

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION****May 13, 2021****7:00 PM****Virtual Meeting Called to Order: 7:01 PM**

**Members Present:** Patrick Reynolds (Chair), Melissa Sharples (Vice Chair), Ellen Snyder (Treasurer), Cris Blackstone, David Bell, Megan Brabec (Town Council Rep), Melissa Brogle (Alternate), Jeff Goldknopf (Planning Board Rep), and Sam Kenney.

**Members Absent:** none

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

**2. Roll Call**

**3. Public Comments**

No comments this evening from the public.

**4. Guest Presentation- Welcome!**

**Jenny Humphries, Operations Manager for Mr. Fox Composting** (<https://mrfoxcomposting.com/>). Mr. Fox Composting was begun over 10 years ago with the goal of providing composting along the New Hampshire and Maine coasts. Their facility is located in York, ME. They provide both residential and commercial services on a weekly and bi-weekly pickup. Newmarket residents participating in their program receive bi-weekly service along with a large composting bin at our Transfer Station on Ash Swamp Road which is tipped once a week. The Town pays for the large bin. They process all matter at the York facility in what is termed wind rows. These are regulated by the State of Maine. **Cris Blackstone** asked what is accepted as biodegradable. Jenny described the process of adding amendments to the rows to begin the process of composting. Studies have shown that 20% of the materials in the landfill could be composted. Mr. Fox is the only company from Maine to Maryland that provides a full service composting with a complimentary soil back program. If you are a participant, you get a bag of compost back to use in your gardens. Landscapers can purchase discount compost in a two yard minimum. They accept pizza boxes and compostable plastic labeled PLA #7. PLA means that the material is plant based. The Chair asked about a general fact sheet for composting: 1) Can I do it? 2) How do I do it? and 3) What can I put in it? She will send along a fact sheet for us and, if we need something in addition, she is willing to create it for us to use for outreach. **Cris Blackstone** will speak to Toni Weinstein (TC Chair and Rep to the Energy and Environment Sub-Committee) about the original discussions of the Mr. Fox bin at the Transfer Station. If anyone has questions or needs more information, they can contact Mr. Fox through the customer service email box: [customerservice@mrfoxcomposting.com](mailto:customerservice@mrfoxcomposting.com). Thank you so much!

**5. Project with the Cemetery Trustees**

**Melissa Brogle** was contacted by the Stacy Mazur concerning the hill between Calvary Cemetery and the Industrial Park on Rt. 108. Unfortunately, the hillside is just filled with trash from the cemetery – wire wreath frames, etc. She would like to ask the Conservation Commission to team up with the Trustees to clear the area. **Melissa Sharples** volunteered to help and suggested the Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts might also help. **Melissa Brogle** also suggested the basketball teams that helped with the recent road clean-up. The Chair suggested that she get a date set and then we can promote the event.

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**7a. Updates from the PB and TC Reps about 75 Neal Mill Road and other business**

**Planning Board:** **Jeff Goldknopf**, our new Rep, reported on the recent meeting of the PB regarding the property at 75 Neal Mill Road. A motion was put forward to give guidance to the TC as to what they should be looking for in an application for that building permit and not to have the applicant go through the full roadway design without knowing if the TC will approve the building permit. The Town Council may, if they wish, ask the PB to assist with a Technical Review. If the Town Council decides not to approve the building permit, the PB would request that they consider changing the Class VI portion of the road to a Class A Trail.

**Town Council:** **Megan Brabec** reported that she had nothing to add to what **Jeff** just noted about 75 Neal Mill Road. She wanted to remind everyone that the Town mask ordinance is still in effect.

**7b. 75 Neal Mill Road**

The Chair shared three letters with the members 1) a letter from the Newfields Conservation Commission, 2) the most recent letter from Duane Hyde, SELT, and 3) a draft letter from **Ellen Snyder**. **Ellen** outlines the CC concerns about the driveway (700+ feet down the Class VI road). The applicant has presented the project four times since February. Generally, the applicant has not provided enough information in an engineering plan to make any decision. No information has been forth coming on how the Town easements will be protected. She went back to the Master Plan for review. The Master Plan is supposed to be used when making decisions like this. A big thank you to **Ellen** for preparing this letter!!! The Chair spoke of the issue of 'how do we maintain the properties we believe have significant value to Newmarket for the overall betterment of the community'. People are discovering that Newmarket has a wealth of recreational properties and are seeking to relocate here. Approving this building permit puts our investment at risk.

**Action**

**Motion:** **Patrick Reynolds** made a motion to submit the letter (as prepared by **Ellen Snyder** and signed by all members of the Conservation Commission) to the Planning Board regarding the property at 75 Neal Mill Road.  
**Second:** **Melissa Sharples**  
**Vote:** Approved 7-0-0

**Ellen Snyder** will reformat the letter, add all names of the Commission members, and then send to **Patrick** to proof and submit. The Chair will send the letter as soon as possible.

**8. Approval of Minutes**

April 8, 2021

**Action**

**Motion:** **Ellen Snyder** moved to approve the minutes of April 8, 2021 as written.  
**Second:** **Cris Blackstone**  
**Vote:** Approved 6-0-1 (**Jeff Goldknopf** abstained)

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**6. Application for Use of Schanda Park**

An application for the use of Schanda Park on Saturday, May 15, 2021 from 10-2 was received from the Newmarket Freemasons. They are planning a commemorative ceremony celebrating Mr. Shanda – a founding member of the chapter.

**Action**

**Motion:** **Sam Kenney** made a motion to approve the request for the use of Schanda Park on Saturday, May 15, 2021 from 10:00-2:00 by the Newmarket Freemasons.

**Second:** **Melissa Sharples**

**Vote:** Approved 7-0-0

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**9. Chair's Report**

**a) Moody Point residents** have been in contact with the CC about rain barrels. **Patrick, Jeff** and **Ellen** gave a little history about our participation in the rain barrel and composting barrel programs which we had when Fred Pearson, a long-time member of the Commission, served. He sadly passed away in 2017. Ellen mentioned a group called The Great American Rain Barrel

<https://www.greatamericanrainbarrel.com/community/watertown-copy/>

**b) The Chair received notice that herring fishing** has been closed for the entire State. He contacted Jerry Collins, who operates Chick's Weir from Schanda Park. He moved the frame into the Lamprey, but is not using any nets.

**c) Don't forget the 'Big Trees of New Hampshire'** presentation by Kevin Martin on zoom set for June 2, 2021 7:30 PM. His presentation is being co-sponsored by the Newmarket Library and the Conservation Commission. You must register by emailing the library for a zoom invitation/reservation.

**d) The Conservation Commission Scholarship** announcement has gone out. A volunteer sub-committee will read the applications and choose an awardee before the next meeting. The sub-committee is: **Cris Blackstone, Melissa Brogle** and **Melissa Sharples**. The Chair will check with the school on the status of the awards ceremony and whether or not anyone from the CC may attend to make the award this year.

**e) Ellen Snyder presented the project to replace the signs at Wiggin Farm** this year. She showed how the paper signs, under plexiglass, have deteriorated. We can simply reuse (or move) the posts and put the new signs (made of aluminum) onto the posts. She thinks they may have to move a post or two. Portsmouth Sign Company gave a quote of \$65.00/sign with some layout costs. There may be a total of 12 signs, so we might want to allocate up to \$1,000 just in case. **Patrick** suggested some new signs at the parking lot, for instance, which can clearly state the dog regulations for the property. **Melissa Sharples** has volunteered to help with editing. **Jeff** mentioned the way the Town lists the dog policy now for this property is 'dogs are allowed on leash and off leash after the bird mating season. **Ellen** will check on the current ordinance before the signs are formalized. **Cris** would like to revisit where dogs are allowed off leash and the current Newmarket dog ordinance.

**Action**

**Motion:** **Patrick Reynolds** made motion to approve an expenditure of up to \$1,000 for new descriptive trail signage at Wiggin Farm from the Portsmouth Sign Company.

**Second:** **Melissa Sharples**

**Vote:** Approved 7-0-0

**10. Treasurer's Report**

**Ellen Snyder** reports that the General Fund balance to date is \$648.42. The Conservation Fund balance is \$170,812.58 which includes interest. The Clarke Farm expenditure of \$75,000 has been withdrawn and the reimbursement check from Fish & Game through the small grant funds for the work at Wiggin Farm has been received, but does not appear on the ledger yet.

**Patrick Reynolds** wanted to congratulate the Southeast Land Trust for their hard work and assistance on the

purchase of the Clarke Farm Conservation Easement. He has spoken with SELT about having a celebration to recognize the Clarke family on the conservation of their property. Further discussion will continue on this idea.

#### 11. Committee and Subcommittee Reports

**Riverfront Committee:** Sam Kenney reported on the Riverfront Committee. The committee last met April 20. They were supposed to meet last Tuesday and will meet instead this coming Tuesday. Their goal is to pursue grant funding from NHDES (applications due in July). They intend to draft an RFQ (Request for Quote), if they have support from the Town Council, to hire architectural/engineering assistance to render conceptual plans of the area.

#### 12. Old & New Business

##### **Guest Speaker for June:**

**Cris Blackstone** reports that the guest speaker is TBN, but the topic will be 'Nighttime Pollinators' and what you can do as a homeowner to protect them from harsh light sources. There will be a discussion of bats, moths, bird biorhythms and migration, and more!

**Cris** also mentioned that the CC had spoken about having our February guest, Matt Tarr, return and walk Wiggin Farm with a small group and chat about the property. Matt is a professional forester and wildlife biologist for UNH Extension. **Ellen** will reach out to Matt to find a date in mid-June during the late afternoon or evening which might work for him.

##### **Special Recognition:**

On behalf of the Commission, **Patrick Reynolds** wanted to extend a big thank you to **Melissa Brogle** for her tremendous success with the Newmarket Earth Week Clean-up from April 17 to 24! Our deepest gratitude goes to **Melissa** for her vision, hard work and dedication. The Commission would also like to thank the myriad of participants for making Newmarket a cleaner place to live!!

#### 13. Adjourn

##### **Action**

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

**Second** Melissa Sharples

**Vote:** Approved 7-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 PM.

The next meeting will be held June 10, 2021 at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary

[\*-----\* indicates a jump in the agenda]