



Conservation Commission

June 8, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Town Hall Auditorium

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ellen Snyder (Chair), David Bell, Jeffrey Goldknopf (Planning Board Rep.), Tom Jones (Alternate), Sam Kenney (arrived at 7:15 PM), Colin Lawson (Alternate), Julianna Tyson, and Brian Ward (Town Council Rep. *ex officio*)

Members Absent: Melissa Sharples (Vice-Chair) and Cris Blackstone.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

[time on DCAT 3:29]

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

We welcomed **Brian Ward** as the newly appointed Town Council Representative! The Chair appointed **Tom Jones** and **Colin Lawson** to serve as voting members this evening.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment this evening.

4. Guest Speaker: Doug Cygan

[time on DCAT 4:55 - 55:45]

Doug Cygan is the Invasive Species Coordinator for the NH Dept. of Agriculture.

Markets & Food. He has agreed to speak to the ConCom this evening about

“Preventing the Spread of Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*)”. He distributed copies of a pamphlet on best practices ([japanese-knotweed-bmps.pdf\(nh.gov\)](http://japanese-knotweed-bmps.pdf(nh.gov))).

There are also great resources on all invasive species of concern at the NH Dept of Agriculture website ([Plant Industry | Publications and Forms | NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food](http://PlantIndustryPublicationsandFormsNHDepartmentofAgricultureMarketsandFood)).

He discussed all of the issues that Japanese Knotweed present as a threat to the environment: 1) it is highly adaptive to new environments, 2) it can outcompete native plant species, 3) it can reduce or eliminate species diversity, 4) it can disrupt ecological processes (light, nutrients, water), 5) it can negatively affect wildlife habitats, 6) it has alleopathic properties (which means: “the chemical inhibition of one plant or other organism by another, due to the release into the environment of substances acting as germination or growth inhibitors”) are phytotoxic to native species, 7) it contributes to erosion, 8) it can impact on threaten or endangered species, and 9) it

can lead to agricultural crop loss. These plants can reach 10 ft tall and any small 1" piece of the rhizome broken off the main plant can root. The rhizomes can grow up to 60 ft. The plants flower from August to September. Homeland Security is concerned by the dense grow of knotweed surrounding power poles, lines, and substations. NHDOT requires an invasive species control and management plan ([Invasive Species Environment | NH Department of Transportation](#)). There are several ways to try to eradicate knotweed including smothering, biocontrol with sap-sucking aphids, and herbicides. Smothering can take 5-10 years. Many rivers and stream banks are being taken over by knotweed which can clog and change the flow and threaten many different wildlife species including the turtles. He also discussed the Giant Knotweed plant and explained the difference between the two invasives.

5. Approve Meeting Minutes

[time on DCAT 56:00]

April 13, 2023:

Action

Motion: Tom Jones moved to approve the draft minutes of April 13, 2023.
Second: David Bell
Discussion: None
Vote: Approved Unanimously 7-0-0

May 11, 2023:

Action

Motion: Julianna Tyson moved to approve draft minutes of May 11, 2023.
Second: Colin Lawson
Discussion: None
Vote: Approved Unanimously 7-0-0

6. Financial Summary

[time on DCAT 56:46]

The Chair reported that he current balance in the Conservation Fund is \$124,953.09 plus \$ 4,764.46 in the Richard Schanda Fund for a total of \$129,717.55. Interest earned was \$287.33. We expended funds for the kayak rack and lock for Sliding Rock. We will receive LUCT funds of \$8,400 for 60 Grant Road sometime soon. The Chair requested reimbursement for materials purchased for work on Newmarket Cares Day in Schanda Park of \$144.27.

Action

Motion: Colin Lawson moved to reimburse Ellen Snyder for purchased supplies for the Newmarket Cares Day project in Schanda Park totaling \$144.27. Funds will be paid from the Richard Schanda Fund.
Second: Sam Kenney
Discussion: None
Vote: Approved Unanimously 7-0-0

The Chair also reported that the General Fund balance is \$1,458.11.

7. SELT's Piscassic Greenway Management Plan Update

[time on DCAT 1:00:48-1:27:30]

Drew Kiefaber joined us again this month to make the final presentation of the

recommendations made by the Piscassic Greenway Management Advisory Committee to the Southeast Land Trust (attached as Addendum pages 1-3). He reviewed the summary recommendations to SELT with the members, answered questions, and discussed any new changes. He covered the details of 1) forest management, 2) invasive plant management, 3) early successional habitat, 4) fields, 5) management access, 6) public parking and trailheads, and 7) trails and public use. Thank you so much Drew!

8. Conservation Commission Operating Guidelines [time on DCAT 1:27:32]

Sam brought up the discussion held earlier about requesting that the ConCom received 100% of the LUCT. The Chair stated that she will put the LUCT on the agenda for July along with the discussion of the general budget for 2023-24. **Jeff** wanted to add a bullet item: "provide review and comment on matters regarding wetlands which come before the Planning Board upon request". The members did not have any further suggestions or comments. The Chair mentioned that these guidelines may be amended at any time.

Action

Motion: **Jeff Goldknopf** moved to approve as amended the Conservation Commission Operating Guidelines.

Second: **Tom Jones**

Discussion: None

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

A final copy with changes will be forthcoming.

9. Committee/Board Reports [time on DCAT 1:38:00]

Town Council: **Brian Ward** reported on the recent meeting of the TC. The TC held a workshop on various ways to improve community outreach. They also discussed the sewer line break 4 ft underneath the Lamprey Riverbed below the Dam. Sean Grieg has hired engineers from Wright Pierce Engineering to investigate possible fixes. The leak is very tiny and NHDES has determined that recreational fishing is not at risk. While looking at the leak, the Town discovered that the pedestrian bridge is beginning to rust and will require repairs. The Town has a new notification system going online called CivicReady. Everyone is encourage to sign-up at [Subscribe to Alerts / News | Newmarket NH](#). The Town hired a company called Placework from Portsmouth to complete a facilities study as part the TC preparations for the Master Plan update. They have already found that both the Police Department and the Town Hall may need to be expanded and repaired. The facilities study is in the very early stages right now. The TC received the letter dated May 22, 2023 from the ConCom requesting the reclassification of Class VI Old Lee Road to a Class A Trail. They plan to write an RSA and go through the process of two readings.

Planning Board: **Jeff Goldknopf** had nothing new to report. The Chair mentioned that a letter of support, discussed previously by the ConCom, for the Planning Department's application for a Coastal Resilience Grant has been submitted.

Riverfront Advisory Committee/Schanda Park: **Sam Kenney** mentioned that he, **Ellen, Bart**, and Aimee Gigandet had visited Schanda Park. This visit led to the quick turnaround for the decision to use the young people from Newmarket Cares Day to work

with **Ellen** sprucing up Schanda Park. He also mentioned that they hope to have a meeting with The Nature Conservancy very soon to determine where to place the Community Oyster Garden. The ConCom spoke with Kimberly Arlen, the Habitat Restoration Coordinator for the Nature Conservancy with the Marine Team working on oyster reef restoration and community engagement across the Great Bay area back in November 2022.

Energy and Environment Advisory Committee: **Julianna Tyson** reported that the Town Council has approved the Community Power Aggregation Plan and the Town is moving forward with the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH). Newmarket is expected to be in the third wave of communities to join and the formal launch is expected to begin in Spring 2024. The committee is still working on editing their recommendations to the Planning Board for the Energy Chapter of the Master Plan.

10. Initiatives

[time on DCAT 1:40:03]

Pathways for People and Nature: The Chair reported that Pete Steckler is still working on the two maps we requested. They will be ready soon to be printed out. **Bart** and **Ellen** met with the Durham Planning Board to discuss issues we have in common [052423.pdf \(durham.nh.us\)](https://www.durham.nh.us/052423.pdf).

Stream and Wildlife Crossings: **Colin Lawson** is still working on this project and expects to have a draft ready for the next meeting.

Pollinator Pathways: There is no report this evening.

11. Land Stewardship

[time on DCAT 1:41:15]

Sliding Rock Recreation and Conservation Area: LRAC grant: **Ellen** reported that the new kayak rack should be going in shortly. She reported that nearly all the boats are removed now except for one, which is padlocked. A decision on that boat has not been made yet. **Ellen** has a designer working on the kiosk signage. **Tom Jones** is still looking into different fencing options and prices for the area that the ConCom wants to protect from continued erosion.

Piscassic River–Loiselle: entrance sign: There is no new information this evening.

Wiggin Farm: UNH interns, kiosk: **Ellen** reported about the UNH Interns who worked for 7 hours today! They cut brush and pulled invasives. They are clearing the stone wall in the back and will begin again tomorrow at 8:00 AM. All are welcome to join the work! The interns will return next week and possibly work at Heron Point.

Dearborn – Driveway ROW Easement: The Chair reported that the State Attorney General has signed the driveway ROW easement and it is on the way back to the abutter. After the abutter signs, it will go back to Fish & Game. Long process and well done!

12. Other Business:

[time on DCAT 1:43:38]

Jeff mentioned that UNH student Lauren White has set three camera traps along Ash Swamp Road where the turtle signs are located near his home.

Colin reported that he, **Bart**, and **Melissa** spoke to the Boulder HOA. They met out at the trail. The trail runs from Sanborn/Lamprey Streets to Dame Road. It is a short trail, but is very wet. A member of the audience, Paul, lives on Dame Road and confirmed

that the trail is very muddy. The HOA has agreed that we can perform some restorations by placing chips on the trail and maybe building a boardwalk on the most muddy section. They are also discussing ways to connect up to Heron Point. **Colin** will have more of a plan ready soon and they are looking into ways of creating connectivity across Town and possibly between neighboring Towns.

13. Non-Public Session:

[time on DCAT 1:52:15]

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 **Jeff Goldknopf**, seconded by **Colin Lawson**, and approved 7-0-0 at 8:50 PM.

A motion to end the non-public session was made by **Jeff Goldknopf**, seconded by **Tom Jones**, and approved 7-0-0 at 9:17 PM.

A motion to seal the notes of the non-public session was made by **Ellen Snyder**, seconded by **Colin Lawson**, and approved 7-0-0.

14. Adjourn

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 PM.

Second: **Julianna Tyson**

Discussion: None

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary

DCAT:

https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/XSekkdEeRsk0JHQVHAvKJVka7_5VjxKP/videos

Addendum page 1

Piscassic Greenway Management Advisory Committee Summary of Recommendations to SELT for the Management Plan Update May 30, 2023

The members of the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) for the Piscassic Greenway (PG) Management Plan update include: Yohann Hanley (SELT), Lauren Hill, (Town of Newfields), Alison Watts (Town of Newfields), Drew Kiefaber (Town of Newmarket), Patrick Tate (NH Fish and Game), Ellen Snyder (Ibis Wildlife Consulting, Facilitator).

Recommendations for the Management Plan Update

The previous management plan for the Piscassic Greenway was completed in 2008 and encompassed 385 acres. Several parcels were added since that time (see attached map and the table below); the management plan update will include these new parcels. The PG now totals 491 acres.

Tract Name	Year Acquired	Size (acres)	Conservation Easement, Conservation Restrictions and/or Third Party Interest
Haughton-Falzone	2006	316	Town of Newfields, NOAA, US Fish & Wildlife Service, NH DES
Cole Farm	2006	33	Town of Newfields, USDA–NRCS Farmland Protection
Cole Wildlife	2006	36	Town of Newfields
Tucker #1	2012	59	The Nature Conservancy, US Fish & Wildlife Service
Tucker #2	2020	15	USDA–NRCS Wetlands Reserve, Town of Newmarket
Gaziano	2021	32	Town of Newmarket, LCHIP, NH DES

Forest Management

- Continue to manage forests for primary purposes: wildlife habitat, biodiversity, forest health, water quality, recreation. Income from forest products is not a focus, but any income can be used for further enhancements on the property.
- Update map of PG using same designations that are in the 2008 Plan: active management areas, modified reserves (limited management), and reserves (no active management, except as needed to control invasive plants or similar)
- Given climate change and weather patterns, ensure that any forest/habitat management operations occur during times to minimize rutting (e.g., frozen ground, very dry periods).
- Update map of big trees and other ecologically significant features; Retain large, legacy trees.
- Describe threats and opportunities to forest structure and composition resulting from invasive pests including Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) and Emerald Ash Borer (EAB).
- Include recent information on rare plants and animals and recommendations for management.

Invasive Plant Management

- Map the invasive plants on the Piscassic Greenway, especially prior to any management activities.
- To reduce spread of invasive plants, ensure that management equipment is clear of invasive plant material before coming on site; this includes logging and mowing equipment.
- Develop an invasive plant control plan. The Committee recommends the least impact with the best available science and Best Management Practices. This could involve engaging volunteers where feasible, limited use of herbicides, and mechanical methods.
- The MAC noted two areas of specific concern: glossy buckthorn in the early successional habitat and spotted knapweed and yellow rattle in the Cole Field.

Addendum page 2

Early Successional Habitat

- Map the existing early successional habitat in the central region of the PG and determine number of acres to be maintained over time and treatment cycle.
- Maintain a mosaic of vegetation ages so that not all is treated in one cycle.

Fields

- Continue to mow the Gaziano field. Evaluate what portion should continue to be mowed for hay and what portion delayed to a late fall mowing for wildlife.
- Continue the annual agricultural lease for the Cole Field; clarify which parts of the field are mowed for hay and which for breeding birds and other wildlife (i.e., timing of mowing).
- Continue the annual lease for the Helping Hands of Newfields garden.
- As noted above, mowing equipment should be free of invasive plant material before and after mowing.

Management Access

- Continue to maintain and use the following for Management Access.
 - **Neal Mill Road and Class A Trail Newmarket:** Provides best access to the east side of the PG for mowing, forestry, and other management equipment.
 - **Route 87 – Deeded Access through former Haughton property:** The primary access for getting management equipment and SELT staff and volunteers into the entire central region of the PG.
 - **Bald Hill Road, Newfields:** Provides access for mowing equipment to the Cole Field.
 - **Halls Mill Road and Class A Trail, Newfields:** Provides access for SELT staff and volunteers.

Public Parking and Trailheads

- **Mras Trailhead, Bald Hill Road:** This is the only parking area on the PG. Expand from 4 to 6 parking spaces, as allowed by the conservation easement deed.
- **Neal Mill Road, Newmarket and Halls Mill Road, Newfields:** These parking areas are maintained by the two towns, respectively.
- **Recreational Rail Trail:** A popular entry point, which involves a public access easement from the rail trail across private land to the PG.
- **North end of the Byrne Trail:** This entry point leads from private lands along the northern SELT boundary. Collaborate with abutters to maintain this access point.

Trails and Public Uses

- Maintain the existing trail network and allowed uses on the respective trails (see map).
- Reroute or improve trails as needed to avoid sensitive soils, erosion, and other issues.
- No additional trails recommended.
- Add trail signage as needed to inform visitors of allowed uses on trail segments.
- Collaborate with the Towns of Newmarket and Newfields to improve the drainage on the Neal Mill/Halls Mill Class A Trail and the Byrne Spur Trail.
- Update policy on motorized wheeled vehicles to allow for some ebikes and motorized electric vehicles for ADA accessibility.
- Continue to allow hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, nature observation, fishing, hunting, bicycling and horseback riding on designated trails, dog-walking (under voice control), foraging for personal non-commercial use, and the following with permission only: geocaching, wildlife cameras, trapping on a case-by-case basis.
- Continue to prohibit camping, fires, digging, drones, target shooting, collecting biotic and abiotic materials (other than for personal foraging), disturbance of natural materials.

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