



NEWMARKET CONSERVATION COMMISSION

THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2022

TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM

7:00 PM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ellen Snyder at 7:03 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Members Present:

Ellen Snyder (Chair), Melissa Sharples (Vice Chair), David Bell, Jeffrey Goldknopf (Planning Board Rep.), Melissa Brogle, and Julianna Tyson (Alternate)

Members Absent: Cris Blackstone, Sam Kenney, and Colin White (Town Council Rep. – *ex officio*)

On behalf of the Conservation Commission, the Chair thanked **Megan Brabec** for her service as the Town Council Rep for the last two years. We will welcome our new Town Council Rep.

Colin White, at our next meeting.

The Chair appointed **Julianna Tyson** as a voting member for this meeting.

Voting members this evening include: **Ellen Snyder, Melissa Sharples, David Bell, Melissa Brogle, and Julianna Tyson.**

4. Guest Speaker

The Conservation Commission is joined this evening by Joshua Megyesy, the turtle biologist with the NH Fish & Game Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program. This program was established in 1988 and is the steward for the state's nongame wildlife -- species not hunted, fished or trapped. Josh is a specialist in all things 'turtle', but works primarily with four of the seven turtle species found in NH (Blanding's turtles, spotted turtles, wood turtles, Eastern box turtles) identified as species in greatest need of conservation in the [New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan](#). He joins us via zoom to present information on "Turtles Around Us and Their Habitats". He began with a presentation on the semi-aquatic, semi-terrestrial Blanding's turtles who enjoy a large home range, they are long-lived (up to 80 years), their habitat includes wetlands, shrub swamps, vernal pools, forested wetlands, and emergent wetlands. These turtles

cover territory in a large portion of the Southeastern portion of the state. He showed slides of several turtles who have been tagged with monitors to demonstrate how far they travel every year. Spotted turtles are very secretive and use a variety of habitats in a single season. They are long-lived (up to 60 years) and their favorite habitat is wetlands, vernal pools, shrub swamps, and fens (naturally marshy regions supporting a rich ecology). Like the Blanding's, they live mostly in the southern half of the state. They both hibernate under water in the winter (they need 18" of water). Vernal pools are perhaps the most important habitat for both hibernation and as a food source early in the spring. Upland sandy areas are very important to both species for nesting and are disappearing with increased development. Within the NE: NH has 41%, MA has 23%, NY has 24%, ME has 11%, and PA has 1% of the turtle habitat. They re-sample the populations every five years. Newmarket and Durham are two very important areas as well as Bear Brook State Park and Pawtuckaway State Park. The greatest threats to these turtles is road mortality (because of nesting in June) and residential and commercial development (loss of habitat). Land protection is the highest ranked conservation action to protect at-risk turtle populations and biodiversity. There is more information on some of the programs available to help with conservation at: www.americanturtles.org/uploads/2/6/3/4/26349000/megyesy_josh.pdf. Reporting observations is important. Individuals may report all wildlife observations with photos and locations to raarp@wildlife.nh.gov. Report all vernal pools to help inform the future monitoring of these species. The Chair had several questions about culverts and mowing fields and Josh was very helpful. The Chair and members thanked him for his time and information this evening.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 14, 2022

Action

Motion: Melissa Sharples moved to approve the draft minutes of April 14, 2022 as written.
Second: Melissa Brogle
Discussion: None
Approved: Approved 5-0-0

6. Finance Report

The Chair reported that the current Conservation Fund has \$160,955.10, The Richard Schanda Fund is still at \$4,764.46. We have approved expenditures of approximately \$79,000 from the Conservation Fund, so that the balance is more like \$81,000 after payment of expenditures. We have not had any deposits from current use change tax in a few years. We did have some contributions to the Conservation Fund of \$5,000 from an LRAC grant which we are using at Heron Point and we received \$500.00 from LCHIP for submitting monitoring reports last year. The General Fund balance is \$111.03.

7. Funding Request – 32nd Annual Newmarket Fishing Derby

Rich Heidt is here this evening to seek ConCom funding to help with the purchase of fish for the 32nd Annual Newmarket Fishing Derby. This event will be held on Saturday, June 18 between 7:00 and 10:00 am. There is no entry fee, but entrance registration is required through the Recreation Department. The Derby was not held in 2020, but in 2021, there were approximately 105 participants. The fish cost has risen since they started by about 3-6% each year and the

fisheries have suffered economically. They have terrific volunteers who raise funds for prizes, collect donations, and to cover the increased cost of fish. They also have a raffle to raise funds.

Rules to participate:

- Fishing Derby is for children up to 14 years of age. Age brackets: 4 & under, 5/6, 7/8, 9/10, 11/12 & 13/14
- Residents & Grandchildren of Residents only.
- Horn blows at 7:00 AM sharp (beware of flying bobbars!)

Registration is online only at: [Log in \(recdesk.com\)](https://recdesk.com)

Action

Motion: **Jeff Goldknopf** moved to approve that the Conservation Commission expend \$1,500 for the purchase of fish for the 32nd Annual Newmarket Dishing Derby.
Second: **David Bell**
Discussion: None
Approved: **Approved 5-0-0**

8. Committee/Board Reports

Planning Board: **Jeff Goldknopf** reported that the PB took up the following: “*Eric DeWitt - There will be a public hearing for an application for Design Review & Extension of Conditional Approval of 12/13/18. The Design Review involves a two lot subdivision. One lot containing the approved future 2,920 sq. ft. mixed use building would be .078 acres, with 220’ road frontage and the other lot would be 4.52 acres, with 451’ road frontage. The lots are located at 81 Exeter Road, Tax Map U3, Lot 137, B1 Zone.*” Jeff also mentioned that the PB has a new section for the Stormwater Management Plan which combines the Sub-Division and the Site Plan Regulations into one section called Appendix C. It will be ready for the first hearing at the next meeting.

Ellen Snyder has met with Bart McDonough and he has agreed help the ConCom with several ways. He will be checking on the current land use change taxes to make sure that we have received all the funds we are entitle to and he will help with working on the prime wetlands map. The wetlands have most likely changed since the last time they were mapped (when Mark West prepared them). **Jeff Goldknopf** suggested that it would be helpful for Mark West come to the ConCom as a guest speaker to talk about wetland mapping.

Town Council: Since **Colin White** is not here this evening, **Ellen Snyder** spoke about the proposal taken up by the TC this week to make the Class VI portion of Neal Mill Road a Class A Trail. She spoke at the meeting as well as other members of the public. The second hearing will be May 18, 2022.

Ad hoc Riverfront Advisory Committee: Since **Sam Kenney** is not here this evening, **Ellen Snyder** spoke about her meeting with Bart McDonough. Bart has applied for a grant from NHDES called “NH Flood Smart Seacoast Project” in order to help NH coastal communities: incorporate best available coastal flood risk science and guidance in decision-making, adopt higher floodplain management standards, and access FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance funding. This is a planning grant to help with the culvert planning on Moonlight Brook and help with the living shoreline portion of the project. **Ellen** reported that Fish & Game has nothing to do with the parking spots at Shanda Park, but there still is a questions about the funding of the park and if Fish & Game has an interest.

9. Land Stewardship Projects and Priorities

The Chair and Vice-Chair have been discussing a way to better monitor the conservation areas we have in Newmarket. They thought that they would start with the areas where the ConCom is currently working on projects. There four areas include: Heron Point Sanctuary, Wiggin Farm Conservation Area, Piscassic-Loiselle Conservation Area, and Schanda Park. They handed out spreadsheets for the first three to discuss with the members. **Melissa Sharples** began by going through the Piscassic-Loiselle Conservation Area list as an example. The thought is that we would be in touch with DPW about plowing, mowing, and repairs. We can also look for more scout projects. They would like to discuss at the next meeting all the properties we are responsible to maintain – possibly each member could take responsibility for one or two areas – together with another member or alone. The Chair went through some of the incredible work that the community and DPW have done to help with Heron Pont. We are pleased to say that the Conservation Commission was selected to benefit from “Newmarket Cares Day” on Friday, May 13 from 9:00 to noon. A team of students will be working along with **Ellen** and **Melissa** at Heron Point to continue to spruce up the trails and boardwalk. **Melissa** also suggested that we reserve time in August to do a session on easement monitoring training. All members were excited about working on this project and they are excited about putting all this information on the website

10. Events

April 2022 Earth Week Roadside Clean-up Report: **Melissa Brogle** reported that the clean-up went really well this year. Twenty-two families signed up for 37 streets including both schools and the recreation department. Iron Goat Equipment -Junk Removal participated again this year and collected 4 large pieces of debris. Special thanks to the DPW for providing “blue bags” to our workers which could be dropped off at the Transfer Station for free. We had seven unique finds submitted for the photo contest. See the winner on our Facebook page! The Chair was very thankful for the Town for sending out a special flyer about proper disposal of your pet waste and collection of waste while walking your dogs. See more information at: [pet_waste_brochure.pdf \(newmarketnh.gov\)](#) Thank you **Melissa Brogle** for coordinating the clean-up again this year! **Melissa Sharples** also wanted to mention that dogs are not allowed at Schanda Park. It is posted, but it is widely ignored. **Ellen Snyder** also mentioned that many residents put their garbage out the night before collection. Several things can happen: wildlife can tear open the bags and spread it all over the roadway and they can get into the trash and eat some pretty unhealthy things. It can attract wildlife making them more of a pest and it is simply not a healthy source of food. We should try to get the word out into the community on this important issue. **Jeff Goldknopf** wanted to appeal to the public to avoid littering (throwing items from their cars). Microplastics are a major problem to wildlife and can be found in so many things including cigarette butts. Read all about this issue: [Microplastic pollution and the potential health risks | CNN](#)

May 13, 2022 Newmarket Day of Caring: This was reported by the Chair in the Land Stewardship section above.

May 14, 2022 Wiggin Farm Invasive Plant Pull: **Ellen Snyder** decided to cancel this volunteer event – too many things going on right now and the temperature is likely to be over 80 degrees. She will reschedule the event for another time.

Guest Speaker for June 9, 2022: We are pleased to have Mr. Matt Larkin from the USDA

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) be our guest speaker at the next meeting. He will speak on 'Understanding Water Quality, Soil, Health, and Newmarket's Role'.

11. Adjourn

Action

Motion: **Melissa Sharples** moved to adjourn the meeting.
Second: **David Bell**
Discussion: None
Approved: **Approved 5-0-0**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 PM.
The next meeting will be held on June 9, 2022 at 7:00 PM
in the Town Hall Auditorium.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary