



Conservation Commission

November 10, 2022 at 7:00 PM

Town Hall Auditorium

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ellen Snyder (Chair), Melissa Sharples (Vice-Chair), David Bell, Jeffrey Goldknopf (Planning Board Rep.), and Sam Kenney.

Members Absent: Cris Blackstone, Julianna Tyson, and Colin White (Town Council Rep. – *ex officio*)

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

[time on DCAT 2:31]

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

3. Public Comment

The Chair invited a member of the audience to introduce himself to the Commission. Tom Jones spoke about recently retiring and moving to Newmarket from Milford. He served on the Piscataquog Land Conservancy as the Land Protection Specialist for the past eight years. Almost all of their land conservation has been done in concert with Conservation Commissions in that area and he is eager to volunteer with the Newmarket Conservation Commission in any way needed. Thank you Tom!

[Piscataquog Land Conservancy - Piscataquog Land Conservancy \(plcnh.org\)](http://Piscataquog Land Conservancy - Piscataquog Land Conservancy (plcnh.org))

4. Guest Speaker

[time on DCAT 5:05-7:58]

'Community Oyster Gardening at Newmarket', Kimberly Arlen, The Nature

Conservancy: Kimberly Arlen is 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. She is here this evening to speak about the 'Community Oyster Gardening Program'. Historically, as many as 1,000 acres of thriving oyster beds may have covered the estuary in 1970, but over 90% of those oysters were lost due to pollution, harvest, and disease. Without oysters, the Great Bay Estuary is lacking the natural filtration capacity to maintain healthy eelgrass beds and fish nurseries as nitrogen and siltation increase. The Nature Conservancy partnered with UNH and others in 2009 to rebuilt the reef habitat in the Piscataqua Region Estuary of

New Hampshire and Maine. They continue to seek community partners in this process. Currently, they began a Community Oyster Garden in Durham at the town landing in 2019 and another in Dover by Henry Law Park last summer. Each town or volunteer (who has a dock or private mooring) receives four cages that they care for in the summer months. They currently have approximately 300 participating volunteers along the seacoast of NH. There are five volunteers along the Lamprey River in Newmarket. TNC teach groups about the benefit of oysters, their growth, and their survival rates. The 'baby oysters' (spat) are monitored and counted in July by volunteers. TNC purchases the spat and, once they are a little bigger, they are placed into cages to be distributed to the volunteer sites. Volunteers measure and count them during the summer months. All the equipment (brushes and measuring calipers) will be provided. In the fall, the cages are collected by TNC. In late August or September, they release the oysters to their restoration reefs sites in the Great Bay. Ray Grizzle and Kyrstin Ward at UNH continue to monitor the protected reef sites to collect scientific data on survival rates and health. She would like to propose a Community Oyster Garden for Newmarket. The garden should be accessible to the public and she and her colleagues would educate the public during counting/cleaning sessions and offer workshops throughout the summer as a further community component. The members did agree that this would be a great thing for Newmarket and discussed where we could place the cages. The Chair mentioned that there is time to plan and discuss the placement for cages. The ConCom will be back in touch with TNC. Thank you Kim!

5. Approval of Minutes

September 8, 2022:

[time on DCAT 18:34]

The Chair had some editorial corrections.

Action

Motion: Ellen Snyder moved to approve the amended draft minutes of Sept 8, 2022.

Second: David Bell

Discussion: none

Vote: Approved Unanimously 5-0-0

October 13, 2022:

The Chair had some editorial corrections.

Action

Motion: Ellen Snyder moved to approve the amended draft minutes of Oct.13, 2022.

Second: Melissa Sharples

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved 4-0-1 (Sam Kenney abstained)

6. Finance Report

[time on DCAT 22:45]

The Chair reported that the General Fund balance is currently \$3,939.38 and the Conservation Fund balance is currently \$133,998.01 which includes the Schanda Park Fund. She also reported that Bart confirmed that our slightly increased budget request for FY24 has been supported and forwarded. We hope that it will continue to the final

budget approval.

7. Committee/Board Reports

[time on DCAT 23:57]

Planning Board/Town Planner: **Jeff Goldknopf** gave a report about the recent PB meeting. The PB briefly touched on the letter/comments submitted by the ConCom regarding their concerns about the ADU/DADU proposed amendments to the ordinance. It was decided by the PB members to strike the portion having to do with adding an ADU to any section of the prime wetland protection overlay district. This was done so that applicants could not encroach further into wetlands. The PB plans to revisit this section again. They also discussed the Open Space Requirements and struck the section. However, they did discuss requiring 35% pervious surface no matter how large the lot. The PB did retain the 100 sq ft bonus for an ADU/DADU if you place solar on the roof. An applicant is required to obtain a building permit and then will be required to register annually. The check list for that annual registration has not been created as yet. If they do not comply, they would be served with a Zoning Violation. A consensus of the PB was to have only one ADU or DADU per lot. The PB will continue further discussions next month regarding the discussion of allowable curb cuts. This entire process could take several more months complete the proposal and send it to the Town Council. The Chair asked **Jeff** for a copy of the next draft before the PB meeting in December and he will email that her for distribution to the ConCom members.

The Chair mentioned that **Bart** has arranged a site walk with Lyndsay Butler, PE, our new Town Engineer, to review the Ash Swamp Road culvert near **Jeff's** house and where we place several of our turtle crossing signs every year. The site walk will take place at 9:00 AM on Tuesday, November 15 and all may attend.

Ad-hoc Riverfront Advisory Committee: **Sam Kenney** reported that the ARAC held a meeting about three weeks ago with Lyndsay Butler. The ARAC was briefing her on the Schanda Park and Moonlight Brook projects to date and enlisting her guidance. **Sam** has had the pleasure of working with her previously in a professional capacity and feels that Newmarket is very lucky to have her working for us. The next meeting of the ARAC will be next Monday, November 14. They hope to hear more about the outcome of the CIP process regarding both Schanda Park and Moonlight Brook. He will report again at the next meeting of the ConCom.

Town Council: **Colin White** could not make the meeting this evening and there was no report.

Energy and Environment Advisory Committee: **Julianna Tyson** is our new representative on that Committee and was unable to make the meeting this evening to report. **Julianna** mentioned to the Chair that there is a lot going on at the **EEAC** and they have held a community forum on a community power coalition plan for Newmarket on November 9 : [Newmarket NH Video on Demand \(telvue.com\)](https://www.telvue.com/) .

8. Conservation Easement Monitoring

[time on DCAT 42:41]

The Chair mentioned that she had received the monitoring report for the Bald Hill Easement and will send it along to SELT (who owns the property). She noted that there were a few issues with the property. **Julianna** and **Jeff** walked the full boundary line. They were able to find all the monumentation with a little difficulty (lots of leaves!). They noticed that the property lines that didn't have any stone walls or barbed wire fencing,

had no signs at all. They placed tags where they could. There is no marked trail, but there are some stairs to 'nowhere'. Two neighbors came out to meet them and wished to have a marked trail system to use. We will suggest to SELT that they might create a marked trail. They both noticed that there had been some tree harvesting, but the boundaries were respected. **Jeff** noted that SELT visited the property the day before their visit and **Julianna** mentioned that SELT found some of the same issues.

9. Land Stewardship/Conservation [time on DCAT 48:55]

Piscassic River-Loiselle Conservation Area: The Chair reported on the successful work day at Piscassic River-Loiselle. She and **David Bell**, **Melissa Sharples** and **Julianna Tyson** along with friends and volunteers all helped accomplish the plan for the day. They shored up the footbridge until that can be replaced at a later time. We now need to design and purchase two 18 x25" signs for the newly installed posts. The Chair got a quote from Portsmouth Sign Co. for under \$250. She will circulate the proposed signage. The members did not feel it would be necessary to get another quote.

Action

Motion: **Sam Kenney** moved to expend up to \$250 to purchase two trail signs for Piscassic River-Loiselle from the Portsmouth Sign Co.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Discussion: None

Vote: **Approved Unanimously 5-0-0**

Melissa has continued to research new entrance signage for Piscassic River-Loiselle. She presented two versions for the members to consider from Timberline Signs. Both versions are consistent with our other conservation properties which is a goal of the Commission. The consensus of members was to purchase the larger sign (27"x72") priced at \$1,845 using 6' x 6' posts. So, including the necessary hardware, the total could reach \$2,200.

Action

Motion: **Melissa Sharples** moved to expend up to \$2,200 to purchase a 27"x72" size sign, 6'x 6' posts, and necessary hardware from Timberline Signs.

Second: **David Bell**

Discussion: None

Vote: **Approved Unanimously 5-0-0**

A great big thank you to **Melissa**!

The Chair spoke again about the footbridge replacement using pressure treated wood. She priced the supplies and estimates approximately \$220. **Ellen**, her husband, and **Melissa** will build this in the next few weeks in order get it in place before the snow flies. Any and all volunteers are welcome to help!

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** moved to expend up to \$250 to purchase supplies needed to rebuild the footbridge at Piscassic River-Loiselle.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved Unanimously 5-0-0

The Chair will suggest some times through email. **Jeff** suggested taking before and after pictures to send along to Jim Bergeron to share with his son. His son built the current bridge as his Eagle Scout project.

Sliding Rock Conservation Area – LRAC application: **Bart** and **Ellen** attended the LRAC meeting on October 18 to discuss a proposal for Sliding Rock. The Chair had submitted the application to their community grants program prior to the meeting. **Bart** and **Ellen** discussed the beach and the boat launch with them since the ConCom was uncertain about a remedy. Grace Levergood, a member of LRAC and a Senior Civil Engineer with NHDES, came to look at the area with **Ellen**. After discussions about the site, it was recommended not to do anything immediately. **Ellen** submitted a new grant proposal for \$6,325:

- Hazard trees remove/drop ~ 8 hazard trees near boat launch/trailhead \$2,000 Orion Tree Service
- Kiosk and trailhead create new interpretive panels for a kiosk and trailhead with watershed map, trail map, etc \$2,000 Cathy Arekalian-design; Portsmouth Sign Printing
- Trail Assess the existing 1/4 mile trail for accessibility/improvements \$500 Snowhawk, LLC, Lew Shelley
- Kayak space Add one more kayak rack for 6 kayaks and cable locks. Rec Dept says this is one of their most popular boat sites, and signage \$1,300 Logkayackrack.com (quote from Aimee Gigandet, Director of the Rec Dept)
- NH DES permits included in case we need permits for some of the tasks \$425
- Stakes and fencing to place around eroded area near shore where people have been storing and dragging boats \$100

REQUEST TOTAL \$6,325

We should hear from LRAC shortly after their grant committee meets.

Wiggin Farm: The Chair reported that the invasive work has been completed by the Rockingham County Conservation District. The field was mowed in October – good work and thank you DPW! She proposes a work day in the spring to follow-up with mechanical work on invasive control and other minor projects.

Schanda Park: **Sam** recently visited Schanda Park and noticed the unbelievable number of cigarette butts on the ground. He thought that a cigarette butt disposal container might be placed at Schanda Park and **Melissa** noted that the Mill has one such container by their front door that helps keep the area clean. The members agreed and asked **Sam** if he would be willing to investigate costs and purchase something appropriate.

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** moved to expend up to \$100 to purchase a cigarette butt disposal container for Schanda Park.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved Unanimously 5-0-0

We should also speak to DPW before it is placed on site.

10. Other

None

11. Adjourn

[time on DCAT 1:13:02]

Action**Motion:** Ellen Snyder moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 PM.**Second:** Melissa Sharples**Discussion:** None**Vote:** Approved Unanimously 5-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary

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