



TOWN OF **NEWMARKET** NEW HAMPSHIRE

Conservation Commission

August 10, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Town Hall Auditorium

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ellen Snyder (Chair), Melissa Sharples (Vice-Chair), Cris Blackstone, Jeffrey Goldknopf (Planning Board Rep.), Tom Jones (Alternate), Sam Kenney, Julianna Tyson, and Brian Ward (Town Council Rep. *ex officio*)

Members Absent: Colin Lawson (Alternate) and David Bell

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

[time on DCAT 3:17]

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

Tom Jones (Alternate) was appointed to serve as a voting member this evening.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment this evening.

4. Approval of Minutes

Approval of the July 13, 2023 minutes is postponed until the next meeting in September.

5. Financial Summary

[time on DCAT 4:15]

The Chair reported that the current Conservation Commission Fund is \$133,568.66 and the Richard Schanda Fund is \$4,621.11. Total Fund Balance is: \$138,189.77. The General Fund Balance (as of 8/1/23) totals \$4,520.00.

6. FY25 Proposed General Fund Balance

[time on DCAT 5:42]

The Chair reviewed the FY25 proposed budget. She distributed a draft letter to Steve Fournier and Bart regarding a proposed budget showing increases/decreases as necessary from FY23 through FY25:

	FY23	FY24	FY25
Part-time Salaries	\$3,335	\$3,470	\$3,300
Contracted Services	\$300	\$400	\$1,000
Dues/Subscriptions	\$350	\$450	\$500

General Supplies	\$200	\$200	\$200
Postage	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$4,185	\$4,520	\$5,000

She spoke with Bart about the increase in funds required for contracted services for conservation easement monitoring. She reviewed the proposed changes with the members and they were in agreement.

Action

Motion: **Melissa Sharples** made a motion to approve the FY25 budget as drafted. It should be sent to the Town Manager and the Town Planner for continued consideration by the Budget Committee and Town Council.

Second: **Sam Kenney**

Discussion: none

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

7. Committee/Board Reports

[time on DCAT10:09]

Town Council: **Brian** updated the members that the sewer leak below the dam has been fixed and it should last for several years while a more permanent solution can be determined. **Tom** wanted to know if the sewer fix had been put in the Town Newsletter...**Brian** was not sure. **Melissa** reported that the Newsletter did have a general water quality press release from NHDES. **Brian** reported that two citizens have been appointed to the Arts, Culture, & Tourism Commission: Joshua Skovlund (Alternate) and Jamie Knauer (member). \$50,000 has been transferred to the merit pool from the Fire Capital Reserve Fund which the Chief said was not used/necessary.

Planning Board: **Jeff** reported that Lyndsay and Bart presented the proposed changes to Chapter 32 requirements regarding the MS4 program. The new changes will give the Code Enforcement Officer the ability to enforce illicit dumping into the Town catch system. Prior to these proposed changes, the Town had no clear path to enforce violations. The PB approved the proposed changes and will send them directly on to the Town Council for consideration and hearings. **Jeff** will send the changes around to the members by email. Dale Pike did not come to the PB to discuss continuing the signage around Moonlight Brook regarding the water quality, but he told the PB of Dale's concerns. It was determined that signage is the responsibility of NHDES. The Chair asked if any wetlands were impacted with the proposed senior housing on South Main Street...he said that no wetlands are impacted at this time. The site approval application has been continued to Sept 12.

Riverfront Advisory Committee/Schanda Park: **Sam** reported that the next meeting will be August 21. He will check in with Dr. Jones at UNH about the Moonlight Brook sampling and report back.

The Chair reported that the oyster cages are in! The first workshop will be Wednesday, August 16, 2023 from 4-6 PM at Schanda Park. She has received an application from Jerry Collins requesting his use of Schanda Park for the annual storage of 'Chick's Weir' from October 2023 to June 2024.

Action

Motion: **Melissa Sharples** made a motion to approve the application from Jerry Collins to store 'Chick's Weir' from October 2023 to June 2024.

Second: **Cris Blackstone**

Discussion: **Sam Kenney** had a brief comment about the space Jerry currently uses. Should any shoreline improvements be done at Schanda Park, that area would no longer be available.

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

Energy and Environment Advisory Committee: **Julianna** reported that the next meeting will be on August 30th. The State PUC has approved the Newmarket aggregation plan. The next move for the plan is to submit it to the Town Council, Town Manager, and the Town Attorney (for legal assistance). After approval of all documents, the hope is that the plan will go into effect Spring 2024.

Lamprey River Advisory Committee: The Chair received a letter from Suzanne Petersen at LRAC. They are considering restarting a stream survey. She sent along a stream survey worksheet (included in the meeting packet). LRAC is requesting input from the ConCom on 'actionable items' which could be included on the form. It was determined that the ConCom needs more information and it was suggested we invite the Town Rep to LRAC, Patrick Reynolds, to attend a meeting. **Cris** will contact Patrick.

NHACC Photo Contest: **Cris** wanted to let everyone know about the photo contest being sponsored by NHACC. There is a \$10.00 entry fee for any number of photos. The theme – Water, Wetlands and Wildlife – gives a wide variety of potential material for the public's amateur photographers. NHACC wants to encourage the public to get outdoors, and there's an added incentive of cash prizes; \$250 for winners, and \$50 for honorable mentions. Check out the [photo submission page](#) for more info. The deadline is Sept. 8 and the photos should be taken this year. **Melissa** said that all the info is posted on our Facebook page.

8. Initiatives

[time on DCAT 31:16]

Pathways for People and Nature: The Chair mentioned that we have some maps from Pete Steckler. Bart is beginning work on the Master Plan and he has some maps. We also need to collect some trail data this fall including Follette's Brook. This is still in the planning stages and it will take us into 2024-25 to complete. **Tom** reported that he has reached out to Lori Sommer, Coastal Watershed Land Conservation Manager with SELT. **Tom** will contact her about being a speaker in October.

Stream and Wildlife Crossings: **Colin** couldn't be here this evening.

Pollinator Pathways: **Melissa** will be emailing a group of folks at the school system with regard to recruiting a group of students to help with the planting of the seeds gifted from Pollinator Pathways. There will be a couple of locations at each school.

Night Sky Event: The Chair was asked by **Cris** to mention the NH Astronomical Society [New Hampshire Astronomical Society \(nhastro.com\)](http://nhastro.com) event. We will be co-hosting the event with the Nature Conservancy on Monday, January 8, 2024 at 7:00 PM. The event will be at the Nature Conservancy on Bay Road...it is really dark on their deck. The High School has an Astronomy class which we could try to reach out to...**Cris** will check

on who to contact for the class and see if the Newmarket Library is interested. **Cris** suggested that we might do something with the students about the effects of night lighting on bird migration as well as insects.

9. Conservation Easement Monitoring [time on DCAT 39:07]

SELT Contract: The Chair sent the SELT contract to Deborah Goard, Stewardship and Land Engagement Director (it was okay), then it went to Steve Fournier (it was okay), and then it will go back to the SELT director for signing. We will then be able to release the current contract. In September, the Commission could approve funding for SELT and contract for them to monitor both Hilton and Nostrum this year. Also, at the September meeting, we could divvy up the monitoring assignments for this year.

10. Land Stewardship [time on DCAT 40:50]

Sliding Rock Conservation & Recreation Area: LRAC grant -approve expenditures: The Chair reported that the signs are here and look fantastic! We have three invoices to approve: Cathy Arakelian \$877.50 (graphic design), Greg DiSanto \$455.00 (trail map), and Portsmouth Sign Company \$1050.00 (printing). We did not do the fencing and we did not need a DES permit so we saved \$400.00. The grant was for awarded for \$6,325.00 and we spent \$6,244.43.

Action

Motion: **Tom Jones** made a motion to approve the invoices for the three items: Cathy Arakelian \$877.50, Greg DiSanto \$455.00, and Portsmouth Sign Company \$1050.00.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Discussion: none

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

Piscassic River-Loiselle Conservation Area – approve final sign payment:

The Chair reported that the sign is in and looks very nice! We were \$150.00 short when we approved that funding.

Action

Motion: **Melissa Sharples** made a motion to approve the expenditure of an additional \$150.00 for the sign at Piscassic River-Loiselle.

Second: **Cris Blackstone**

Discussion: none

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

The Chair would like to look toward to Wiggin Farm next and hire Cathy and Greg again for the planned kiosk. She would like to submit another application to LRAC for the new kiosk. **Cris** would like to ask Prof. Matt Tarr to come back for another guided tour again and maybe add it to a ribbon cutting for a new kiosk?

11. Other Updates

Boulder Drive Trail: **Colin** is still working on this trail.

Camera Traps on Ash Swamp Road – Turtle Movement: **Jeff** reported that Lindsay White contacted him to say that the camera traps were removed on July 21st and she

will reach out to us again once her data analysis is complete. **Jeff** only saw one bad turtle accident on Ash Swamp this year. He has, however, seen many, many dark red crayfish this year. They make mud huts under his trees and stick their claws up in the air!

12. Adjourn

[time on DCAT 51:43]

Action

Motion: **Melissa Sharples** made a motion to adjourn at 7:49 PM.

Second: **Cris Blackstone**

Discussion: none

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary

DCAT:

https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/XSekdEeRsk0JHQVHAvKJVka7_5VjxKP/videos