

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

March 12, 2020

7:00 PM

Members Present: Patrick Reynolds (Chair), Marianne Hannagan (Vice Chair), David Bell, Melissa Sharples, Drew Kiefaber (Alternate), Ellen Snyder (Alternate), Sarah Finch (Planning Board Rep,) and Casey Finch (Town Council Rep – Ex-Officio).

Members Absent: Excused members this evening were: Cris Blackstone and Sam Kenney.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**

2. **Roll Call**

Welcome **Ellen Snyder** as an alternate to the Conservation Commission! Your many years of service as a member and your current service as an alternate are truly appreciated by the Commission.

3. **Public Comments/Permits**

No comments from the public this evening.

4. **Approval of the Minutes**

February 13, 2020:

Action

Motion: **Marianne Hannagan** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 13, 2019 as drafted.

Second: **Sarah Finch**

Vote: 4-0-1 (**Melissa Sharples** abstained)

5. **Treasurer's Report**

There was no financial report available from the Town for this evening. The Chair is not aware of any expenses incurred since the last meeting.

6. **Committee and Subcommittee Reports**

Town Council: **Casey Finch** reported they did try to host the organizational meeting of the Riverfront Advisory Committee. Only a few members could attend so they will try to re-schedule as soon as possible when the UNH students become available. The UNH students have already drafted many ideas for the Advisory Committee to review and consider.

Planning Board: **Sarah Finch** had nothing to report this evening.

7. **Chairman's Report**

The Chair reported on the Grant Road culvert project by the Town. The necessary wetlands permit has come through.

8. **Old/New Business**

Heron Point Kiosk Sign and Forest Health: **Ellen Snyder** visited the Heron Point Sanctuary to assess the site

and determine the size of the signage which we wanted her to create. The Chair felt that sign should be the same size as the one prepared for Piscassic-Loiselle. A smaller PDF could also be put on the website. **Ellen Snyder** also had some questions about the conditions of the trails. She described the trails on her draft map (see attachment at the end of the minutes). **Drew Kiefaber** was out on site last fall and believes that the 'River Loop' trail would need some maintenance to keep it sustainable in the future (i.e. bridges). Any use causing erosion into the River/Bay is to be avoided. **Ellen** and others suggested that we schedule a site visit to walk the 'River Loop'. **Ellen** also reported that there is an infestation in the trees on the property: both the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (<https://nhbugs.org/hemlock-woolly-adelgid>) and the Emerald Ash Borer (<https://extension.unh.edu/blog/emerald-ash-borer-eab-update>) are present. All ash trees on the property are dead. The hemlock tree in the parking lot is dead and probably needs to be taken down for safety reasons. The CC should get a forest health report from the Rockingham County's Forestry Field Agent, Greg Jordan. **Ellen** will contact him for a site walk one day sometime between 4:30-6:30 pm. The Chair mentioned that, if work might be required, Dale Jones might be able to gather volunteers from the neighborhood to help. The Chair will speak with the Town Manager for an opinion/clarification about the "yellow" path ownership. The Chair reminded the members about Christian Matthews who is working to get all the trails for Newmarket Conservation Properties listed on Trail Finder.

He attended the CC meeting last April:

"Christian Matthews – Trail Maps for Conservation Properties: *Christian Matthews is here this evening to help the CC with methods to create trail maps of conservation lands using smart phone apps. Christian is the Transportation/GIS Analyst for the Rockingham Planning Commission and lives in Newmarket. He worked with Epping last year to prepare GPS trail maps and wanted to offer his help to Newmarket. GPS trails are created with an apps that ping every 2-3 seconds as you walk along a trail. It is very easy with any cell phone. His preferred app is OSMTracker which is an offline GPS tracker designed for collecting [points of interest](#) (POI) to be added to the map and for recording GPX tracks. POIs can be marked using shortcut buttons, voice, text, or by taking a picture. OSMTracker data is exported in GPX format with waypoints, making it suitable for import into the [JOSM](#) (Java OpenStreetMap Editor) map editor. One can also directly [upload waypoints](#) when one [uploads tracks](#). OSMTracker is also [highly customizable](#), allowing advanced users to create their own buttons and layouts. The second app which can be used is OpX Tracker. Anyone can do this! Why should this be done? - 1) to update conservation property maps, 2) to expand public access and increase public knowledge, and 3) to stay current with digital trends. After collecting the data, it would be time to upload to the website using 1) AllTrails (<https://www.alltrails.com/us/new-hampshire>), 2) Trail Finder (<https://www.trailfinder.info/>) from UNH, 3) OpenStreetMap (<https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=4/38.01/-95.84>) by Google maps and/or 4) the Town of Newmarket website. He recommends that one should 1) collect the data now (no leaves to interfere with satellite signals), 2) collect each trail at least four+ times, 3) Strafford Regional Planning is a great resource and they can use QA/QC (quality assurance and quality control) to check and send the maps to other resources. This might be a great opportunity for in internship. **Drew Kiefaber** asked about smoothing out the multiple trails. It has to be done manually, but is quite easy to learn. **Melissa Sharples** will learn to create trails and do some posting on the Conservation Commission Facebook page. The members thanked Christian for coming this evening and teaching everyone how to create and post trail data for the benefit of all who enjoy walking the trails in Newmarket."*

Schanda Park-Fence and Signage: The Chair visited Schanda Park at both high and low tides to examine the site issues. Rick Malasky is suggesting more fencing and some signage to protect people from falling. The Town Engineer mentioned that to repair the damaged wall it will cost upwards for \$500.00/sq.ft. We could also remove that rock that has fallen into the river, but that might be a problem causing erosion. Permits would be required. The Chair would like to contact Kirsten Howard and Steve Miller again about a living shoreline. **Ellen Snyder** suggested that we might invite the two professors at UNH who designed the living shoreline at Wagon Hill Farm in Durham. They are Dr. David Burdick who is a Research Associate Professor of Coastal Ecology and Restoration at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) and Interim Director of the Jackson Estuarine Laboratory and Dr. Tom Ballesterio who is a hydrologist and water resources engineer in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department at the University of New Hampshire (UNH). At UNH he is also the Director of the UNH Stormwater Center and a member of the UNH Coastal Habitat Restoration Team (CHaRT) which focuses on studying, designing, implementing, and monitoring living shoreline approaches in New England coastal communities.

Action

Motion: **Patrick Reynolds** moved that the Conservation Commission approved an expenditure of funds up to \$2,500.00 to cover the cost of erecting temporary fencing to protect the public in areas where there are public safety issues in Schanda Park.

Second: **Marianne Hannagan**

Vote: 5-0-0

The Chair will contact the Town Manager with this information. **Casey Finch** suggested that a temporary sign be put up to describe the issue and the fencing. **Ellen Snyder** asked about the parking lot...who owns it...Fish & Game? The Chair will ask the Town Manager about the ownership issue. **Casey Finch** will bring this issue back to the TC.

Clarke Farm Easement: There is no new information about the Clarke Farm easement.

9. Adjourn

Action

Motion: **Patrick Reynolds** moved that the meeting be adjourned.

Second: **Marianne Hannagan**

Vote: 5-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 14, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary

