



TOWN OF **NEWMARKET** NEW HAMPSHIRE

Conservation Commission

January 12, 2023 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.), Tom Jones (Alternate), Sam Kenney, and Colin Lawson (Alternate), and Colin White (Town Council Rep- *ex officio*)

Members Absent: Cris Blackstone and Julianna Tyson.

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

[time on DCAT 0:54]

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

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

3. Public Comment

There were no members of the public to make comments this evening.

4. Approval of Minutes

November 10, 2022:

Action

Motion: Ellen Snyder moved to approve the draft minutes of 11/10/2022.

Second: Colin Lawson

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved Unanimously 7-0-0

December 8, 2022:

Action

Motion: Ellen Snyder moved to approve the draft minutes of 12/8/2022.

Second: Melissa Sharples
Discussion: None
Vote: Approved 6-0-1 (Sam Kenney abstained)

5. Guest Speaker: Lyndsay Butler, Newmarket Town Engineer

[time on DCAT 4:25]

Lyndsay Butler, P.E., the Newmarket Town Engineer, introduced herself to the members. She began working for the Town toward the end of August 2022 in a newly created position. Before being hired by the Town, she held a variety of positions giving her both municipal and consulting experiences. Previous positions included: a Project Engineer for the Town of Salem NH, a Project Manager for Wright-Pierce Environmental Services, a Civil Engineer for Tetra Tech Rizzo, and a Project Engineer for Ducharme & Dillis Civil Design Group, Inc. Her expertise is primarily in stormwater management, hydrology, hydraulics, and a general infrastructure with a definite emphasis on the stormwater management aspects. She also has some experience in water and waste water. She is the MS4 Project Manager for the Town for both the program side and regulations. Projects she is currently involved with include supporting the DPW in various projects, working with the Environmental Services Department, working with the Planning Department and site plan reviews.. She hopes to become proactive in the future and less reactive to issues as they arise. She will be involved in the Master Plan preparations coming along shortly. **Ellen** asked about culvert issues in the Town - primarily around our many turtle crossings. Lyndsay mentioned that the Town is mostly reactive to culvert issues – i.e. if they wash out or become damaged. While at Wright-Pierce, she was the project manager and designer for the team that replaced the culvert on Bay Road. Mapping of all culverts in Town would be an important beginning. NHDES plans to evaluate culverts state-wide and put them in a database ranking their priorities. **Colin Lawson** mentioned the SADES (New Hampshire Statewide Asset Data Exchange System) program which has approximately 10,000 culverts in NH in their database so far. [NH SADES, Statewide Asset Data Exchange System](#) He will look in the SADES database to see if Newmarket has been inventoried yet and will keep in touch with Lyndsay. The members are excited to work with her on future projects.

6. Finance Report

[time on DCAT 1819]

The Chair reported that the current balance of the Conservation Fund is \$133,635.29 which include the \$4,764.46 of the special Richard Schanda Fund. The Piscassic River/Loiselle sign is still to be paid for and the 1st payment of the LRAC grant for the Sliding Rock projects has been deposited along with some interest. Available funds in the CF are \$128,888.83. The current balance in the General Fund is \$2,475.58. The SELT has completed the monitoring report of the Hilton Easement and they have submitted an invoice of \$365.88 for their services. The cost has gone up a little this year and will most likely go up next year also.

Action

Motion: **Colin Lawson** moved to approve the expenditure of funds to pay SELT \$365.88 for the annual monitoring of the Hilton Easement.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**
Discussion: None
Vote: **Approved Unanimously 7-0-0**

The Chair asked for reimbursement of \$24.84 for purchasing a ¼ sheet of pressure treated plywood for the signs at the PR/L property. The signs are ready to be placed shortly when the weather permits.

Action

Motion: **Colin Lawson** moved to approve the expenditure of funds to reimburse **Ellen Snyder** in the amount of \$24.84 for supplies for the signage for PR/L.
Second: **Melissa Sharples**
Discussion: None
Vote: **Approved Unanimously 7-0-0**

7. Committee

[time on DCAT 21:29]

Planning Board/Town Planner:

Jeff Goldknopf reported that the ADU proposal is moving forward now with one new change: that the bedroom limit will be two per ADU or DADU. The PB received a request from the Town Manager to look into establishing an Historical District Committee. Currently, the Town has an Historical Overlay District. **Bart** has agreed to put together some research on this topic for a discussion at the next Planning Board meeting in February.

a. Connect to Protect Initiative

The Chair discussed the origins of the Connect to Protect, New Hampshire Coastal Watershed Conservation Plan program. Information may be found at : [New Hampshire Coastal Watershed Conservation Plan - Connect to Protect \(connect-protect.org\)](https://connect-protect.org). **Bart** submitted a Technical Assistance Request and provided a copy for the meeting packet:

*Connect to Protect Technical Assistance Request Submitted by Planning Director **Bart McDonough***

The Town of Newmarket is in the nascent stages of planning a municipal and regional wide effort to consolidate, expand, and interconnect conservation easements. This initiative, currently called, "Connectivity for Nature and People", has two primary goals designed not to be mutually exclusive: (1) to preserve critical natural resources and the lands they reside on, and (2) to create regional terrestrial and aquatic trail networks for recreation purposes. The Town of Newmarket is seeking guidance and technical assistance from the Connect to Protect Program to create a management plan of its conservation easements and fee own lands; identify properties that would bridge the gap between the Town's conservation easements and fee own lands, creating an interconnected conservation network within and beyond the Town's boundaries; and the identification of resources and strategies to assist in creating a coalition with an assigned charge to create a regional trail network. The Town of Newmarket is of the opinion that an increase in investments into such a recreation trail network will yield a higher user base thereof, thereby, theoretically, increasing the community's willingness to allocate more funding towards future land preservation and conservation efforts.

The request was approved and **Bart, Sam, and Ellen** were appointed to meet with the team several times and they will help define our ideas about connectivity. The first meeting will be January 26 (or 25) from 3-4 PM in the Town Auditorium. Several people from UNH Extension and the Great Bay Estuary Research Preserve will also be present. **Tom** and **Melissa** are also interested in participating. **Bart** and Mike Hoffman have discussed interest in adding trails to the Boulder Drive subdivision and connections between Dame and Bay Roads. **Bart, Ellen, Melissa, and Colin White** will meet to discuss options on January 17.

Ad-hoc Riverfront Advisory Committee / Schanda Park:

Sam Kenney reported on the two recent meetings of the Ad-hoc Riverfront Advisory Committee. He mentioned that having the new Town Engineer on board is wonderful, especially with the Moonlight Brook culvert issue. The Town feels that there is a lot of grant money available for this culvert work, especially through the Clean Water SRF program. So the RFC has tabled the idea of asking for a warrant article to fund this right now. The priority has turned to a Plan NH Grant ([Home page - PLAN NH](#)) which **Bart** has been working on for some time. The grant has not been submitted yet. They feel that a charrette dealing with the water front area would be extremely beneficial and he hopes to get funding to hold this meeting in June. The committee also invited the Rec. Director Aimee Gigandet, and two members from the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Commission to join in the exchange of ideas. **Sam** reviewed the back history of the original Great Bay Living Shoreline grant. The final report may be found here: [Great Bay Living Shorelines – Schanda Park | New Hampshire Coastal Adaptation Workgroup \(nhcaw.org\)](#) . Both **Bart** and Lyndsay are the Town Staff who work closely with the RFC. **Sam** mentioned that there is always discussion at the meetings about just who is responsible for Schanda Park...the ConCom, Rec, DPW? More research on the original management plan for the park will be done and further conversations will be helpful.

Town Council:

Colin White reported on recent discussions about the Historic Overlay District. The TC would like to identify the current areas in the Overlay District. There was also discussion about whether or not that they should create an Historic District Commission. He also mentioned that there are concerns at the TC about exactly who is responsible for Schanda Park. The next meeting of the TC will be on Wednesday and he will bring these topics up for discussion and report back at our next meeting.

Energy and Environment Advisory Committee:

No report was submitted by **Julianna** for this meeting. The recent meeting may be viewed at:

https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/XSekdEeRsk0JHQVHAvKJVka7_5VjxKP/media/772334?autostart=true&showtabssearch=true

8. Conservation Easement Monitoring [time on DCAT 54:24]

Hilton Easement: SELT has completed the monitoring, and submitted the report. The Chair mentioned again that the price of monitoring went up this year and is expected to

increase next year. ConCom will discuss at another time.

Smith Sisters (Audubon): Completed by **David** – thank you!

Nostrum Farm: **Melissa** and **Jeff** walked for four hours and are $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way done.

They will be returning soon to finish. They were looking for exclusionary markers and found three of four. They posted +/- 20 signs on the property covering most of the south and east portions. They took pictures of the found pins for the report.

Bald Hill Reservation: **Jeff** and **Julianna** completed the monitoring– thank you Jeff and Julianna!

Gaziano, Schneer, and Silverman: **Ellen** completed – thank you Ellen!

Three Town-Owned Properties:

* *Piscassic River/Loiselle:* **Sam** complete – thank you Sam!

* *Wiggin Farm:* Monitored by NHDES – NHDES, LCIP, and Fish & Game hold the easement

* *Dearborn:* Monitored by NHDES – Fish & Game holds the easement

The Chair went on the monitoring with the State this year and there were a few third party abutter issues. She wrote a letter to an abutter to the Wiggin Farm and one letter to the abutter of the Dearborn property. A copy was sent to the State and **Bart** with a copy to our files. The issue of the driveway 50' easement is still unresolved. The Chair is currently working with F&G to draft a new deed. We currently perform monitoring of seven properties and three are done by the State. We will continue the discussion of the PR/L monitoring at another meeting. **Colin Lawson** would like to join **Melissa** and **Jeff** on the west side of Nostrum Farm when they return to finish the monitoring in the coming weeks. We receive reports on four properties each year because the Town holds an executory interest: *Clark Farm III*, *Dodds*, *Tucker* (we hold no conservation easement for Tucker), and *Richmond* on Langs Lane. The SELT owns the conservation easements on these four properties.

9. Land Stewardship/Conservation [time on DCAT1:22:44]

Sliding Rock Recreation and Conservation Area – LRAC grant:

The Chair reported that projects are being completed as discussed at the last meeting. The grant included:

- Hazard trees remove/drop ~ 8 hazard trees near boat launch/trailhead \$2,000 Orion Tree Service **DONE IN DECEMBER 2022**

- 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 **STILL WORKING ON THIS**

- Trail Assess the existing 1/4 mile trail for accessibility/improvements \$500 Snowhawk, LLC, Lew Shelley **HE HAS VISITED THE SITE W/ ELLEN AND WILL WRITE A REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 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) **IN AIMEE'S HANDS NOW**

- 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

Wiggin Farm – 2023: kiosk, bridge, invasives:

The Chair reported that the kiosk at Wiggin Farm fell over in the last big wind event. The 8x8 poles just snapped. She met a Wiggin Farm neighbor named Vic Bilodeau who is a retired mechanical engineer and would be happy to do some brush cutting and keep the kiosk clear. He also took a look at the footbridge. He found that the footings are still sturdy but the Chair mentioned that the decking and rails are a little kittywampus. A wetlands permit to extend the boardwalk and the footbridge may be required. **Sam** is willing to help with the permitting if it becomes necessary. The members discussed a design for the kiosk and further discussions will follow. The Chair received a request from Becky Franks of Newmarket who would like to install a Geocache at Wiggin Farm. She has been working with SELT to place geocaches and would like to hang a very small (1") tube in a tree by the entrance to the parking area at Wiggin. It will not disturb the habitat in any way. There is more information on Geocache at : [Geocaching](#) There was consensus among members to approve her request and the Chair will let her know.

Colin White was excused from the meeting at 8:31 PM

10. 2022 Annual Report and 2023 Priorities [time on DCAT 1:33:10]

The Chair provided the members with a copy of her Conservation Commission Annual Report to the Town in the meeting packet material. She highlighted the many partners who work with the Commission on projects – DPW, Recreation Department, LRAC, etc. Members all felt that she did a terrific job and the report really informs the Town of the many projects that the ConCom has been involved with this year. The report will be published in the Town's Annual Report. Thank you Ellen!

The Chair provided the members with a draft list of the 2023 Project Priorities in the meeting packet. There are a few leaders still needed to spearhead several projects and the Chair sought volunteers.

Tom Jones will lead the erosion control/fencing at Sliding Rock.

Sam Kenney will lead the rebuild and extension of the pedestrian bridge at Wiggin.

Vic will lead the re-set of two signposts near the pond at Wiggin.

Vic will lead the weed trimming around the interpretive signs at Wiggin.

Sam Kenney will coordinate the Community Oyster Garden at Schanda Park.

Colin Lawson agreed to work with **Ellen** on creating a baseline documentation report on the Follet's Brook Region: PR/L, Carolyn Drive, Follet's Brook, Leary, Rousseau.

Colin Lawson will work with Lyndsay Butler on the culverts/stream crossings.

The Chair included the email sent to Richard Heidt, a coordinator of the Annual Newmarket Fishing Derby, on Dec. 29, 2022 in the meeting packet. She described the financial commitments and constraints on our current funding especially for duties we are statutorily required to complete every year. She wanted them to know that we are unable to continue to contribute funds and hoped that they would find other sources to help fund the event. A copy was also sent to Aimee Gigandet at Recreation. She has not received any feedback on the email.

11. Adjourn

[time on DCAT 1:55:34]

Action**Motion:** **Melissa Sharples** moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 PM.**Second:** **David Bell****Discussion:** None**Vote:** **Approved Unanimously 6-0-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary

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