval by the Conservation Commission, a Conditional Use Permit from the Planning Board would be necessary.



2. *Stand of Trees between 3 green and 4 tee – remove half a dozen oaks and pines to create more sun angles to 4 tee.* If removal is within the boundary of the Fairway easement (Bk2782, P388) indicated as the area left of the purple line in the image below, it is my interpretation that this activity is PERMITTED by the fairway easement. "Said Country Club may use said property for such purposes and may clear, or plant, such vegetation, re-grade or fill such land and otherwise landscape such area as it may deem necessary, from time to time, for such purposes." If the activity includes tree removal to the right of the purple line, it requires approval by the Conservation Commission.



3. *Back of 1 green to 5 Fairway – selective cutting of trees for sunlight and airflow. Involves pruning of healthy trees (birches, maples, beeches, and oaks) and removal of pines which are mostly dead or dying.* This area is within the Conservation Easement and requires approval by the Conservation Commission.



4. *Stand of trees to left of 1 fairway to 9 ladies tee. Strictly pruning all pines. No removal necessary. This area is within the Conservation Easement and requires approval by the Conservation Commission.*



5. *Right hand side of 6 green. 2 large pines blocking hours of morning sun need to be removed. If these trees are within the blue buffer around the Squamscott River, removal of these trees will require a Conditional Use Permit from the Planning Board unless it is shown that removal does not alter the function of the vegetative buffer. Alternatively, limbing of these two trees would be limited enough that a Conditional Use Permit would not be necessary. This area is within the Conservation Easement and requires approval by the Conservation Commission.*



6. *Right side of 7 fairway – removal of overhanging limbs and dead or dying trees. These limbs are a safety hazard. Obviously removal of limbs that pose a safety hazard is exempt from the zoning regulations. If trees that do not present a safety hazard and are not obviously dying and are still planned for removal within the blue buffer around the Squamscott River, removal of these trees will require a Conditional Use Permit from the Planning Board. Alternatively, limbing of these would not require Conditional Use Permit provided it is limited enough that it does not alter the buffer. This area is within the Conservation Easement and requires approval by the Conservation Commission.*

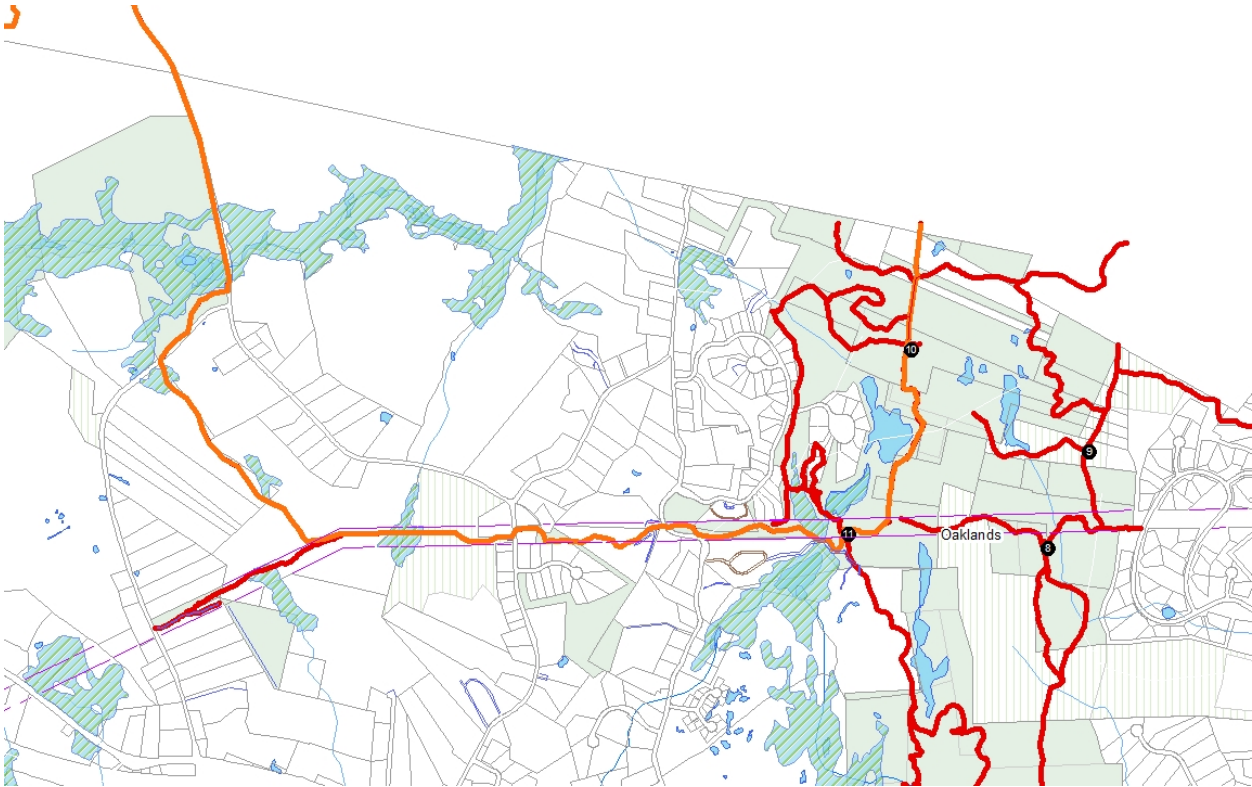


7. *Right side of 9 fairway – select removal of dead trees. Thinning out of smaller trees, shrubs and brush 10-15 yards into the woods line. The area north of the purple line is within the Conservation Easement area and should be reviewed by the Commission for compliance with the Conservation Easement Deed.*



Exeter Snowhounds Trail Use Permission Request

Request to use trails that cross town owned conservation land within existing alignment .





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Draft Minutes Exeter Conservation Commission November 18, 2014

Call to Order:

The meeting convened at 7:01pm in the Wheelwright Room of the Exeter Town Offices on the above date.

1. Introduction of Members Present: Maggie Matick, Cynthia Field, Mike Field, Jay Gregoire, Peter Richardson, Don Briselden, Ginny Raub, Carlos Guindon. Staff Present: Sarah McGraw (Recording Secretary)
2. Public Comment: None

Action Items:

1. **Minimum Impact Expedited Wetland Permit for the construction of an artificial turf field in the location of the existing athletic fields for Phillips Exeter Academy at Gilman Lane, Exeter (Tax Map 71, Lot 119).**

Mark Leighton, Director of Projects and Building Systems at Phillips Exeter Academy, spoke about the location of the proposed project on the east side of Phelps's Stadium. He discussed why the project was being done and its importance. Ken Costello from SMRT Architects and Engineers talked about the wetlands at the north, east and south side of the field. The Applicant would send the application to DES for review after Conservation Commission approval. Mr. Costello said that a wet pond is proposed at the north end of the field with 393 square feet impacted.

Ms. Raub asked about the possible dangers of using the rubber filler on the turf field. Mr. Costello said the consultants are still evaluating the use of different types of fillers. He cited studies completed on other projects where water tests came out negative for heavy metals. Ms. Raub was concerned about the discharge to the environment.

Mr. Gregoire asked about the minimum impact regulations. Mr. Costello said it had to be below 3,000 square feet. He said December 2, 2014 is the end period for comments in the state application for Alteration of Terrain. Mr. Costello said the Historical Commission found no impact. The Applicant had also gone before the Planning Board for a conceptual review.

Mr. Richardson asked about runoff from the project. Mr. Costello maintained that there were impacts found for runoff. Mr. Richardson asked about the increase in flow from the field. Mr. Costello said there was no increase in peak runoff because of the proposed wetland.

2. Mr. Gregoire stated the options for the project: 1. The Conservation Commission approves the project and the application goes forward to the State. 2. The Conservation Commission refuses to approve and the Applicant would not be eligible for expedited review.

Ms. Raub asked about project follow up from DES. Mr. Costello said the application goes to DES as a wetland permit. Jeff Clifford from Altus Engineering said because of the Alteration of Terrain

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Exeter Conservation Commission meeting.

permit, DES can call a staff member to monitor the project although it is not usual. Mr. Clifford explained the project also requires Storm water Pollution Prevention Permit (SWPP) permit.

Ms. Raub moved to approve the minimum impact expedited application, second by Mr. Guindon. VOTE: Unanimous.

3. Town of Exeter Linden and Court Street Culvert Replacement (Britt Audette, CMA Engineers).

Britt Audette from CMA Engineers described the proposed culvert replacements at Linden and Court Street. She explained the culverts were listed for rusting, holes and pitting on the structures. A single span bridge would be constructed at each location to replace the structures. Linden Street would be constructed in the first year and Court Street in the second year. Ms. Audette said a hydraulic study was conducted. The current structures would not be able to pass a 50 year storm event without topping over. Impacts of the project include grading during installation and no impacts to endangered species including the Blanding's Turtle and American Eel according to NH Fish and Game. Ms. Audette stated there is a requirement by NH Department of Environmental Services for a public hearing on the prime wetlands that are located at Linden Street culvert. The Applicant was looking for a waiver to the requirement as it was found the project would have minimum impact to the area.

Mr. Richardson asked what version of the 50 year storm event the contractors were using. Ms. Audette said they used the information from the Great Dam Feasibility Study. Jason Gallant from CMA Engineers said it was the FEMA version for a 50 year storm event which meant in today's terms it was actually a 100 year storm event. Mr. Guindon asked about the impacts of the dam removal. Mr. Gallant said the Little and Exeter Rivers converge which impact the project anyway.

Mr. Richardson asked what would happen if they did not approve the waiver and the project was delayed for one month. Mr. Gallant said they hope to wrap up plans by the end of the year.

Mr. Briselden moved to approve the application for both culvert projects as presented, second by Ms. Raub. VOTE: Unanimous

Mr. Briselden moved to submit a letter to DES waiving the requirement for a public meeting on work done inside of a prime wetland buffer, second by Ms. Raub. VOTE: Unanimous.

4. Exeter Snowhounds Request for Annual Use of Snowmobile Trail. Secondary request for new trail re-route to avoid sharp turn back onto the power line within the Forest Ridge Conservation Area.

Ms. Murphy who could not attend the night's meeting sent a memo to the Conservation Commission with the details of the request. A written request has not been submitted to date. Mr. Gregoire said that the proposal seemed unclear. Mr. Richardson agreed and suggested postponing until further details are submitted.

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Regular Business

1. **Elliot Clean Up**

Mr. Richardson said there is a plan to have a fire in the winter to burn brush at the Elliot Property.

2. **Committee Reports**

a. **Boundary Monitoring**

Mr. Richardson noted a bent pin at the Dollof property. He said he will be gone for a week but will try to locate it when he gets back. Mr. Guindon noted logging off Commerce Road on the Little River Property and stated that the logging might have gone past the flagged boundary.

b. **Trails**

Mr. Gregoire said at Forest Ridge there is a bridge with missing planks. He said the Conservation Commission does not know who owned the bridge. Mr. Briselden suggested not getting involved. Mr. Gregoire was not sure if the bridge was on Town Property. Mr. Richardson reported on the Eagle Scout project that built a 23 foot ramp. Mr. Richardson went out with the project manager to look at the project. Ms. Raub talked about 28 foot sign posts costing about 100\$.

c. **Outreach**

Ms. Raub said that the rain barrel sale went well with most people who signed up picked up their barrels. Mr. Gregoire said that at least 150 passports were given out at Chile Fest. The Commission had not received any back.

3. **Approval of Minutes from October 14th, 2014.** *Mr. Briselden moved to approve minutes as corrected, second by Mr. Guindon. VOTE: Unanimous*

4. **Treasurers Report:** Mr. Richardson asked what the end of year budget looked like. Ms. Raub said there are funds available.

5. **Other Business**

Mr. Guindon reported he and Ms. Murphy went to the National Association of Conservation Commissions annual meeting. Vernal pools, and climate changed were among the topics discussed.

6. **Next Meeting:** Tuesday December 9, 2014

Mr. Guindon moved to adjourn the meeting, second by Ms. Matick. VOTE: Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27pm.

Work Session.

The meeting went into work session at 8:28 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Sarah McGraw
Recording Secretary