

**TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
August 12, 2021 7:00 PM
Town Council Chamber**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

Members Present: Patrick Reynolds (Chair), Melissa Sharples (Vice Chair), Ellen Snyder (Treasurer), Cris Blackstone, Sam Kenney, Megan Brabec (Town Council Rep) and Jeffrey Goldknopf (Planning Board Rep)

Members Absent: David Bell and Melissa Brogle (Alternate) were absent this evening.

Others Present:

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

3. Public Comments

We were joined this evening by Amy Benson from BSA Troop 200G from Newmarket. She is currently a pursuing Life Scout which is the rank just below Eagle Scout. To obtain Eagle Scout, she would like plan a project at Heron Point Sanctuary. She received a packet of information from **Ellen Snyder**. As soon as we hear from Jon Martin and Greg DiSanto about the scope of the plans for Heron Point Sanctuary, Amy will be invited to join in the conversation to work out a service project. The members are pleased with Amy's enthusiasm and are excited that she has chosen Heron Point Sanctuary for her project. Thank you Amy!

The Chair asked to revise the agenda to accommodate two items from Old/New Business. There was no objection.

8. Old/New Business

Heron Point Sanctuary Management Plan: Jon Martin, from Martin Forestry Consulting LLC, and Greg DiSanto, GIS Technician and Recreation Specialist, are here this evening to discuss the Management Plan they have prepared for the Heron Point Sanctuary. Jon shared the plan with Ellen Snyder and the plan mainly focused on recreation as this seems to be the best of use of the property. Jon mentioned that there were issues with general forest health because of diseased trees due to the Emerald Ash Borer and the Wooley Adelgid. There are also some hazard trees. He does not feel that the property be considered for timber harvest. There are many invasive plants which might be addressed mechanically at first and then by hand to keep them from coming back quickly. The plan included a map of trail recommendations. In general, there are many trails which should be decommissioned/relocated to improve the recreational use. This might be a good part of the project for Amy Benson to help coordinate a trail working group. Greg DiSanto pointed out that a little stone dust should be used to improve the wetter portions of the trails. **Ellen** mentioned getting a volunteer work day going on the trail work with Jon or Greg to lead the work. She also mentioned the special

day on October 2. The Chair mentioned contacting Dale Jones to inquire if members of the Heron Point Estates HOA would be interested in volunteering to help with the trail work.

-Estimate to treat the multi-flora rose is \$1,500 with a mower and mini-excavator. He would mow it rather than pull it.

-Estimate to take down the hazard trees along the board walk (they estimate 10 trees) to be \$4,000-4,500 be a tree climber would be required because of the size of the trees to get them down safely.

-Estimate cost for felling trees along the trails and laying them down would be \$1,000-\$1,500.

-Estimate for the trail repair with crushed stone running from the parking area to the boardwalk would be \$300-500 for time and material. They would use 'ledge pack' which is a mix of sand and gravel – about 1 ½". Ellen mentioned that this was the proposed project for Oct 2 and she asked for an amount to purchase.

-Estimate for stone on Trail 7A for ¾" crushed stone would be \$400-600.

-Estimate for new signage \$300-500 plus \$150 for printing.

Other recommendations:

- Construct benches at the overlook spots

- Update the kiosk trail maps to include an integrated map discussing the history of the sanctuary

The Chair asked about kayak access. Greg said that there is a place at one of the overlook spots that goes right down to the river. LRAC might be interested in funding a trail down to the river. Greg agreed to estimate a proposal for gravel-backed steps and a location for a kayak launch.

They projected that each 300' section of trail work would take approximately one day with a professional leader with volunteers. In total, the trail work would take 2-3 days. Jon thinks the tree work should be done before the trail work. All the trails are flagged. **Melissa** would like the ConCom to consider signage to make the sanctuary consistent with our other properties. The Chair said that this is an incremental project.

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** moved to expend up to \$1,500 for Martin Forestry LLC to remove the hazard trees around the trails on the interior of Heron Point Sanctuary.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Vote: Unanimously Approved

The Chair wants to be sure that the public is notified of the closure dates for tree cutting. **Melissa Sharples** will make sure that the closures go out on all social media. Jon will edit the plan with the few items discussed and provide a full financial proposal for the trail work for the next meeting. Thank you Jon and Greg for attending this evening!

Jeff Goldknopf recused himself from the discussion.

SELT Purchase of 75 Neal Mill Road – Duane Hyde: Duane Hyde, Land Conservation Director for the SELT, is here this evening to discuss the purchase and conservation of the property at 75 Neal Mill Road (aka the Gaziano property). SELT is moving very quickly. He wanted to update the ConCom on a number of items and particularly wanted to thank us for holding a public hearing on a contribution on August 16. The property is under contract with SELT and they have completed their due diligence

to stay on track: 1) the title is clear, 2) the appraisal was completed and it met the purchase price, 3) SELT made their required additional deposit, and 4) the closing is scheduled to September 1. They have hired Doucet Survey Inc. to prepare the boundary survey (32 acres) by August 13 and Exeter Environmental Associates LLC donated a hazardous assessment and they found no issues to report. They have arranged for financing in order to close, but they are continuing to fund raise. LCHIP was asked for \$150,000 and the Drinking Water and Ground Water Trust Fund Grants for \$185,000 (50% of the value of the property). They have also received private donations from social media and a special mailing to residents of Exeter, Newfields, and Newmarket. He sincerely hopes that the ConCom will approve \$75,000 at the public hearing next week to contribute to the purchase. The Town will have a legal interest on the property. The Chair mentioned the parking concerns even though we did some improvements last year. Duane mentioned that there is money in the budget for a kiosk which can help direct visitors. SELT has not made any inventory of wildlife, but they have made a request to NH Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) and not heard back as yet. **Ellen** pointed out that they intentionally have not put any trails in the Piscassic Greenway because of the importance and fragile nature of the corridor. For the grant applications, SELT needs letters of support from the ConCom, Town Council, and Sean Greig, Director of Newmarket Environmental Services – Sewer and Water Divisions. The Chair suggested that SELT might also ask for a letter from Newfields.

Thank you Duane and congratulations for a great job from all the folks at SELT!

Jeff Goldknopf rejoined the meeting.

The meeting returned to the agenda.

4. Approval of Minutes

July 8, 2021

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** moved to approve the minutes as drafted for July 8, 2021

Second: **Cris Blackstone**

Vote: 4-0-2 (**Jeff Goldknopf** and **Sam Kenney** abstained)

5. Chair's Report

Request from Mark 209 to Use Schanda Park: The Chair received a request from a musical group called Mark 209 to use Schanda Park for a concert on August 18. The group was originally going to use Saint Mary Church, but that venue was cancelled. The concert would be free and run from 7:00-9:00 PM. Many members had questions/concerns about the group and too little information to make a decision. No motion was made and the Chair will notify them of the decision not to approve.

NHACC Events:

Cris Blackstone reported on the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions 50th Year Celebration. They invite all ConCom members to be a guest at the event on Saturday, September 11 from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm. at the Bear Brook State Park Shelter Pavilion. It will be an inspiring day of fun with conservation commissions from all over the state. Registration opens on August 9. **Cris Blackstone** encourages all members to check out the entire site for upcoming events and get ready

for the Annual Meeting on November 6. There are many other upcoming events and they can all be accessed at: [NHACC :: New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions](#)

6. Treasurer's Report

Ellen Snyder did not receive a financial report from the Town, but currently we have approximately \$162,000. However, if we spend the \$75,000 on the 75 Neal Mill Road purchase, that would take us down a bit. She checked with Diane Hardy recently and there are several new subdivision approvals/ or under consideration proposals which could add income to the Conservation Fund in the future.

7. Committee and Subcommittee Reports

Planning Board: **Jeff Goldknopf** said that the PB is looking at the B3 zone (commercial and not for residential use) and working on the Master Plan which must be rewritten in a few years. They also plan to look at the census results soon.

Town Council: **Megan Brabec** discussed the 1st reading of a proposal for approval of Resolution #2S021/202202 Authorizing the Town of Newmarket to enter into a Joint Powers Agreement of Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire. The creation of the Ad-hoc Riverfront Advisory Board had lapsed, so it will be reinstated next week.

Ad-hoc Riverfront Advisory Board: **Sam Kenney** wanted to thank Diane Hardy very much for all of her help in getting the NHDES Coastal Resilience Grant (CRG) application completed by the deadline of July 31. These grants are designated for coastal community and habitat resilience projects. He told members that he would send them a PDF of the grant. He mentioned that LRAC submitted a letter of support.

8. Old/New Business (continued)

Conservation Connection: **Cris Blackstone** spoke about all the excitement around the event on Oct.2. We are lucky to be collaborating with the Recreation Department and the Newmarket Public Library to promote the event. Between registration, vehicles, and promotion, they are our great friends in this special event. After the education component of the event on Oct 2nd, you will have the opportunity to visit one of three conservation properties, or participate in a volunteer workday. There will be a member of the Conservation Commission at each property and you will learn a little about the property and have time to explore!

- 1) Piscassic River Loiselle-you can also practice nature photography
- 2) Neal Mill Rd property-overview of the new project with SELT
- 3) Schoppmeyer Park-the adaptive sports launch and their outreach

You can find the Facebook event at <https://fb.me/e/2CsJdU5pi> and you can call the Rec Center at 659-8581 to register.

Congratulations Ellen Snyder! The Conservation Commission would like to congratulate Ellen!! At SELT's 2021 Annual Meeting, they presented Ellen Snyder with the Ashton Hallett Award. This award is given to a person or organization that has made significant contributions to the exemplary stewardship of land. The Chair and members also wanted to mention that the signs at Wiggin Farm look fantastic!

9. **Adjourn**

Action

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

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Vote: Unanimously Approved

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

The next meeting will be held on September 9, 2021 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary