



NEWMARKET CONSERVATION COMMISSION

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 2022

TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM

7:00 PM

Members Present: Ellen Snyder (Chair), Melissa Sharples (Vice-Chair), Jeffrey Goldknopf (Planning Board Rep.), Sam Kenney, and Colin White (Town Council Rep. – *ex officio*)

Members Absent: Cris Blackstone, David Bell, and Julianna Tyson,

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair **Ellen Snyder** at 7:01 PM. [time on DCAT 4:00]

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

A quorum of voting members this evening includes: **Ellen Snyder, Melissa Sharples, Jeff Goldknopf, and Sam Kenney.**

4. Public Comment

No members of the public were present this evening for comment.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes – July 14, 2022

[time on DCAT 5:05]

Action

Motion: Sam Kenney moved to approve the minutes of July 14, 2022 as drafted.

Second: Jeff Goldknopf

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved 4-0-0

The Chair announced that our speaker this evening, Barbara Richter, Executive Director of the NH Association of Conservation Commissions, has a conflict this evening and will join our meeting as soon as she is available.

6. Land Stewardship

[time on DCAT 5:56]

a. List of Town Conservation Lands and Easements. The Chair distributed a spreadsheet of all the conservation lands and easements. She began working on this project a few years ago and has recently jumped back on it! These lists include a comprehensive list of the 21 conservation lands, the 7 conservation easements, and the 3 town-held executory interest lands. The spread sheet will be posted on our website. The information provided includes the site name, easement

holder, easement monitoring, executory interest, size (acres), date acquired, tax map lot #, location, recorded documents, and notes (if applicable). The Chair also included a map which colored coded the three types of properties. She mentioned that a natural resource inventory might be a good idea on the Follet's Brook properties and then a plan for trails once we know what is out there in terms of important wildlife habitat. All this is effort to take a more active stewardship role. With regard to Lita Lane, she recommends that we go out and take a look as well. The 20 individual properties on Pembroke Drive, Brandon Drive, and Lita Lane (a tax forfeiture) should be consolidated into one property as these are wet lots. She proposes the Riverbend properties be visited as well. The Chair wanted to see how the members felt about asking SELT to monitor a few more of our conservation easements. Given that towns should not monitor their own properties. Piscassic River-Loiselle is one such land. **Jeff** mentioned the Dodd's property at the corner of Neal Mill and Grant Roads as we receive a copy of the monitoring report every year. Ellen will check on that property. **Ellen** has contact the State about the monitoring of Wiggin and Dearborn as members may wish to attend. We have gone out with LCHIP to monitor the Piscassic River-Loiselle.

[time on DCAT 24:45]

b. Schanda Park

1) Permit Application: The Commission has received the annual application from Mr. Jerry Collins to store the 'pocket' of Chick's Weir during the winter time from October 2022 to June 2023 on the park property. The application was tabled for further discussion at the next meeting. The Chair will contact Jerry for more information in general and about the process he uses for storage.

2) Accessibility: The Chair, the Planner, and DPW Director will be meeting at the Park early next week to look into the accessibility porta potty placement and will also look at the placement of the Weir 'pocket' for storage.

Our guest speaker is available via zoom now and the agenda is suspended for her presentation.

7. Guest Speaker – Barbara Richter

[time on DCAT 36:00-1:07:41]

Barbara Richter is the Executive Director of NHACC and brings with her more than 20 years of experience in communications, administration and land conservation. Her background is in stewardship work for land trusts. The NHACC is a non-profit organization which receives no State funding. It serves 234 communities of which 217 have conservation commissions and 190 are dues paying members. The mission of the NHACC is to foster conservation and appropriate use of New Hampshire's natural resources by providing assistance to conservation commissions, facilitating communication and cooperation among commissions, and helping to create a climate in which commissions can be successful. Their newly updated website [NHACC :: New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions](#) is a treasure trove of helpful information. The Annual Meeting this year will be held in person on November 5 at Pembroke Academy from 8:30-3:30. Topics for that meeting may be viewed at: [NHACC :: Annual Meeting](#) and specific program information will be posted in August. They have also recently updated the NHACC Handbook (\$20). One other important NHACC action is work with their partners on the Wetlands Council, Current Use Board, State Conservation Committee for stewardship, and Taking Action for Wildlife (a partnership among UNH Coop Extension, NH Fish & Game, and the NHACC). The Lunch & Learn programs have been very successful and there are many working regional round tables, The Seacoast Round Table has been very successful and is led by

Jay Diener (Vice-Chair of the Hampton ConCom and current NHACC board member) for providing networking opportunities and sharing best practices. The Chair would like more information to join this group or form one in this area. They also provide testimony at public hearings in the State Legislature. They covered the following bills very closely: Right-to-Know Laws, Guns on Town Land, Cyanobacteria Study Committee, and Upland Invasive Species Program. The State is still trying to change the definition of Prime Wetlands. The Chair indicated that our prime wetlands map is out-of-date and Mark West believes that we should probably update. There is a new committee being formed to discuss OHRV and NHACC was asked to nominate a member to the Committee. They were pleased to have Suzanne Smith join the committee (soon-to-be former Representative for Grafton and member of the Resources, Recreation and Development Committee). Thank you for joining us tonight Barbara!

The Chair returned to the agenda:

6. Land Stewardship

[time on DCAT 1:07: 43]

c. Piscassic River-Loiselle Conservation Area

1) Abutter Encroachment: We have some abutter encroachment issues with trails and tree cutting. These issues may not be recent, but we will need to visit the site and possibly speak with the neighbor. **Ellen**, Bart McDonough, and **Melissa** were actually visiting the Caroline Drive site recently. Bart believes that, since we haven't been stewarding the property, we should do a natural resource inventory and assess the boundaries.

2) Field Mowing: **Melissa** reported that the field had just been mowed. She is playing a little phone tag with him to find out about his schedule. We would like to ask that he delay mowing to mid-late October.

3) New Roadside Sign: **Melissa** wants to discuss uniformity of our property signs throughout town. The sign for Piscassic River-Loiselle is parallel to the road and stuck in a bush that's been overgrown. **Melissa** spoke with Rick as a first step. **Jeff** will look at the plan of Schoppmeyer to determine the distance of the ROT back into the property for their sign. **Melissa** would also like to see if **Jeff** has information on the designer. He said it was designed by Timberline Signs in Rye.

4) Oct 15th Volunteer Work Day: **Ellen** mentioned that we held a volunteer work day in connection with the Oct 15th Conservation Connections event. She would like to suggest that we do this again...this year at Piscassic River-Loiselle. Some projects might include cleaning out the bird houses and rebuilding the footbridge (which is almost ready to collapse). It is a bank-to-bank walk way ~ 3' x 10' that would not require a permit and a design would be fairly simple. Another project might include some 4x4 posts and signs at the path junctions to clarify 'you are here'. **Ellen** agreed to check on the cost for the bridge and posts.

d. Wiggin Farm Conservation Area

1) Invasive Plant Control: **Ellen** reported that the Rockingham County Conservation District did go out in July to do some invasive treatment for us. We haven't received a report on their work as yet. The Town/DPW is still doing a great job mowing the trails.

8. Finance Report /Budget Discussions

[time on DCAT 1:19:52]

The ConCom ended the General Fund FY22 on June 30 and began the new FY23 on July 1. The budget for FY23 is now \$4,185.00. After discussion, the members want to ask for \$3,500 (part-

time salary), \$1,000 (contracted services), dues/subscriptions \$500 (current NHACC dues are \$500/yr), \$100 (general supplies), and \$.00 (postage) for a total of \$5,100 for FY24.

As best practices would dictate, members agreed that we should ask SELT to monitor the other Town-owned properties, thus increasing the contracted services budget to \$1,000.

Action

Motion #1: **Melissa Sharples** made a motion to increase the general budget request for **FY24 to \$5,100** [\$3,500 (part-time salary), \$1,000 (contracted services), dues/subscriptions \$500 (current NHACC dues are \$500/yr), \$100 (general supplies), and \$.00 (postage)] and to bring that forward to the Town Manager for approval.

Second: **Jeff Goldknopf**

Discussion: **Jeff** wanted the figures for each category added to the motion.

Vote: **Approved 4-0-0** (as amended)

Ellen will write a memo to Steve Fournier with a copy to Bart.

Ellen discussed the distribution of the Land Use Change Tax. Members wish to pursue a greater share of this Land Use Change Tax for conservation of properties in Newmarket.

Action

Motion #2: **Sam Kenney** made a motion to increase the Land Use Change Tax from a 50% share to 100% going to the Conservation Commission.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Discussion: None

Vote: **Approved 4-0-0**

Sam Kenney stated that in the last two years alone, the ConCom has been successful in using our Conservation Fund to contribute monetarily to securing conservation easements on 220 acres in Newmarket. The members believe that a strong case can be made for Town financial support to maintain the best stewardship possible for all the properties we have in conservation and using the Land Use Change Tax funds for what it was intended.

Current fund balances as of 8/1/2022: CC Fund \$129,846.64; Schanda Park Fund \$4,764.46

Credits: Land Use Change Tax: 6/14/2022 \$45,000

Approved to be spent: \$4,615

The Chair wishes to consider beginning a Reserve Fund of \$75,000. We need to be fairly conservative about who and what we spend funds on particularly with other groups who request funding.

[time on DCAT 1:42:24]

The Chair prepared a draft for discussion of the projects for FY23 and the potential projects for FY24. The members discussed the list and the draft is attached as an Addendum at the end of the minutes (page 7).

9. Committee/Board Reports

[time on DCAT 1:48:11]

Planning Board: **Jeff Goldknopf** reported the PB spoke briefly about proposed changes to the Accessory Dwelling Unit zoning ordinance. The PB is proposing a slight change to the wetland

overlay protection district. It simply says that any construction associated with an Attached ADU is subject to the same regulations. There will be a public hearing on the proposed changes next month: Proposed Zoning and Planning Board Regulation Amendments | Newmarket NH .

Town Council: **Colin White** reported that they had the 2nd reading of Resolution #2021/2022-37 the “Sustainable Energy Goals”. One small change in language was made to take out the word ‘commit’ and change it to ‘aspire to’. There was a very active public comment session. The vote was 7-0 to move the resolution forward. There was a discussion of changing the Energy and Environment Advisory Committee back to its original constitution which included representatives of the PB and the ConCom. No decision was made.

Ad hoc Riverfront Advisory Committee: **Sam Kenney** reviewed the process to date with the members. He began to review the CIP Project Request Forms prepared for this cycle of CIP requests. The first was the ‘Schanda Park Living Shoreline/Park Improvements’. The Town received a grant for a 50% level design of a living shoreline feature at Schanda Park along with other general park improvements including upgrades to the boat launch, park frontage, and landscaping areas. The FY23/24 request includes the soft cost for finalization of engineering design based on discussion with a consulting engineer and also includes public outreach efforts. The FY24/25 placeholder includes an expectation of cost to implement the proposed improvements. In order to apply for grants, we must have ‘seed’ money and a full plan ready to go. The second CIP request is titled ‘Moonlight Brook Culvert Outfall/Culvert Replacement’. Moonlight Brook outfalls through (3) 24” culvert pipes into the Lamprey River adjacent to Schanda Park. The culverts are partially blocked by accumulated sediment and may also be undersized for current stormwater control needs. The FY23-24 request of \$50,000 includes estimated engineering study/analysis for Hydrologic & Hydraulic study for a new culvert design. Cost was based on an anticipated range of these studies to be \$30-\$50K depending on the scope. These are both projects which are collaborative with other departments in the Town.

CIP Ranking Criteria:

|“U” for urgent if the project is required to remedy an existing threat to public health or safety, or is required to rectify grossly inadequate, but essential, public facilities or services.

|“C” for compulsory if the project is required by statute, law, regulation, contract, or other obligation.

|“N” for necessary if the project is needed to maintain existing standards or levels of service./

|“D” for desirable if the project would be beneficial to the community but is not considered necessary, compulsory, or urgent, or is deferrable.

The committee wanted to separate the two projects because of the time to completion varies so much.

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** made a motion to endorse the two CIP Project Request Forms related to Shanda Park and Moonlight Brook which have been submitted to the ConCom by the Riverfront Advisory Committee (by our representative on the Committee, **Sam Kenney**) and that we change the priority from D to N on ‘Schanda Park Living Shoreline/Park Improvements’ and that we include a line on the forms stating that this is in collaboration with the Riverfront

Advisory Committee.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Discussion: None

Approved: **Approved 4-0-0**

Bart plans to hold a charrette for the Riverfront Advisory Committee in spring 2023 using the services of Plan NH <https://plannh.org>. **Melissa** will speak to Bart about language to use for media posting in advance of the charrette.

10. Events

[time on DCAT 2:12:00]

September 8, 2022: Conservation Commission Monthly Meeting: Guest Speaker- Emma Tutein, UNH Extension. “Conservation Easement Monitoring”.

October 15, 2022: The 2022 Conservation Connections II Event. Aimee Gigandet will be letting us use the van again this year. They are still working on fabulous ideas to make this event successful.

November 10, 2022: The Nature Conservancy will be coming to speak about a potential community oyster farming pilot program.

11. Adjourn

[time on DCAT 2:17:48]

Action

Motion: **Jeff Goldknopf** moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 PM.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Discussion: None

Approved: **Approved 4-0-0**

The next meeting will be held on September 8, 2022 at 7:00 PM
in the Town Hall Auditorium

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary

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

Addendum

DRAFT

Newmarket Conservation Commission

(August 5, 2022, prepared by Ellen Snyder, Chair)

FY 23 Projects and Possible Expenditures

- Wiggin Farm Invasive plant control \$3,190
- Heron Point kiosk panels – design \$825
- Heron Point kiosk panels – printing \$600
- Piscassic River-Loiselle – foot bridge lumber
- Piscassic River-Loiselle – new roadside sign
- Conservation Easement monitoring
- Conservation Property boundary signs
- Natural Resource Inventory and Plan – Follet’s Brook region conservation properties
- Boundary surveys – Follet’s Brook region properties
- Prime wetlands mapping update
- Riverfront/Schanda Park/Moonlight Brook planning
- Reserve for potential land conservation projects - \$75,000

FY 24 Potential Projects

- Riverfront/Schanda Park/Moonlight Brook planning/restoration
- Conservation easement monitoring
- Interpretive signs for conservation areas – design, printing
- Invasive plant projects
- Trail projects – extend and/or re-build Wiggin Farm foot bridge, others?
- Reserve for potential land conservation projects - \$75,000