

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

September 10, 2020

7:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Patrick Reynolds (Chair), Melissa Sharples (Vice Chair), Ellen Snyder (Treasurer), David Bell, Cris Blackstone, Sarah Finch (Planning Board Rep), Drew Kiefaber (Alternate), and Jonathan Kiper (Town Council Rep).

Members Absent: Excused member this evening: Sam Kenney.

1. Roll Call**2. Guest Presentation**

Malin Clyde is a Community Volunteer State Specialist with the UNH Extension Service and her areas of interest include volunteers, land and water stewardship, citizen science, and other efforts that create meaningful connections between communities and the natural world. In 2012, Malin and **Ellen Snyder** launched *Nature Groupie- Outdoor Volunteers in New England*, an initiative that employs collaboration and technology to empower generations of outdoor enthusiasts to volunteer for nature in New Hampshire and beyond. The calendar at Nature Groupie is utilized to promote work days on conservation properties where the participants learn by hands on experience combined with training. She has discovered that 50% of those volunteering choose an opportunity outside of their own county. More detailed information and the weekly bulletin may be found at the web site <https://naturegroupie.org/>. She showed many wonderful slides to demonstrate different types of activities and pictures of happy volunteers! They purchased a van this year to transport volunteers to sites a short distance away. There are so many wonderful opportunities available which can be easily passed along to those in the Newmarket community and beyond. **Melissa Sharples** mentioned that there has been some chatter on Facebook about the pretty awful/nasty stuff that has been seen in the mud of the Lamprey River drawdown. **Cris Blackstone** is excited about the help that Newmarket could get from volunteers toward the removal of invasive plants which were mentioned by our speaker last month, Greg Jordan, Forestry Field Agent for Rockingham County and UNH Cooperative Extension. Nature Groupie and the Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire (SELT) co-sponsor a Stewardship Tool Library at Burley Farms located on North River Rd, just off Rte. 125 in Epping. Everything you need for a work day! <https://www.google.com/maps/place/245+N+River+Rd,+Epping,+NH+03042/@43.0677866,-71.0467065,15z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x89e2f25463b9b01d:0x87840f51c4d9d5aa!8m2!3d43.063699!4d-71.0466099>. The Conservation Commission thanked Malin very much for her presentation and wonderful information to get us started on community volunteers in Newmarket. Scott Boudreau, another speaker this evening, is a Girl Scout Master in Newmarket. He has a very active and eager group who would really like to volunteer in Town. The scouts are 11-16 years old. The members was excited to hear this!

3. Public Comments/Permits

Scott Boudreau, Boudreau Land Surveying PLLC, is attending the meeting this evening for Mark West, West Environmental Inc., to discuss an Expedited Minimum Impact Wetlands Permit Application for the property at 19 Moody Point Road. He provided information to all members by email prior to the meeting. The owner of the property, Steven Breecker, is also present at the meeting. The plan and application clearly show that

there will be 14 SF of permanent impact and 120 SF of temporary impact in the 100' tidal buffer zone.

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** made a motion to provide the approval of the ConCom for the Expedited Minimum Impact Wetlands Permit Application for the property located at 19 Moody Point.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Vote: Unanimously Approved

Thank you Scott for attending this evening.

4. Approval of the Minutes

August 13, 2020:

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** made a motion to approve the minutes as written for August 13, 2020.

Second: **Cris Blackstone**

Vote: Unanimously Approved

5. Treasurer's Report

Ellen Snyder reported on the most recent account balances. The Conservation Fund has a current balance of \$246,951.59. The Schoppmeyer Park Committee has a balance of \$6,433.45. There were no deposits for current use fees.

6. Committee and Subcommittee Reports

The Chair welcomed **Jonathan Kiper** to the Conservation Commission as Town Council Representative. Welcome Jon!

Town Council: **Jon Kiper** has no report this evening.

Planning Board: **Sarah Finch** has no report this evening.

7. Chairman's Report

Letter from NHDES: The Chair received a copy of a letter reporting that a property on River Street may be in violation of RSA 483-B, the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act. A permit is required within the protected shoreland for any new construction or construction that modifies the footprint of existing impervious surfaces, using mechanized equipment to either excavate, remove or form a cavity within the ground and filling any areas with rocks, soil, gravel or sand. The owner has 20 days to respond to NHDES. NHDES will keep us informed of the progress in the investigation.

Annual Photo Exhibit: **Melissa Sharples** and **Cris Blackstone** shared a report on the progress of the annual photo exhibit. They are still accepting photos mostly by email. They were scheduled to meet with two members of the Newmarket Arts & Tourism Commission yesterday, but had some zoon issues. The commission was created by the Town Council and will study, consider and make recommendations to the Town Council and Town Manager, general policies for the arts and tourism in the Town of Newmarket. The Commission will develop and promote programs, forums, and exhibits that highlight the talent and active art related venues currently existing within the Town. **Melissa** spoke with Helen Sanders, TC rep on the Commission, yesterday about trying to combine our efforts. One issue discussed was keeping the schedule like last year, i.e. Oct/Nov. **Cris Blackstone** mentioned that we still may wish to make a calendar.

Thank you **Melissa** and **Cris**!

8. Old/New Business

Schanda Park Permit: The Chair is in possession of the permit application from Mr. Jerry Collins for storing the pocket for the just upstream of the Town Dock for the winter months. The Chair reached out to Fish &

Game and they had no concerns. Fish & Game reports that both the alewives and blueback herring are in good supply/health this year. So much so, that they moved over 5,000 to other fresh water sources. Some 50,000 were moved up the Lamprey. Mr. Collins reported that Chick's Weir is opened up every Wednesday for a pass through.

Action

Motion: Patrick Reynolds made a motion to approve the request by Mr. Collins to store the pocket of Chick's Weir at Schanda Park from October 2020 to June 2021.

Second: Melissa Sharples

Vote: Unanimously Approved

Clarke Farm Update: The Epping Conservation Commission is willing to contribute some funding for their share of the easement for this Clarke Farm which falls within their town limits. Hopefully we will hear shortly from the Southeast Land Trust (SELT) with an update.

Schoppmeyer Park Management Plan: Ellen Snyder provided the members with a copy of the Schoppmeyer Park Management Plan by email. The Town Manager and the Director of the Public Works would like to take over the entire management of the park. The ConCom may recruit volunteers to work with the Town and DPW, but DPW would like to supervise all work. The ConCom will be happy to work with DPW on any necessary projects.

Action

Motion: Patrick Reynolds made a motion to accept the final management plan and the recommendations as written which delineates the maintenance responsibilities of the Town and Dept of Public Works.

Second: Cris Blackstone

Vote: Unanimously Approved

Ellen Snyder will consult with the Schoppmeyer Park Committee Chair regarding the remaining funds. Thank you Ellen for all your work to get this done!

Heron Point Management Plan: The Chair spoke to Sam Kenney about a date to work on invasive removal at Heron Point. Ellen mentioned that the invasives are 'clumped' in small areas (bittersweet and buckthorn) and social distancing must be maintained while removing the plants. Cris said that the COVID training video at Nature Groupie is excellent and she has received her certificate. Anyone who is planning to do this work must provide their certificate of completion. Melissa suggested that the ConCom members conduct this first work day to get trained and then space additional working groups out every several weekends with more volunteers. The members decided to do the first training just for ConCom members on Saturday, September 26, 2020 at 9:00 am while being careful not to gather in groups larger than three. Ellen Snyder has created a brief scope-of-project for the Forest Management Plan and sent it out to several foresters asking for proposals. She believes that the final plan might be completed by April 1.

Campaign Signs: No more campaign signs have been placed on conservation properties.

Municipal Code 32-155-C and D: This code specifically relates to the wetland permit overlay district. Two neighboring home owners along the Piscassic River agreed to hire a forester to take down some trees. He came in with heavy equipment and removed 10+ trees (among the two properties). Some of the area was disturbed by the heavy equipment. The tree removal forester did the work for free in exchange for the timber. Some were dead pine trees, but all the trees cut were within the 75' wetland buffer. David Price, NHDES Portsmouth Regional Office Wetlands Bureau, was contacted by Mike Hoffman, Code Enforcement Officer for Newmarket, and they did a site walk together. David did not believe that there was any violation of state codes, but the municipal code may be of concern. The CC members reviewed and discussed the municipal code carefully.

Action

Motion: Patrick Reynolds made a motion to ask that the Town Planner and the Planning Board review Municipal Code 32-155C and D as it applies to this situation of tree removal in the prime wetlands.

Second: Cris Blackstone

Vote: Unanimously Approved

Lamprey River Drawdown: There have been a few complications with the drawdown of the Lamprey River for the Macallen Dam repair. A lever got stuck in the open position and the water level dropped more rapidly than expected. DPW is working with Fish & Game and the public on this issue. They are asking individuals not to attempt to remove trash, move fish, amphibians, or invertebrates as the mud is extremely dangerous. Because of the drought, the impoundment is lower than expected.

High School Cross Country Team Request: The Athletic Director would like the ConCom to consider allowing the cross country track team to use Piscassic Loisselle for competitions and have the property serve as their home field. Up to 4 or 5 teams would be attending the race meets. Members have concerns about the width of the trails and the parking area capacity. Piscassic Loisselle does not have a three mile loop which is required for a meet. In addition, the loop at Neal Mill Road is only 2.6 miles. The impact on these properties is really not in keeping with the recreational use. The Chair will go back to the Athletic Director with the consensus of the members that these properties are not appropriate for cross country team races.

Consideration of Tree Removal on the Dearborn Property: Emily Hyland, 202 Grant Road, has sent pictures to the ConCom about a tree which is leaning toward her property from the Dearborn Property (conservation land). The Chair reached out to Fish & Game. This past summer, Fish & Game had an intern monitor all of the properties including the Dearborn Property. The ConCom and Ms. Hyland are still waiting to hear from the State concerning this removal. Ms. Hyland has agreed to pay all costs of removal if approved.

9. Adjourn**Action**

Motion: Cris Blackstone moved that the meeting be adjourned.

Second: Ellen Snyder

Vote: Unanimously Approved

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 15, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary