

CONSERVATION COMMISSION**January 14, 2021****7:00 PM****Virtual Meeting**

Members Present: Patrick Reynolds (Chair), Melissa Sharples (Vice Chair), Ellen Snyder (Treasurer), David Bell, Megan Brabec (Town Council Rep), Melissa Brogle (Alternate), Sarah Finch (Planning Board Rep), and Sam Kenney

Members Absent: Cris Blackstone and Drew Kiefaber (Alternate) were absent.

Guest Presenter: Chris Nash

1. Pledge of Allegiance**2. Roll Call****3. Public Comments**

There were no public comments this evening.

4. Guest Presentation- Welcome!

Chris Nash, Project Manager for the Shellfish Program, NHDES Watershed – Management Division. Mr. Nash examines the sanitary quality of the state's tidal waters to ensure that the molluscan shellfish meet standards for consumption (recreational and commercial harvest). He has held this position for 21 years. He holds a B.S. from BU in Biology and an M.S. from UNH in Hydrology. He has previous experience in non-point source pollution and wetlands permitting. He will discuss with the members shellfish needs and commercial and private harvesting in the coastal seacoast area. He will also describe the public health issues. Bivalves include softshell and razor clams, American oysters, and blue mussels (all filter feeders) that siphon the passing waters for food. They are important for cleaning the water. However, sometimes the passing waters may include bacteria and viruses. There are blue mussel farms way out in the ocean. They are grown in long socks on ropes which are set 40-50' down in the water. They pull up the socks and ropes in about 2-3 years for harvest. They require lots of cleaning prior to sale (byssus threads and barnacles). The American oysters suffered a serious decline back in the 90's due to parasites and are trying to come back through oyster cultivation projects. Currently there are 25 oyster farms in the Bay and it requires 2-3 years to grow to harvest age. The DES Shellfish Program is responsible for monitoring seacoast tidal waters for safety. Of most concern are the sewage outfall areas, possible algal blooms, and vibrio bacteria which thrive in coastal waters where oysters are harvested. The team walks every inch of the shoreline to monitor outfall pipes, streams, and failed septic systems on a property by property basis. He showed some slides demonstrating the use of red dye at WWTF to see how fast the dye would dissipate. For clamming, people can call the clam hotline 1-800-43-CLAMS (which is updated every Friday) to find out if the flats are open. Of most serious concern are the marine biotoxins PSP (paralytic shellfish poisoning), ASP (amnesia shellfish poisoning), and DSP (diarrhetic Shellfish poisoning). They sample for toxins at four stations per week. The NH Coastal Atlas is a great source of information: <https://www4.des.state.nh.us/CoastalAtlas/Atlas.html>. The Atlas provides an in depth source for harvesting in the Bay. More information may also be found at the NHDES Shellfish Program page: <https://www.des.nh.gov/water/coastal-waters/shellfish>.

5. Approval of Minutes

December 10, 2020

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** made a motion to approve the minutes as written for December 10, 2020.

Second: **Sam Kenney**

Vote: 6-0-0

6. Treasurer's Report

Ellen Snyder reports that the General Fund has a balance of \$1,422.23. The Conservation Fund is currently \$245,945.07. The income earned for the CF was \$98.71. There are two outstanding expenses from last month: 1) the \$75,000 for the Clarke Farm Easement and 2) the \$2,500 for the management plan for Heron Point. The SELT monitoring fee for the Hilton Easement was \$191.04. **Patrick Reynolds** was contacted by the Newmarket Masonic Lodge (named for Richard Rory Schanda) which is closing after 195 years. They would like to gift the Conservation Commission \$4,000 for maintenance or other needs for Schanda Park. There is currently \$764.46 in the Schanda Park account. We truly appreciate the donation of funds to the Town.

7. Committee and Subcommittee Reports

Town Council: **Megan Brabec** reported that the Clarke Farm Easement passed! She reported that the deliberative sessions will be held by zoom.

Planning Board: **Sarah Finch** had no report this evening. The next Planning Board meeting will be 1/26/2021.

8. Chairman's Report

Easement Monitoring Update: Every year, the Southeast Land Trust of NH (SELT) monitors both the Hilton and Dodge Conservation Easements. The Commission pays for these monitorings and we receive copies of the reports for our files. There were no concerns mentioned in the reports this year. The Chair is pleased to announce that all of the annual monitoring reports have been completed on the Newmarket Conservation Properties this year! Good Work!

The Chair asked **Megan Brabec** if there had been discussions at the Town Council about the comprehensive planning being suggested for the water front area and Schanda Park in particular. She had not, but will bring the issue back to the Town Council for discussion. The Chair mentioned the erosion problems, the safety issues, and the eventual sea rise concerns. Schanda Park is one of the most used parks in the downtown area. **Ellen Snyder** will check with the Durham group involved in the living shoreline project at Wagon Hill Farm about the grants and other information which might be helpful to us.

9. Old/New Business

Clarke Farm Easement: Discussed in the Town Council Report above. The Town accepted the Executory interest in the property if the SELT does not survive.

Easement Monitoring: Discussed in the Chairman's Report above.

Project Ideas for April and June 2021: COVID-19 may hinder large group event planning for this spring, but the Chair is looking for things that we could suggest folks do on their own or in their family groups. One suggestion is an April roadside clean-up (with the help of the DPW to pick-up the bags?). As we get closer (perhaps March), we could ask people to sign-up for specific sites/roads. These events might be documents/videoed and put up on our social media. It could coincide with Earth Day celebrations on April 22. For June, we might plan a walk around town to photograph rare trees and the really big trees. Arbor Day is April 30. We might invite Kevin Martin (writer of 'Big Trees of New Hampshire: Short Hikes to the Biggest

Trees in New Hampshire from the Seacoast to the North Country') to attend our April meeting as a speaker to help us identify trees species. The Chair will speak with **Cris Blackstone** about our speaker line –up for April. **Ellen Snyder** is looking for grants from the Fish & Game small grant program for the restorative work at Wiggin Farm.

Patrick Reynolds attended the 'Funding Opportunities for Restoration and Enhancement Projects' hosted by the NHACC. (See addendum) They have 2.5 million dollars to improve stream flow and crossings/ culverts. He has information on how to apply for grants. We have two sites on the Piscassic River which would benefit: 1) culvert at Ash Swamp Road which impedes passage from upstream and 2) Grant Road where there is a very old stone dam. We could speak to LRAC about joining us for these projects.

Non-Public Session:

A motion to go into non-public session to discuss confidential matters related to real estate, pursuant for RSA 91-A:3, II(c) , was made by **Patrick Reynolds**, seconded by **Melissa Sharples**, and approved 6-0-0 at 8.00 p.m.

A motion to end the non-public session at 8:20 pm was made by **Patrick Reynolds**, seconded by **Melissa Sharples**, and approved 6-0-0.

A motion to seal the notes of the non-public session was made by **Patrick Reynolds**, seconded by **Ellen Snyder**, and approved 6-0-0.

10. Adjourn

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** moved that the meeting be adjourned.
Second: **Sam Kenney**
Vote: Unanimously Approved

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.
The next meeting will be held on February 11, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary

Addendum

The NH Association of Conservation Commissions Hosts Workshop on using ARM Funds for Restoration

Posted on December 21, 2020 by Cheryl Bondi

Learn more about wetland and stream restoration projects that can be funded using the NH ARM Fund. This free online workshop included presentations by the NHDES Wetlands Mitigation Program, the Army Corps of Engineers, and NH Fish and Game. To listen and view the **recording of the program follow [click here](#) and enter** Passcode: vRq+8WLL

Funding Opportunities for Restoration and Enhancement Projects

Programs and resources available to improve wetlands and streams in your community

The NH Department of Environmental Services, US Army Corps of Engineers, and NH Association of Conservation Commissions invite you to a free information program to discuss funds available in the Seacoast. Speakers will cover topics including:

- Aquatic Resources Mitigation (ARM) Fund and other resources available & how to use them.
- State Stream Crossing Initiative stream assessments and culvert replacement.
- Examples of successful wetland and stream restoration projects.
- Schedule for 2021 ARM Fund grant round.

**December 17, 2020
4:00 – 6:00 pm
Virtual Meeting**

Who Should Attend: Conservation Commissions, road agents, town engineers, Regional Planning Commissions, non-profit groups, land trusts, lake and homeowner associations, interested public and elected officials, and consultants interested in wetland and stream restoration improvements.

For more information on the Army Corp of Engineers Mitigation program, check out the resources listed below.

<https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/Mitigation/>

<https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/Mitigation/In-Lieu-Fee-Programs/NH/>

or contact the Mitigation Program Coordinator at taylor.m.bell@usace.army.mil