

TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

November 18, 2021 7:00 PM

Town Hall Auditorium

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Members Present: Patrick Reynolds (Chair), Ellen Snyder (Treasurer), David Bell, Sam Kenney, Megan Brabec (Town Council Rep), and Melissa Brogle (Alternate).

Members Absent: Melissa Sharples (Vice Chair), Cris Blackstone, and Jeffrey Goldknopf (Planning Board Rep)

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

The Chair appointed **Melissa Brogle** as a voting member this evening.

3. Public Presentation – Riverfront Advisory Committee

Sam Kenney reported that the Riverfront Advisory Committee met October 18 with the Great Bay Living Shoreline Project design team from UNH and NHDES at Schanda Park. Tristan Donovan and Patrick McNally, members of the multi-disciplinary team, are here this evening to present an overview of the Proposed Living Shoreline plan for Schanda Park. Tristan Donovan provided the members with copies detailing existing conditions as well as the preliminary proposed living shoreline changes. The project is broken down into six areas most relevant for discussion: 1) the boat ramp, 2) the plaza, 3) Moonlight Brook and the culverts, 4) the bluff, 5) the ‘kayak’ launch, and 6) and the parking lot. They discussed the following:

- 1) The boat ramp could be narrowed to 18 feet providing more space to install living shoreline.
- 2) The plaza floods frequently causing plants to struggle with salt intolerance.
- 3) Moonlight Brook –the stream edges are collapsing and should be revetted with salt marsh plants. In addition, the culverts are constricting the flow as they are half-filled with mud caused by high tidal activity. The team proposes to remove the culverts and replace them with one large box culvert.
- 4) The bluff area has some delicate and rare plants located toward the water. They suggest pulling the bench back to get more of the green living space into living shoreline.
- 6) The Parking Lot – they would like to change the curb line and add a rain garden. This might cause the loss of 2 parking spaces. Other suggestions included: removal of the large Japanese Knotweed and replace it with a native species, pruning in the tidal plant area to get the riverbed evened out. There would be some land filling. NHDES is likely to approve a permit because of the living shoreline work. The CC wanted to be sure to include F&G in the discussions about the parking lot and boat ramp. The boat ramp would be 18’ by 18’ long and made of planks which are bolted together. As **Sam** pointed out, the hope is to keep the footprint relatively the same and make Schanda Park an educational site. The Chair mentioned that the idea of some form of pedestrian bridge would be great given that the culverts simply don’t work. **Sam Kenney** wants to find out as much information as possible about this site by: 1) reaching out to Fish & Game, 2) speaking with DPW and the TM, 3) speaking with Richie Shelton, and 4) speaking with the Schanda family if possible. **Ellen Snyder** wants to find the deed. The Chair wants to look at the recent pollution testing in Moonlight Brook.

There will be a workshop at the beginning of December where they will present the design concept to the Town which is between 50-60% of the total project. Their final deadline is March 2022. They expect that the plan will be flexible so that it could be accomplished in small increments. **Sam Kenney** will send the plan to **Megan Brabec** for the Town Council and Aimee Gigandet in Recreation because of her summer concert series and classes with kayaks. Dale Pike suggested reaching out to Suzanne Peterson with LRAC in order to widen the input as well since she is very interested in this project. The design team consists of six consultants including two engineers, two environmental scientists, one landscape architect, and one horticulturist along with some technical staff from UNH and the resources made available from NHDES.

Sam Kenney and **Patrick Reynolds** thanked the team members for attending this evening and being so generous with their time to answer all questions. The entire Conservation Commission would also like to thank Dale Pike very much for pursuing this project for Schanda Park to be included in The Great Bay Living Shoreline Project.

4. Approval of Minutes October 14, 2021

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** moved to approve the October 14, 2021 draft minutes as written.

Second: **Melissa Brogle**

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimously Approved

5. Chairman's Report The Annual Monitoring Schedule:

<i>Property</i>	<i>Volunteer Monitor</i>
Piscassic-Loiselle	Sam Kenney
Audubon Smith Sisters Sanctuary	David Bell
Nostrum Farm – New Roots	Patrick Reynolds
Silverman-Schneer @ Neal Mill Road	Ellen Snyder
Heron Point Sanctuary	ConCom will arrange to walk the property together.
Follett's Brook Wildlife Sanctuary	Melissa Brogle

The Hilton Farm is monitored by SELT each year. Wiggin Farm and the Dearborn property are monitored by Fish & Game.

The Chair will send each monitor a copy of the previous year's report and template.

Report on the Recent LRAC Meeting: The Chair reported on the recent meeting of LRAC. Dr. Stephen Jones, Research Associate Professor in the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment at UNH, submitted a report to LRAC. He took four students out to do monitoring last

summer. Two of their sites along the Lamprey River included two sites in Newmarket. He discussed the three types of E.coli bacteria: 1) those that are not harmful, 2) bad red tide/shellfish E.coli, and 3) the truly bad E.coli which can make you very sick if you just fall into polluted waters. They are able to perform DNA tests to determine the source, i.e. human, cow, dog, bird. They tested Moonlight Brook several times last year and found that the book failed the threshold for E.coli. The Chair wants to get a copy of the report to LRAC and send it to Sean Grieg and Steve Fournier.

December Meeting: The Chair would like to postpone the December meeting because of concerns about the Covid uptick. He poled the members. **Megan Brabec** will ask the Town Manager if it is possible to resume zoom meetings.

6. Treasurer's Report

Ellen Snyder reports the Conservation Fund has a balance of \$165,226.11 and includes the Schanda Park Fund of \$4,764.46. The 'real' CF balance is \$160,461.65. We have approved expenditures of \$75,712.72. This leaves us with approximately \$84,000 remaining in the Conservation Fund. **Ellen** has a number of funding requests for various projects and the members discussed them.

Action

Motion #1: Patrick Reynolds made a motion to expend funds up to \$1,200 for Orion Tree Service to drop the large white pine tree on the boundary of the Piscassic-Loiselle Conservation Area near neighbor Brian Racicot into the conservation area. This removal may require other trees on the conservation land to be felled for safety reasons. Funding would come from the CC Conservation Fund.

Second: David Bell

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimously Approved

Action

Motion #2: Melissa Brogle made a motion to expend funds up to \$200 for replacing broken or missing rails for the fence at the entrance to the Piscassic Loiselle Conservation Area with funding from the CC Conservation Fund.

Second: Ellen Snyder

Discussion: They discussed getting the rails from Fences Unlimited on Rt. 125 – 7-8 rails @ approximately \$21.00 each. DPW will pick up the old rails in the pile on site. The Chair will ask DPW for help in picking up the rails.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

DPW has agreed to add the mowing around the fence and the trail to their to-do list. Tom Loiselle has been mowing this area for years. Thank you so much for your work, Tom!

Ellen Snyder wanted to thank all the volunteers who came out to help at the Heron Point work days. She especially wanted to thank Jon Steer, an abutter, who helped move materials with his tractor. He broke his bucket, but was not deterred. Thank you Jon! Scout Amy Benson had her project approved

by the Town Council. **Ellen** will be meeting her at Heron Point to go over the project. Amy plans to make some benches which will really enhance the experience of visitors. She will probably complete the project this spring.

Action

Motion #3: Patrick Reynolds made a motion to expend funds up to \$700 for the Heron Point kiosk interpretive sign and trail map, approximately 40" x 40", to be developed by Martin Forestry with funding from the CC Conservation Fund.

Second: David Bell

Discussion: None.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

Action

Motion #4: Ellen Snyder made a motion to expend funds up to \$400 for trail markers and nails for the trails at Heron Point Sanctuary with funding from the CC Conservation Fund.

Second: Sam Kenney

Discussion: **Ellen** emailed a design which could be used in different colors. Scout Amy had suggested some small laminated signs to show closed trails and the reasons. Members agreed.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

Action

Motion #5: Ellen Snyder made a motion to rescind the remaining balance of \$162.72 for the printing of interpretive signs at Wiggin Farm. (NOTE: We approved up to \$1,000 on 5/13/2021 from the CC Conservation Fund for this project. The signs are completed so the remaining funds are not needed.)

Second: Melissa Brogle

Discussion: None.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

7. Committee and Subcommittee Reports

Town Council: **Megan Brabec** reported back to the members on the questions she was tasked to ask on behalf of the ConCom. She spoke with the TM about changing the designation of Neal Mill Road from a Class VI Road into a Class A Trail and the TM said the process seemed pretty straight forward. SELT, however, has asked that we consider this later in April or May because of the funding that they are still securing. **Cris Blackstone** had asked how we go about updating our website information on the Town site. We are to send all changes/updates to Wendy who will facilitate that process.

Planning Board: **Megan Brabec** reported on the recent joint meeting on November 3 between the Planning Board and the Town Council for **Jeff Goldknopf**, who is absent this evening. This meeting may be seen at: [Newmarket NH Video on Demand \(telvue.com\)](https://www.telvue.com) . This meeting was a repeated presentation about the gateways into Town from a consultant for the Town.

8. Old/New Business

The Annual NHACC Meeting:

Ellen Snyder attended the meeting (virtually). She particularly found the workshop by Melissa Doperalski, NH F&G Wildlife Biologist, on ‘Sand and Gravel Pits: An Unnaturally Natural Landscape’ interesting. **Patrick Reynolds** mentioned that we have 4-5 pits out on Wadleigh Falls Road. We are scheduled to do an inspection on the old Rosa pit (recently purchased by a new owners). **Ellen** and **Patrick** agreed that it may be possible to help the pit owners perform reclamation as necessary in a way which might promote good wildlife habitat. She also participated in the ‘Regional Partnerships & NRCS’ workshop which was informative should we need to look for granting sources for the Schanda Park project.

Neal Mill Road Parking Signs:

SELT has installed their parking signs on Neal Mill. They hope to have the trail kiosk up before the end of the year.

Wiggin Farm Mowing:

Patrick Reynolds asked Rick Malasky (DPW) about the mowing at Wiggin Farm this year. Unfortunately, the tractor broke, so there was no mowing. **Ellen** brought up the possibility of a spring mow to the back side of the property, but we just have to wait and see how it goes.

9. Adjourn

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** moved to adjourn the meeting.
Second: **Melissa Brogle**
Vote: Unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 PM.
The next meeting will be held on January 13, 2022 at 7:00 PM
in the Town Hall Auditorium.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary