

WILLEY HOUSE POCKET PARK PROJECT

Presented by the Newmarket Arts, Culture & Tourism Commission

PROJECT HISTORY

New Hampshire's dominance during the time of the industrial revolution cannot be denied. The state's waterways provided power to many mills and factories and shipbuilding was a major industry here in the 18th and 19th centuries. Newmarket quickly became the hub of shipping trade between New England and the West Indies. Manufacturing in Newmarket grew up around the Lamprey River, which passes through the town's center. It was the river's power that helped to give life to the mills and continues to provide beauty and recreation to its residents.

Today Newmarket is a well-preserved example of this manufacturing era, which is why history buffs find it fascinating. Its densely-settled downtown is home to an assortment of independent shops and restaurants, and is one of the most walkable communities in the state. For those with an interest in the industrial history of the state, Newmarket is the place to enjoy walking downtown and exploring the river's edge. There is much that makes Newmarket memorable, enjoyable, unique and attractive to residents and visitors of all ages from around the Seacoast and New England, which is why it was recently designated, "Best Place to Visit in New Hampshire." The Willey House Pocket Park Project seeks to identify specific examples of what makes Newmarket unique and represent them through permanent art installations for all to enjoy and contemplate.

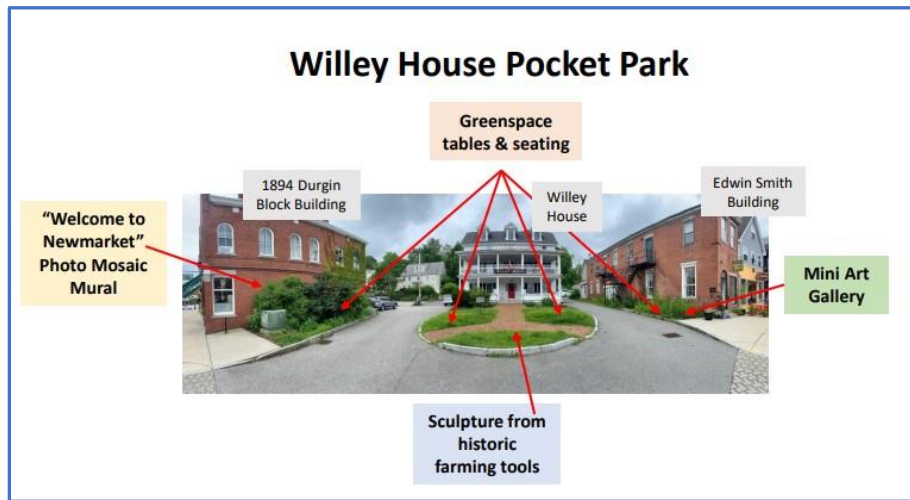
PROJECT LOCATION

The historic Willey House, one of the last surviving tavern-hotels built in 1822, is tucked back off the middle of Main Street. It's abutted by the Edwin Smith building, which is the only brick federal-style building in downtown Newmarket. According to the Newmarket Historical Society, this unique building is the narrowest building in the state with a colorful history. Today it houses Inkwell Flowers.



On the other side of the Willey House is 5 Monkeys Tattoo Parlor, which is owned by the 1894 Durgin Block, LLC. Together, these three buildings surround a small greenspace, which if developed appropriately, would provide a welcoming respite for downtown shoppers and visitors to stop and savor a bite to eat, learn about the local history and enjoy outdoor art installations.

Currently the Willey House greenspace is owned by Ben Stebbins, who recently approached the Town of Newmarket with a proposal to relinquish his rights to his property's Main Street frontage to the Town for public enjoyment. In addition to this development opportunity, Newmarket Arts, Culture & Tourism Commission (ACT) was approached by the Newmarket Historical Society with a request to create a permanent art installation built from an assortment of historic farm implements. The final coincidental detail precipitating this Willey House Pocket Park Project, is that the Main Street Corporation has secured an outdoor piano to be installed directly across from the Willey House underneath our Veteran's Memorial portico. To capitalize on these three presented opportunities, ACT has proposed the creation of the Willey House Pocket Park and garnered the support of all abutting property owners. The park will include permanent art, culture and tourism enhancing features, which are highlighted on the following illustration:



- **Mural**- A "Welcome to Newmarket" mural on the exterior of the 1894 Durgin Block, LLC building wall created from pictures submitted by professional and non-professional resident photographers, which represent what makes Newmarket a unique place to live, work and play.
- **Sculpture**-Permanent art sculpture created from the historic farm tools donated by the Newmarket Historical Society.
- **Mini Art Gallery**- Gallery contains rotating display of various local artists' work.
- **Gathering Greenspace**- Seating benches/tables constructed by local craftsman and adorned by artist renderings of historic people, places and/or events which represent "Why We LOVE Newmarket."

PROJECT PARTNERS

The goal of this project is to promote downtown revitalization, that will strengthen economic, historical and cultural characteristics of Newmarket. ACT cannot implement the Willey House Pocket Park Project, with its multiple components, on its own. We have, therefore, garnered the support (as articulated in the attached letters) and will rely on the collaboration of critical businesses, town planning and recreation professionals, community organizations and artists to guide the project development. The project Planning Committee will include representatives from the ACT Commission, Town Planning Department, Parks & Recreation Department, Newmarket Historical Society, Newmarket Business Association, abutting property owners and local artists. Together, we will establish selection criteria, review art submissions, solicit financial resources and champion the development of another significant art installation in downtown Newmarket.

PROJECT EXPERIENCE

For the first time since Town Manager, Steve Fournier, and the Town Council created the Arts, Culture & Tourism Commission (ACT) in 2019, the Town now has a Five-Year Strategic Plan for arts, culture and tourism, which can be found [here](#). The plan aims to align ideas, people and resources around a shared vision and a comprehensive set of goals, strategies and tactics for putting arts, culture and creativity at the very heart of life in Newmarket.



Artist Among Us Pocket Park mural panels featuring 20-year-old, wildlife photographer, Martin Culpepper.



Consolidated Communications utility box enhanced by landscaping painting of Alex Leith.



The recently unveiled **Artist Among Us Pocket Park** was the first multi-faceted art installation outlined in the plan. The park includes an eight-panel outdoor mural, which currently features 20-year-old wildlife photographer, Martin Culpepper, the transformation of a graffiti-covered Consolidated Communications utility box by local artist, Alex Leith, and the creation of a community Kindness Rock Garden where all are welcome to Paint a Rock, Take a Rock and Share a Rock.

In addition, the first of a planned series of Mini Art Galleries was installed at the park entrance. The mini gallery exhibits will change quarterly and the mural exhibit will change twice a year. These exhibit changes will enable us to feature many interested artists and maintain community engagement with the space. Thus far the reaction to the Artist Among Us Pocket Park has been very positive with people using the space to enjoy the art displays, eat on the new picnic tables, relax on the benches and add rocks to the Kindness Rock Garden daily, which is exactly what we intended.

Artist Among Us Pocket Park Mini Art Gallery featuring watercolor work by Carol Poitras.



PROJECT ACCESS

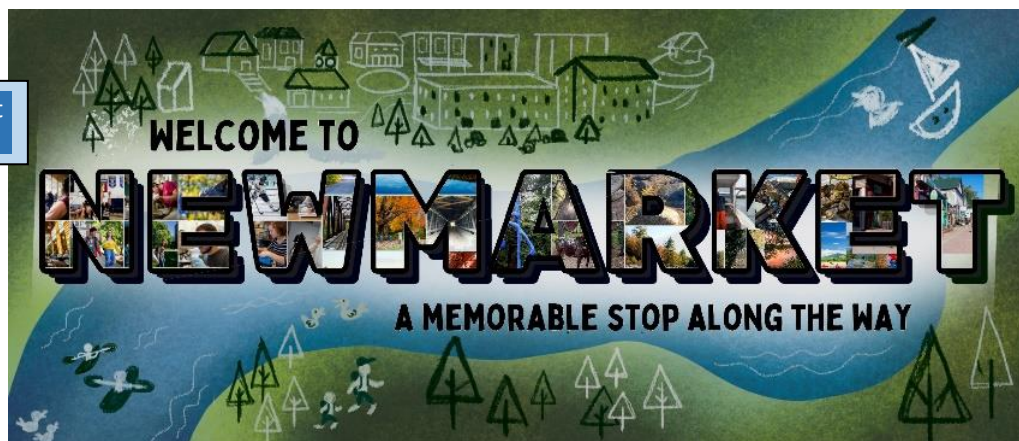
The Willey House Pocket Park Project is an outdoor art installation to be created for the enjoyment of residents and visitors of all ages and walks of life. Everyone, who wants to, can contribute to the “Welcome to Newmarket” mural because every photo received will be included in the final mosaic letter designs, which will be the focus of the mural. Existing Main Street sidewalk access to the park with no curb obstructions ensures wheelchair accessibility. Handicap designated parking spots are already marked on Main Street. Braille versions of park signage will be included in the final installation as will wheelchair accessible tables, similar to those previously installed in the Artist Among Us Pocket Park. In addition, since this is an outdoor public space, there are no limitations to when people can access this park or view the art. Financial limitations also will not impact park and art accessibility as there is no fee required to enter. This park will truly be open and accessible to all.

PROJECT ARTIST CRITERIA

It is the intent of this project to engage the community in the selection of the final artist renderings so that when the art (mural, sculpture, mini art gallery) is ultimately installed, it will be embraced and celebrated wholeheartedly because everyone was part of the creative process. Additionally, through this process, the public will gain a broader understanding of our history and “Why we all LOVE Newmarket.”

The top 3 finalist submissions (mural & sculpture) will be displayed online via our town newsletter and will circulate through prominent town locations, e.g., Town Hall, Library, Post Office, MillSpace, etc. to encourage residents to vote for their preferred entry. In addition, we will record the artist presentations and rebroadcast them via our Town public access channel.

Draft Concept of Mural



Mural

Submitting artist must:

- Be over 18 years or older and have a social security number
- Reside in New England (proposals by Newmarket artists will have preference)
- Present proposal in person if chosen as one of the five finalists
- Provide a written narrative to accompany the mural which describes images represented and artist's design rationale (narrative will be used to create written & Braille signage to accompany mural)
- Attend the inaugural unveiling ceremony

Proposals must meet the following requirements:

- Mural artist design budget will not exceed **\$4,000**.
- Artist responsibilities include creative work and delivery of high-resolution digital print file at minimum 150 dpi and 240 inches by 120 inches (horizontal). Mural will be printed on removable vinyl to preserve integrity of historic building brick facades. Printing NOT artist responsibility.
- The designs must be original and include important elements of Newmarket landscape, history and characteristics which people have noted are reasons "Why We LOVE Newmarket." Historical photos and current photography will be provided to artist and used to create mosaic lettering which will be central to the design. (See Mural Concept uploaded separately)
- If selected, the artist will be required to sign a contract outlining the scope of their work and delivery timeline requirements.
- Upon delivery, the artwork will become the sole property of the Town of Newmarket to use for reproduction and fundraising in perpetuity with guaranteed copyright to the artist in all instances.
- Payment for the art will be disbursed in three payments: 25% at proposal award; 25% when 50% of artwork is completed with balance upon satisfactory delivery of digital file.

Artist must submit the following for consideration by the selection committee:

- Artist statement of interest in project
- Resume with 3-5 specific examples of mural work or large outdoor public art installations
- Rendering, sketch or drawing of proposed mural design in required scaled dimensions
- Concept description
- Two professional references
- Only proposals received by 5 p.m. on deadline date will be considered

Sculpture

The same community engagement activities, Submitting Artist Criteria and Selection Review Process will apply for the Willey House Pocket Park sculpture, with the following proposal requirements:

- Sculptor design budget will not exceed **\$5000**.
- The sculpture must be created using all or parts of the historical farm tools provided by the Historic Society. Final sculpture must be at least 4' tall to a maximum of 6' tall and not be more than 4' wide.
- The design must be original and reflect either Newmarket landscape, history or favorite characteristics which people have noted as reasons "Why We LOVE Newmarket." Historical photos and public photography submissions will be provided to artist for idea generation.
- If selected, the artist will be required to sign a contract outlining the scope of their work and delivery timeline requirements.
- Upon delivery, the artwork will become the sole property of the Town of Newmarket. Photographic reproduction of the sculpture can be used in perpetuity with guaranteed copyright to the artist in all instances. Site preparation is NOT the responsibility of the artist.
- Payment for the art will be disbursed in three payments: 25% at proposal award; 25% when 50% of artwork is completed with balance upon satisfactory delivery of the sculpture.

Mini Art Gallery

Solicitation of artists who wish to have their work displayed in the Mini Art Gallery is done through signage at existing gallery installations and on the town website found [here](#). No artist fee is provided to display original artwork in the Mini Art Gallery. The artist's biographical information and contact information will be posted on the Town website to promote the artist's work. The exterior of the gallery is painted by a local artist, who will be selected from the list of those whose work has been or will be exhibited in the gallery.

Greenspace Seating & Tables

Seating and table proposals will be suggested by the town Parks & Recreation and Public Works departments as appropriate to ensure longevity. Recommendations for custom seating will also be solicited with the opportunity for artist enhancement preferred. We have included quotes for premade options for budgeting purposes.

PROJECT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

How ACT solicits and uses the community input received is what makes the proposed **Willey House Pocket Park** project the epitome of *Arts for Community Engagement* for the Town of Newmarket. From the voting on mural and sculpture designs to the selection of the BEST "Why We LOVE Newmarket" photos, the community will make the choices, which will determine the permanent art installations in their town. In the process, they will learn about the Town's historic landmarks, how-to take a better picture and what makes Newmarket a memorable stop at the river's edge.

To ensure, residents can fully and ably provide photo submissions, we shall sponsor the following Community Engagement activities:

1. Photography Education Series (audience: children & adults)
Partner: Newmarket Parks & Recreation Dept., High School Photography Club & local professional photographers
 - a. How-to use your cellphone camera features
 - b. How-to use a digital camera (digital cameras will be donated and/or purchase for use by those who do not have a camera of their own)
 - c. How-to edit your pictures with Adobe Lightroom or Photoshop
2. Historic Photography Scavenger Hunt (audience: family, couples, singles)
Partner: Newmarket Historical Society
 - a. Where are our historic landmarks
 - b. Use the Historical Society's Walking Tour
3. "Why We LOVE Newmarket" Sidewalk Photo Exhibit (audience: all)
Partner: Newmarket Business Association & MillSpace
 - a. Public display of photo submissions for voting purposes
 - b. Permanent display of BEST of BEST photos in Town public buildings.

4. Photo Exhibit (audience: all)
Once all the "Why I LOVE Newmarket" photo submissions have been received, the Planning Committee will cull the submissions to select BEST 5 in each category (people, places & events).
 - a. Print each on 24"x 36" PVC substrate for an exterior sidewalk display to facilitate public voting.
 - b. Following voting, prints will be permanently installed in Town Hall on auditorium walls.
5. Hot Jazz on a Chili Night Celebration (audience: all)
Partners: Main Street Corporation & Newmarket Business Association
 - a. Downtown Main Street event featuring the new outdoor piano and chili cook off by local restaurant chefs
 - b. Unveil park art installations and recognize contributing artists, planning committee and funding sources for their efforts

PROJECT PROMOTION

ACT has already established an effective community communications cadence, which includes publishing a monthly update which is distributed to all residents who subscribe to the weekly Town newsletter. Each issue appears for four consecutive weeks. *See pictured sample.* This update is also circulated digitally within large community HOA's and the Sunrise Senior Center membership. It is how ACT regularly announces events, seeks support and promotes artist work. From the fundraising launch to the unveiling events, the Willey House Pocket Project Park will be a prime topic in our monthly update. In addition to this digital communication, we will be distributing printed copies of the update for posting in Main Street restaurants, the library, MillSpace and the two downtown churches' bulletin boards.



Once project funding and plans have been finalized, we will construct a temporary "Coming Soon" board to be erected in the Willey House open space both to generate excitement for the project and to keep the general public apprised of project progress, fundraising goals, activities & deadlines for responding to Requests for Proposals (RFP), and Voting for BEST "Why We LOVE Newmarket" photos.

We recently completed the first edition of an intended series of five-minute videos to be broadcast on the Town public access channel for the purpose of informing the general public about the Arts, Culture & Tourism Commission, including who we are and what we intend to accomplish. The second edition will focus on the Willey House Pocket Park plans and the call for funding support.

To ensure the broad exposure to interested New Hampshire artists, all RFPs will be posted on the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts website and distributed via email to all subscribers.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

The creation of another art focused pocket park on Main Street, where there never was one before, is a measurement of success in and of itself. In addition to this obvious measurement, we cannot overlook the fact that the park will attract additional downtown visitors and provide them with the opportunity to sit and/or linger on Main Street, which will simultaneously provide continuous opportunity for increased commerce. Business revenue increases shall be reported through our project partner, Newmarket Business Association through a comparative analysis of Main Street revenues generated before and after the park installation. This project will also enable us to build a previously non-existent community of "Art Supporters" which will facilitate ongoing funding sources for future Newmarket arts and culture projects.