

**TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

July 8, 2021 7:00 PM

Town Council Chamber

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM.

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

Members Absent: Sam Kenney and Jeffrey Goldknopf were absent this evening.

Others Present: Kiley Briggs, Mark West and Duane Hyde

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments this evening.

4. Guest Presentation- Welcome!

Welcome Mr. Kiley Briggs from the Orianne Society. The Orianne Society works to conserve critical ecosystems for imperiled reptiles and amphibians using science, applied conservation and education. Kiley's primary professional goal is to use imperiled reptiles and amphibians as tools to promote conservation efforts in New England. He is developing a Wood Turtle population assessment and conservation program in the Great Northern New England Forests. He is working in the NE with several agencies to advance habitat for Blanding's and Wood Turtles. He is stepping in this evening for Josh Megyesy, a Wildlife Biologist with NH Fish & Game. He discussed the turtles found in southeast NH: 1) Snapping Turtles, 2) Painted Turtles, 3) Spotted Turtles, 4) Wood Turtles, 5) Box Turtle, and 5) Blanding's Turtles. The Blanding's are Spotted Turtles are in jeopardy because of their loss of suitable habitat for laying their eggs and wetland connectivity. They like to lay their eggs between mid-May and early July in warm sandy soils (these dates shift depending on the weather patterns). In Newmarket, one site-specific threat to the Blanding's is roadkill. NHF&G hopes to have money soon to help towns with culvert construction. ATV trails should not be routed within 650ft of nesting sites. The lack of good nesting sites can be addressed working with F&G. Just dumping sand in appropriate areas and land conservation purchasing easements with good sites for nesting. Landowners should report sightings on their property to F&G. NH has a Reptile and Amphibian Reporting Program <https://wildlife.state.nh.us/nongame/raarp-reporting.html>. Currently there are at least ten hotspots for Blanding's population. The Chair spoke of organizing a meeting with Josh Megyesy and other groups who have some funding. He will include Kiley in the scheduling. Ash Swamp Road has about a 200 ft crossing area and issues with a culvert and beaver dams. The Town DPW is looking into Beaver Deceivers <https://beaverdeceivers.com/> to help with the water level. **Ellen Snyder** does not believe that we have significant ATV use in Newmarket. Predators like raccoons, skunks, and foxes are considered subsidized and they occur when humans

directly or indirectly alter resource availability in such a way as to increase the density of a predator population above levels that would occur without the additional resources.

5. Request for Comments on a Wetlands Permit Application

Mr. Mark West, West Environmental, Inc., is here this evening on behalf of the Kanes family, owners of the property located at 34 Smith Garrison Road. They are seeking a letter of comment from the Conservation Commission on a NHDES Wetlands Permit to put a terrace and fire pit within the 75 ft buffer zone. They would also like a terrace closer to the house with a hot tub. The terrace will be pervious material. The owner has paid \$1,700 to the Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund (AIM) for not meeting the setback requirements. No trees shall be cut and the stones for the patio/terrace will be moved by an electric wheelbarrow along a walkway. They are reducing the total pervious surface area on the lot. Mr. West has sent the project to the Lamprey River Advisory Committee for comment. He has consulted with both Stefanie Giallongo, NHDES Wetlands Division, and Lori Summer, Coordinator for the NHDES's Wetland Mitigation Program. Elizabeth Dudley, Landscape Architecture LLC, designed the project. Mr. West described the project thoroughly and answered the questions of the members. **Ellen Snyder** wanted to make sure that all new plantings would not be cultivars. A cultivar is a plant or group of plants that have been selected from a naturally occurring species and bred to enhance or maintain a particular set of desirable characteristics. Mr. West agreed to change the plans, specifically page 3 (LA3), and remove cultivars.

Motion: **Patrick Reynolds** made a motion to write a letter of support once the revised LA3 page has been changed to exclude cultivars.
Second: **Cris Blackstone**
Discussion: None
Vote: 5-0-0

Mr. West agreed to have the amended plans to the Conservation Commission as quickly as possible.

6. Approval of Minutes for June 10, 2021

Motion: **Melissa Sharples** made a motion to approve the minutes as written for June 10, 2021.
Second: **Cris Blackstone**
Discussion: None
Vote: 4-0-1 (**Ellen Snyder** abstained)

7. Chairman's Report

Eagle Scout Project: The Chair was in contact with a young woman who is applying for Eagle Scout and wants to be involved with trail work on Heron Point. The Chair mentioned this specifically to **Ellen Snyder** who was excited to work with her.

Invasive Plants on Boulder Drive: An individual contacted the Chair about invasive plants bordering

on the Boulder Drive conserved space. He suggested that they contact the Home Owners Association for Boulder Drive to try and resolve the issue.

Meeting with Josh Megyesy: The Chair is working with Josh Megyesy to set a meeting to visit our Blanding's Turtle site. The soonest that Josh will be available is July 26. The Chair is unable to attend, but **Ellen Snyder** and **Melissa Sharples** have volunteered to attend. **Jeff Goldknopf** will be on vacation, but the Chair wants to keep him in the loop because he is very familiar with the site and seasonal turtle activity. The other person attending will be Colin Lawson who has technical expertise and possible suggestions for funding culvert work.

8. Treasurer's Report

Ellen Snyder reports that the General Fund had \$2,900 at the beginning of the FY and we came in under budget with \$257 returning to the Town. The Conservation Fund is currently \$171,466.84. The real balance is \$166,702.38 without the Schanda Park Fund. There are two outstanding expenses from last month: 1) the \$2,500 for the management plan for Heron Point and 2) \$480.00 remains in the Wiggin Farm signage funds and plans are being made to prepare a few more signs. The ConCom still owes the annual membership dues for NHACC (New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions) for 2021. **Ellen Snyder** made emergency repairs to the Wiggin Farm foot bridge. She seeks reimbursement of \$54.10 for materials. Thank you so much Ellen!

Motion #1: **Ellen Snyder** made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$425.00 for the 2021 annual dues owed to the NHCCAA.

Second: **Cris Blackstone**

Discussion: None

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion #2: **Patrick Reynolds** made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$1,500 for the Conservation Commission Scholarship for 2021 which was awarded to Cadin Corben.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Discussion: None

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion #3: **Patrick Reynolds** made a motion to reimburse **Ellen Snyder** \$54.10 for expenses incurred to repair the foot bridge at Wiggin Farm.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Discussion: None

Vote: 5-0-0

9. Committee and Subcommittee Reports

Riverfront Committee: **Sam Kenney** sent in his report. The committee met with the NHDES regarding the Coastal Resiliency Grant. They will be submitting a coastal grant this month and

should hear back by late August. They are working with LRAC and other groups in collaboration. Dale Pike will be going to the next LRAC meeting. They are most likely to seek funding from us at a later date.

Town Council: **Megan Brabec** reported that the TC has been meeting fewer times over the summer months. They swore in the new Chief of Police, Gregory Jordan. Zackary Dumont was thanked for his service to the Town and the new councilmember, Brian Ward, was sworn into office.

Planning Board: No report this evening.

10. Old/New Business

I. Wiggan Farm Report: **Melissa Brogle** reported on the installation of the new signs. There were ten sign posts and eight signs prepared, so they decided to make two additional signs. The topics will be the 1) the history and ecology of rock walls, and a poster talking about health and wellness effects from getting out in nature. **Ellen Snyder** spoke about two new signs about “pedestrian only” and a “keep dogs out of the fields and on leashes”. **Ellen** spoke about the recent walk with Matt Tarr which was really educational! Thank you Matt! We are very lucky to have a wonderful DPW crew - they mow the meadow every fall and the trails every two weeks. They also weed whack around the sign posts. They have agreed to mow closely to the newly exposed rock wall where lots of bitter sweet is leaping! Thank you Karen and Rick! **Melissa Brogle** brain-stormed some ideas for volunteer projects: getting a bike rack, getting a picnic table, the main trail sign needs a little TLC, the two benches need scrapping and painting to name just a few. There were many suggestions for volunteer groups: Nature Groupie, Liberty Mutual, United Way, and UNH Workday. **Melissa** also mentioned the cleanup at Calvary Cemetery, but we should wait a while until the ticks and vegetation have died down a little. We might want to work with the Cemetery Committee.

II. Heron Point Management Plan: **Ellen Snyder** reported on her recent visit with Jon Martin, from Martin Forestry Consulting LLC, and Greg DiSanto, GIS Technician, looking at the modified new trail system. They should have a draft plan to us to review by the August meeting. This draft may include trees which should come out and what it might cost. The Chair will forward the contact information about the Eagle Scout to **Ellen** for a discussion of her Heron Point project ideas.

III. Neal Mill Road: The applicant has withdrawn their application.

IV. Educational Programs: **Cris Blackstone** and **Ellen Snyder** have put together a list of potential educational programs. Members have received a copy. **Cris** spoke about an event we thought about years ago...interested people visiting the conservation properties brought to us by former TC member and ConCom Rep Casey Finch. Thank you Casey! The Recreation Department will let us use their vans and facilities. The date chosen is October 2, 2021. Tara Barker, Assistant Recreation Director for Newmarket Recreation is very excited about this idea as her background is in outdoor education. Dick Lutz is a birder from the Board of Supervisors for the Rockingham County Conservation District. Newfields Conservation Commission has a member with expertise in bringing health and wellness to the indoors. Kim Tilton, Program Director of the Sunrise Sunset Center, has a trail walking group already established.

Motion: **Patrick Reynolds** made a motion to designate October 2, 2021 as our date for a “Connect with Conservation” event in coordination with the Newmarket Recreation Department. A sub-committee will be appointed to coordinate planning.

Second: Ellen Snyder
Discussion: None
Vote: 5-0-0

Melissa Sharples, Melissa Brogle, and Cris Blackstone will anchor the committee from the ConCom. **Cris** will ask Tara Barker to be on the sub-committee as well as any others she might wish to help plan this event.

Non-Public Session:

A motion to go into non-public session to discuss confidential matters related to real estate, pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(c) , was made by **Patrick Reynolds**, seconded by **Melissa Sharples**, and approved without discussion 5-0-0 at 8:46 PM.

A motion to end the non-public session was made by **Patrick Reynolds**, seconded by **Cris Blackstone**, and approved without discussion 5-0-0 at 9:16 PM.

A motion to seal the notes of the non-public session was made by **Patrick Reynolds**, seconded by **Melissa Sharples**, and approved without discussion 5-0-0.

10. Adjourn

Motion: Patrick Reynolds moved that the meeting be adjourned.
Second: Ellen Snyder
Vote: 5-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 PM

The next meeting will be held on August 12, 2021 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers,

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary