



TOWN OF
NEWMARKET
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Conservation Commission

December 14, 2023 7:00 PM

Town Hall Auditorium

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

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

Members Absent: David Bell and Cris Blackstone

Town Staff Present: Bart McDonough, Director of Planning and Community Development, and Autumn Scott (Regional Planner SRPC)

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

[time on DCAT 5:03]

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

The Chair welcomed Jessica Cann (Alternate) to her first in-person meeting and asked her to tell the members a little about herself. Welcome Jessica! The Chair appointed Alternates **Colin Lawson** and **Tom Jones** as voting members this evening.

The seven voting members this evening include **Ellen Snyder, Melissa Sharples, Jeff Goldknopf, Tom Jones, Sam Kenney, Colin Lawson, and Julianna Tyson.**

3. Public Comment

There was no one present for public comment.

4. Approve Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2023

[time on DCAT 7:31]

Action

Motion: **Sam Kenney** moved to approve the Minutes as drafted for November 9, 2023.

Second: **Colin Lawson**

Discussion: none

Vote: **Approved 6-0-1 (Jeff Goldknopf abstained)**

5. Financial Summary

The Chair reported on the current budget. The Conservation Fund balance is currently \$134,536.83 with \$4,621.11 in the Richard Schanda Fund for a total of \$139,157.94. The

General Fund has a balance of \$3,290.95.

6. Master Plan Update – Open Space Chapter [time on DCAT 9:18 – 1:04:27]

Autumn Scott, SRPC, and **Bart** have joined the meeting this evening to give the members an update on the Master Plan and discuss the Open Space Chapter. **Autumn** handed out material showing Natural Resource Inventories. She also went through the Task Outline and what has been completed so far: 1) the internal kickoff, 2) the kickoff with town boards, 3) establishing regular check-ins, and 4) the first community survey. In-progress items include: 1) a review of current progress, 2) revision of existing plans, and 3) revision of existing maps with new data. Today they are beginning 1) the development of a first draft and 2) plans to set up a goal-setting workshop with the ConCom. Goals for this evening are: to update progress, update progress on map revision, give a survey update and continuing promotion, review potential chapter outline, logo/branding update, and prep for the goal setting workshop. **Autumn** also went through a few items to be covered in the January meeting. [time on DCAT 15:29]

Autumn shared a Summary of Recommendations from the Open Space Chapter from 2007 to determine if the members wish to revise, keep, add new, edit, discuss further or delete. The first comments from SRPC were based on comments from the members for the 'Education and Stewardship' section. The Chair recommended that members take some time to consider the recommendations before the next meeting. **Autumn** proceeded to the section on 'Land Conservation'. With regard to listing of priority conservation areas, the Chair mentioned that she and **Bart**, participated in a webinar last Friday with the "Connect and Protect" program. The webinar may be found here: https://media.unh.edu/media/Connect+to+Protect+webinarA+How+coastal+NH+ME+communities+are+advancing+land+conservation+priorities/1_3kylvtv2. There are towns (like Rochester) who have detailed checklists of properties available. **Autumn** will reach out to Lynn Vaccaro, Coastal Training Program Coordinator for GBNERR. **Jeff** asked who might know what is left from the 2003 bond? **Autumn** proceeded to the section on 'Land Use Planning' and the 'notes' section which will be prepared by SRPC. [time on DCAT 31:22]

Bart reported on the Master Plan Subcommittee meeting last night. The MPSCom decided to return to the Planning Board to refine the chapter structure and get their valuable input and support going forward. The 'Open Space, Natural Resources and Water Resources Chapter' will be comprised of the members of the ConCom and other specialists/experts as required - called Team #2. Other chapters were discussed and most chapters will include step-downs/themes. **Bart** said that the funding of the Open Space Chapter is funded requires a fast approaching deadline. The Housing Chapter also has a funding-created deadline. The rest of the funding does not have the deadline expectations. The schedule can be viewed on the overall timeline from the SRPC for Completion of the Master Plan. Open Space is due in May and the Housing is due in June/July. **Autumn** added that Jackson Rand (GIS) will have the maps prepared early next week for members to review and then discussion is planned at the January meeting. There will also be maps for every chapter – not just Open Space. The Chair asked about the availability of farmland which might be open in Newmarket. **Autumn** said that the American Farmland Trust ([Home - American Farmland Trust](#)) has some interesting statistics on farms under threat which SRPC plans to incorporate into their data snapshots for every town. She will grab that information for us to use. The Chair and

Colin also asked about using the culvert and stream crossing data. The plan is to incorporate this information and maps as this is a vulnerability issue for wildlife protection. [time on DCAT 43:28]

Autumn moved on to the survey progress report. The post cards and flyers are being distributed by various means. So far, there have been 100 responses. 90% of those responding consider open space extremely or very important. The QR code is very helpful. Duplicate responses can be identified – they have quality assurance checks.

Autumn reviewed the current color palette that the Town is using for all documents. They plan to continue using these colors, but add a warmer color for design elements. She also showed the members the font/text/style design elements for the project. She briefly described the preliminary outline for the chapter. She spoke about the quotes taken from the survey and various charts and graphs will help with the discussion of the 'themes'. At the end of each chapter, there will be an implementation and goal section. She followed this with a few of the preliminary logo designs and **Bart** described his designs and what the elements convey...using lots of symbology i.e. eels, water, and water wheel (mills). They want to stay away from lettering and simply use symbols to convey the meaning. The report and the all marketing materials would use this logo. Bart would like suggestions from the members of their top five words/symbols which describe Newmarket. **Melissa** wanted to know when they were planned to have this completed because the 300th Birthday Committee is currently reaching out to the community for the same kind of information to create their new logo. It would be good to try to coordinate this process. **Bart** agreed. Autumn gave everyone a little homework for the next meeting: 1) she will send out the maps next week for 'marking up' and they will go through suggestions at the next meeting and 2) please promote the survey – she will send the link and password to access results! The SRPC will prep for the ConCom goal-setting workshop, develop a final draft narrative & utilize the draft chapter outline, and monitor and continue to promote the survey.

7. Committee/Board Reports

[time on DCAT 1:04:34]

Town Council: **Brian** reported information from recent meetings of the TC. The parking study from 2009 was sent to the SRPC. An ARPA Grant was just received for improving the waste water treatment facility for the septage receiving station near Schanda Park. They have leased land from the NCDC (Newmarket Community Development Corp) for Town parking at the corner of Dame Road and Rt. 108. NHDES has provided money to the Town (\$73,500) to address the bacteria loading in Moonlight Brook and the town's infrastructure. NHDES will forgive 100% of the cost.

Planning Board: **Bart** spoke about the recent projects before the PB. The 30-unit affordable elderly housing project at 242 Main Street was approved. The applicant reduced the # of units, provided an architectural redesign, provided some new landscaping elements, and voluntarily reduced the age requirements from the previous meetings. The units meet HUD 62+ housing rules (not 55+ as proposed) – all residents in the facility must be 62+ years old. The wetlands in the back of the property will not be disturbed. **Bart** also described the sidewalk connection to S. Main Street and spoke about Town-planned sidewalk work for Grant Road to S. Main Street. There is also a 41-unit apartment building with commercial on part of the first floor (mixed use) at 3-5 Railroad Street has been accepted for review and a TRC was established. A review is scheduled for January and the proposal will come before the PB in February for public hearing.

Riverfront Advisory Committee/Schanda Park: **Sam** reported that they had invited NHDES to a meeting to discuss the Great Bay Living Shoreline Project at Scanda Park (as proposed some 18 months ago). Now, with new dedicated staff in Town in place, the members wanted to let them know that we are still interested in this project. **NHDES** was still supportive and they understand how long these projects can take communities. He pointed out that the Wagon Hill Project (Phase I) took 10 years to complete and Durham plans a Phase II. **Bart** and **Ellen** are still working on the signage language for Schanda Park regarding the 'water pollution' safety issues. A draft should be ready for the ConCom and RFAC in January.

Energy and Environment Advisory Committee: **Julianna** reported that the CPC is working on a website for the Town. They have also submitted their recommendations for the Master Plan Chapter on Energy. They reviewed a draft letter from CPC which will go out in late January to everyone in Newmarket. The new electric rates will be out shortly and a community information meeting will be held in the Town Hall Auditorium on Wednesday, January 31, 2024.

300th Anniversary Committee: **Melissa** reported on the recent meeting. They completed the grant agreement with the Town. They still have an 'open call' for a logo for the event. The Historical Society is taking those submissions. They are also establishing a board from the volunteers currently interested and they are always open to anyone who wants to join in!

Other: 1) **Bart** received a letter from Sarah Clark who is interested in researching the possibility of a "Green Burial Cemetery" in the seacoast area. **Bart** passed a flyer around. He needs to do some research on whether or not this is a permitted use in Newmarket. There was a discussion about conserved land. Sarah is working with SELT. 2) **Jeff** asked about the culvert on Ash Swamp Road. **Ellen** reported that the culvert is top most in the Town and the State right now. In the interim, the DPW will continue to dig the culvert out every few days to keep the flooding down. The beavers stand watch, search for new materials, and rebuild each time. The beavers are also 'watching' the crews as they work on the culvert on Neal Mill Road. **Bart** will speak with Lindsay and DPW about the current plans for the culverts on Ash Swamp and Neal Mill. There was a discussion about the company Beaver Deceivers and its founder, Skip Lisle, MSc. The company is dedicated to protecting our land and infrastructure, as well as allowing for creative remedies that improve habitats and end wasteful killing and spending. Their technology and practices are state-of-the-art, and have been employed domestically as well as internationally to mitigate the growing problems presented by the beaver population.

8. Conservation Easement Monitoring

[time on DCAT 1:35:47]

Tom presented an update on monitoring. **Ellen** will be going out to Smith Sisters with Parker Schuerman, Director of Land and Ecological Management from Audubon, to walk the boundaries. **Tom** reported that everything will be scanned soon. LCHIP does want copies of monitoring reports, but they want you to use an online portal. Once the Piscassic River-Loiselle report is sent to LCHIP, then we will be paid the \$400. He thanked everyone for submitting their reports. Thank you, **Tom**, for all your coordination and efforts in getting the easement monitoring completed this year!

9. Land Stewardship

[time on DCAT 1:40:38]

Wiggin Farm Kiosk and Interpretive Panel: **Ellen** will be working on this over the winter.
Sliding Rock- phase 2 project ideas: **Ellen** would like to ask Tom Ballestero, a hydrology and water resource engineer at UNH, to look at the boat ramp and the erosion issues.
Folletts Brook Boundary Reconnaissance: This is still planned.

10. Other Projects

[time on DCAT 1:41:47]

Boulder Drive Trail: **Colin** reported that he, **Melissa**, and Paul (another abutter) recently walked the trail to evaluate it. **Colin** has met with the new HOA President, Jeff. They are supportive of the trail, but it is not clear about who is responsible for any work. The fence is an issue for the current land owner. **Bart** confirmed that the HOA/property owner are responsible for the fence removal. **Bart** needs to look into the language of the subdivision approval that is in the deed. The Town has not approved this as a public trail, so it should remain as a neighborhood trail only. The HOA should be made aware that they are responsible for the trail and not the Town.

Pathways for People and Nature: As mentioned before, **Ellen** and **Bart**, participated in a webinar last Friday with the "Connect and Protect" program.

Heron Pt. Boardwalk: **Colin** reported that he checked out the boardwalk at Heron Pt. and found that leaves and soil have caused rotting. **Melissa** suggested a work day event in the spring. DPW could be asked to help evaluate. **Melissa** mentioned that trenches could be dug to keep the water off the wood.

Piscassic River-Loiselle: **Jeff** mentioned that 'someone' has used a leaf blower to clear all the trails at PRL and onto to Audubon a little way. We should consider signage to help.

Sliding Rock: **Tom** mentioned that he went out a few weeks ago and 'someone' had blown all the pine needles 6-8' wide at Sliding Rock.

11. Events

[time on DCAT 1:55:21]

January 8, 2024: Astronomy Night with the Nature Conservancy

Earth Day 2024: Sliding Rock Invasive Removal and Native Planting

Ellen also spoke about the work at Heron Pt. and the possibility of installing the Wiggin Farm Kiosk for Earth Day.

12. Adjourn

[time on DCAT 1:56:05]

Action

Motion: **Melissa Sharples** made a motion to adjourn at 8:52 PM.

Second: **Tom Jones**

Discussion: none

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary

DCAT:

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