



## Conservation Commission

October 12, 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, and Colin Lawson (Alternate).

**Members Absent:** Melissa Sharples (Vice-Chair), Cris Blackstone, Jessica Cann (Alternate), Julianna Tyson, and Brian Ward (Town Council Rep. ex officio).

**Town Staff Present:** Bart McDonough, Director of Planning and Community Development

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

[time on DCAT 6:59]

#### 1. Pledge of Allegiance

#### 2. Welcome New Member

The Chair announced **Jessica Caan** as a new alternate member of the Conservation Commission. She was unable to attend this evening, but we look forward to having her join the Commission.

#### 3. Roll Call

The Chair appointed **Tom Jones** and **Colin Lawson** as voting members this evening.

#### 4. Public Comment

There was no public comment this evening.

#### 5. Congratulations to Sue Frick for 10 years with the ConCom

I wish to thank the Chair and members for their kindness and wonderful cider and cookie party! I have enjoyed and will continue to enjoy serving as Recording Secretary. I have had the opportunity to see all the progress made by this group over the years. The Commission is comprised of some of the most thoughtful, hard-working, and creative people in Town with an ultimate goal of keeping the lands in Newmarket thriving and of protecting all lands and wildlife with a keen eye towards the future of this planet.

#### 6. Approve Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2023

[time on DCAT 14:21]

### Action

**Motion:** **Colin Lawson** moved to approve the Draft Minutes as written for September 14, 2023

**Second:** **David Bell**

**Discussion:** none

**Vote:** **Approved 5-0-1 (Sam Kenney abstained)**

### **7. Sealing and Unsealing Non-Public Meeting Notes**

New NH State Bill: [Bill Text: NH HB321 | 2023 | Regular Session | Amended | LegiScan](#)

### Action

**Motion:** **Tom Jones** moved to appoint **Ellen Snyder** and **Jeff Goldknopf** to review the Non-Public Meeting Notes and report back to the ConCom with their recommendations for a final vote.

**Second:** **Colin Lawson**

**Discussion:** none

**Vote:** **Unanimously Approved 6-0-0**

### **8. Financial Summary**

[time on DCAT 18:42]

From the recent financial statement dated 10/5/2023, the Chair reported that the Conservation Fund has a balance of \$133,347.19; The Richard Schanda Fund has a balance of \$4,621.11; making the balance of the CF \$137,968.30. We have no posted interest for September. On 8/15 we received the second payment from LRAC of \$3,156.93. The General Fund balance is \$4,049.67 which does not take into account the \$1,000 for SELT to monitor easements...so the total available is \$3,049.67. We have received the invoice from the NHACC for our annual dues of \$450. We only budgeted for \$400.

### Action

**Motion:** **Sam Kenney** made a motion to pay the NHACC dues of \$450 from the General Fund.

**Second:** **Colin Lawson**

**Discussion:** none

**Vote:** **Unanimously Approved 6-0-0**

The Annual Meeting of the NHACC is scheduled for November 4. The keynote speaker will be David Carroll, artist, author, and naturalist ([David M. Carroll - Brief Biography - The Carroll Studio Gallery \(carrollartgallery.com\)](#)). All members are encouraged to sign up for the meeting and they will be reimbursed. More information may be found at: [Annual Meeting :: NHACC :: New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions](#)

### **9. Committee/Board Reports**

[time on DCAT 22:08]

**Town Council:** **Brian** is not present this evening, but the Chair wanted to tell members that the TC approved Resolution #2023/2024-07 - to Reclassify a Class VI Road, Old Lee Road, Into a Class A Trail. The Chair also discussed the zoom meeting for all committee/commission/board chairs with the Town Manager to discuss the right-to-know law and to explain their role as a Chair. He informed them that they would have staff

support and all municipal files were to be kept at the town hall, not at their homes. Their designated staff person will be responsible for reviewing contracts and grants for review and submission to the Town Manager. There was also a discussion about members of committee getting town emails to use, but that may be cost prohibitive. There will be further discussion.

**Planning Board:** **Jeff** reported on the recent PB meeting. He brought up the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) with the PB. The ConCom currently receives 50% of the tax and some members of ConCom are interested in increasing that percentage. The percentage could only be changed by a warrant article and we are too late to submit that for this year. **Bart** will find out the deadline date for 2025. The Chair asked if there are any updates on the senior housing proposal for S. Main Street. **Jeff** reported that he is recused from the discussion and voting, but is aware that the applicant has asked for a continuation to November 14.

**Riverfront Advisory Committee/Schanda Park:** **Sam** reported that they did not meet in July or September. There should be a meeting in November. LRAC is still funding Dr. Stephen Jones, from UNH, to continue the water sampling on Moonlight Brook for contamination and we can check back with him should he need help in accessing the entire length of the Brook. Dr. Jones did say that almost every waterway they sampled this year did not pass the contamination test! It was assumed that the increase in rain and run-off was the reason this year. **Bart** mentioned that he and **Ellen** are currently working with Dave Evans, the Town Health Officer, on some language for signs at Schanda Park. Things like 'don't feed the ducks', 'don't climb on the rocks – they are slippery', 'water pollution' (if /when appropriate), etc. Then they will come back to the ConCom and RFAC for discussion.

**Other Committee Reports:** The Chair reported that the Stone Church's Oysterfest was held on September 17. **Ellen**, **Melissa**, and **Cris** worked the ConCom table. **Tom** achieved a perfect score on the special quiz about trees! Kim Arlen, Habitat Restoration Coordinator at the Nature Conservancy, manned the Oyster Garden at Schanda Park. The oyster cages have been pulled for the year. TNC plans an annual 'thank you' celebration at the Liars Bench Beer Company in Portsmouth on October 26 where they will party and speak about the findings this season.

#### **10. Master Plan Update – Open Space Chapter** [time on DCAT 39:50]

**Bart** spoke about the beginnings of the planning process. Guests from the Strafford Regional Planning Commission were planning on being here this evening, but did provide a document for the members which **Bart** handed out. The Master Plan Sub-Committee will begin with the Open Space Chapter and the first meeting will be set shortly. At that meeting, these maps will be reviewed for accuracy and determine what progress has been made from the old chapter. **Bart** will distribute a pdf of the maps and print out large maps for everyone. He would like members to comment to him before the next ConCom meeting on November 9. Several members have already seen some missing things i.e. trails, Gaziano Tract, prime wetlands, well-head protections, and aquifer protections. The Chair was asked if other towns have Open Space Chapters that might help...he will provide links to members. The timeline for the draft of this chapter: it is hoped that it will be completed by winter or early spring 2024. It will then go to the Sub-Committee and then to the PB for their consideration and they would then

send it off to the Town Council for final approval. The Chair asked about the charrette next year and how it folds into this chapter. The names of the chapters in the Master Plan are mostly determined by State Statute. **Bart** mentioned that the Open Space Chapter is very important for writing grants in the future. The Master Plan is the guiding document for all planning in the Town.

#### **11. Conservation Easement Monitoring** [time on DCAT 1:02:20]

**Tom** reported that **Jeff** and **Julianna** have the folder for monitoring Bald Hill. Tonight he gave **Sam** the folder for Piscassic River-Loiselle and **Dave** will be monitoring the Smith Sisters for us. The Chair mentioned that State F&G monitors Wiggin Farm (it is done, but no report yet), and they also monitor Dearborn (they emailed **Ellen** and the report said all is fine there). **Tom** mentioned that he hasn't heard from Amanda at SELT yet as they will be doing Hilton and Nostrum for us. He will forward the reports to LCHIP so we can be paid quickly! Storage of the original reports will be in **Bart's** office with a copy in the basement files.

#### **12. Land Stewardship** [time on DCAT 1:06:31]

Wiggin Farm Kiosk and Interpretive Panel: **Ellen** is working on the kiosk for Wiggin Farm – 2 (4x4) posts with copper caps and two cross pieces for the sign panel. She has quotes from all vendors used before and we voted to spend up to \$500 which will be plenty. If we want to ask Greg to do a locus map to show adjoining properties (like he did for Sliding Rock) and keep the uniform look across all properties in Town we need to allocate additional funding. Cathy Arakelian would cost \$800, Portsmouth Sign would cost ~\$200, and Greg would cost ~\$700 for both a property map and trail map. **Ellen** will submit the design from Greg to the ConCom for final approval.

#### Action

**Motion:** **Tom Jones** moved to expend up to \$2,000 for the interpretative signage for Wiggin Farm from the Conservation Fund.

**Second:** **David Bell**

**Discussion:** none

**Vote:** **Unanimously Approved 6-0-0**

The Chair would like to sincerely thank DPW for their partnership with the Conservation Commission. They have just begun the field mowing for the season and they mowed the trails for us again this year.

Folletts Brook Boundary Reconnaissance: We have several pieces of land that perhaps need voluntary mergers. We need to complete a boundary reconnaissance first to see what we have. Once that is complete, we could contact the neighbors for a site walk and discuss what they might want to see for trails in this area. **Ellen, Tom** and **Colin** are all interested in this project and an early December date was proposed.

#### **13. Other Projects**

Boulder Drive Trail: **Colin** and **Bart** met with the HOA Chair to discuss the upgrades between Lamprey Street and Dame Road. They are amenable to any upgrades we would like to do, but cannot contribute financially. Jon Steer, who owns property on Bay

Road, has returned and spoken to **Colin**. He is not comfortable in making a deed adjustment at this time. The HOA is not particularly keen on having people walking on the trail in their backyards. **Colin** recommends that we begin with the upgrades to the existing trail first. Small trees may need to be cut to reset the path and protect the trail from future erosion. He inquired if we have any history on the cost per foot for putting down stone or woodchips. **Colin** will measure the trail and sketch out a proposal for the ConCom to consider. He will ask **Ellen** and **Bart** to take a walk out there to look at the nuisance spots (roots, etc.). We will confirm the upgrades with the HOA as we go forward.

NH Aquatic Restoration Mapper: **Colin** has been using the NH Aquatic Restoration Mapper to look at the infrastructure of the Town. [Explore Stream Crossing Data in the Aquatic Restoration Mapper – New Hampshire Stream Crossing Initiative \(state.nh.us\)](#) This system provides great information for identifying funding opportunities. He downloaded all the data for the Town and is drawing up a list of potential funding sources. Thank you Colin!

Neal Mill and Old Lee Class A Trails: Please see the Town Council report above in #9. The Chair is still working with SELT. She asked about creating signs for the three entrances to these Class A Trails. **Ellen** is looking for examples and will continue to look for examples to bring to the meeting. **Bart** mentioned that there is a Chapter in the Master Plan called “Regional Cooperation”. Working with Newfields on this project would be a good example.

#### **14. Events**

[time on DCAT 1:39:32]

Newmarket HS Environmental Club Afternoon of Service: October 24, 2023

NHACC Annual Meeting: November 4, 2023

Astronomy Night with the Nature Conservancy: January 8, 2024

TNC ‘Thank You’ for Oyster Restoration Volunteers: October 28, 2023

#### **15. Adjourn**

[time on DCAT 1:40:45]

##### Action

**Motion:** Sam Kenney made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 PM.

**Second:** David Bell

**Discussion:** none

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary

DCAT:

[https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/XSekkdEeRsk0JHQVHAvKJVka7\\_5VjxKP/videos](https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/XSekkdEeRsk0JHQVHAvKJVka7_5VjxKP/videos)