



Conservation Commission

September 12, 2024 7:00 PM

Town Hall Auditorium

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ellen Snyder (Chair), Melissa Sharples (Vice-Chair), Zachary Angelini (Alternate), Cris Blackstone, Tom Jones, Colin Lawson (Alternate), Julianna Tyson, and Brian Ward (Town Council Rep. ex officio)

Members Absent: David Bell, Jessica Cann (Alternate), Emma Fortin (School Liaison), and Jeffrey Goldknopf (Planning Board Rep.)

Guest: Mark West, West Environmental Inc.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

The Chair appointed **Colin Lawson** as a voting member this evening. The six voting members include **Ellen Snyder, Melissa Sharples, Cris Blackstone, Tom Jones, Colin Lawson,** and **Julianna Tyson.**

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Prime Wetlands Mapping

The Chair introduced Mr. Mark West, West Environmental, Inc. who has been hired to prepare a new Prime Wetlands Map for the Town. We received a PREPA grant (<https://prepestuaries.org/resources/prepa-grants/>) to cover the cost. He is here this evening to discuss his methodology and progress to date. Mark completed the first wetlands survey for Newmarket back in 2001! The wetlands change and the new mapping will be used in our zoning and we want to be helpful to property holders about their lands. He had several UNH students help with this project through the Natural Resources Internship Project. They began with old 1998 black and white aerial photos. New tools have been employed. He used new 2015 aerial maps and 2019 LiDAR maps which include 17 wetlands totaling 888.6 acres. He expects the acres classified as wetlands to change with his new mapping. More information on LiDAR may be found at [LidarExplorer | U.S. Geological Survey \(usgs.gov\)](https://lidarexplorer.usgs.gov/). He then prepared new Prime Wetland Boundary changes on the LiDAR map, and then conducted field surveys of 17

wetlands at public access locations and proceeded to update/revise the maps. For these maps he creates a previous and current situation map. He will conduct a field workshop on Prime Wetlands in the Spring of 2025 followed by his submission of the completed maps to us and NHDES. Using LiDAR to create more accurate maps is his primary goal. He showed the 2024 Newmarket Prime Wetland Map, the new National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) map, a map using the Wetland Permit Planning Tool ([Wetlands Permit Planning Tool \(unh.edu\)](https://wetlandspermitplanningtool.unh.edu)), and then several aerial maps of specific areas. LiDAR penetrates the foliage to show elevation – roads, houses, and islands show up. Water shows up perfectly flat and you can detect vernal pools (they appear as flat surfaces with no vegetation). **Zach** asked about the vernal pools in Newmarket. There is no current map for Newmarket and most vernal pools are located on private property and access is difficult. The members had some questions which he clearly explained. At present, he is a little over halfway through the project. The Chair will assist Mark with information on public access as needed. FYI: pesky busy beavers can completely change the water flow in 2-3 years and their presence in Newmarket is recognizable! Thank you Mark!

5. Approve Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2024

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** made a motion to approve the Minutes of April 11, 2024 as drafted.

Second: **Cris Blackstone**

Discussion: none

Vote: **Unanimously Approved 6-0-0**

July 11, 2024

Action

Motion: **Ellen Snyder** made a motion to approve the Minutes of July 11, 2024 as drafted.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Discussion: none

Vote: **Unanimously Approved 6-0-0**

6. Financial Summary

The Chair reported that, as of August, the Conservation Fund has a balance of \$143,105.90 (including the Schanda Park Fund of \$4,621.11). The Mitchell Project funding has not been noted on the ledger as yet. The General Fund is currently \$5,188.64.

7. Committee/Board Reports

Town Council: **Brian** reported on the recent TC meeting on September 9. Scott McGrath was appointed to the Energy and Environment Advisory Committee. For additional information see: [09042024_approved_minutes.pdf \(newmarketnh.gov\)](#).

Planning Board/Town Planner: No report from **Jeff** or **Bart** this month. The Chair

discussed three parcels near Tuttle Swamp Conservation Area which need to have their lot lines merged (a long overdue clean-up on these Town-owned properties). Lots are located near the junction of Ash Swamp Road and Rt. 152.

Action

Motion: **Tom Jones** made a motion to ask the Planning Board to merge the lot lines of the three parcels of Tuttle Swamp.

Second: **Cris Blackstone**

Discussion: none

Vote: **Unanimously Approved 6-0-0**

The Chair will send a memo to **Bart** for Planning Board action.

There are two parcels off Lita Lane, just off Rt. 108, north of the golf course. The lots are 9 & 10. She recommends that we dissolve the lot lines and create one lot. The other properties are bigger and are across the street. These could be merged into a single Town-owned property as well. **Ellen** and **Bart** walked the property recently. There is a possibility of creating a trail with a boardwalk (approximately 200+ yards). There are no current trails and creating one would give the local community better access to a conservation land in Town. It could be named Lita Lane Conservation Area and signage created. Parking is easy as one may pull off the road on Brandon Street.

Action

Motion: **Cris Blackstone** made a motion to ask the Planning Board to merge the lot lines of the parcels off Lita Lane to create the Lita Lane Conservation Area.

Second: **Cris Blackstone**

Discussion: none

Vote: **Unanimously Approved 6-0-0**

The Chair will send a memo to **Bart** for Planning Board action.

Riverfront Advisory Committee/Schanda Park: If anyone is interested in attending the RFAC meeting, please let **Bart** know.

Mr. Jerry Collins has submitted his annual application for storage of Chick's Weir* in Schanda Park from October 2024 to June 2025.

Action

Motion: **Melissa Sharples** made a motion to approved the application submitted by Mr. Jerry Collins to store Chick's Weir in Schanda Park from October 2024 to June 2025.

Second: **Cris Blackstone**

Discussion: none

Vote: **Unanimously Approved 6-0-0**

** After the Squamscot Indians left the area, weirs continued to be used for over 300 years. Chick Hays had fished his weir in Newmarket since 1938 and in 1978 the town was granted "grandfathered" rights for the weir to continue. When Chick died in 1979, Jerry Collins took over fishing with the weir at Schanda Park.*

Energy and Environment Advisory Committee: **Julianna** reported that the members are still working on the Master Plan update. They have been discussing waste management

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in the Town. Recently, they received an update by Lindsay Butler, Town Engineer, on the solar panel installations at the Town well sites. **Julianna** noted that the Community Power Coalition of NH is still working on the 'net metering' issues for people with solar panels.

Melissa mentioned that she had an unsolicited and unwanted CPCNH person at her door recently. This was not a pleasant conversation and others reported the same interactions. **Julianna** will let Joe Lamattina know about this issue.

School Liaison: No report this month.

8. Easement Monitoring Assignments & SELT Contract

Tom reported that he still needs to give the Smith Sisters file to **David**. **Julianna** and **Jeff** have their folder for the Bald Hill property. **Ellen** has her file for the Silverman and Schneer tracks. The Steve Walker will be monitoring the Wiggins and Dearborn properties for the State. SELT will be monitoring the Hilton and Nostrum properties this year as well as the Gaziano track and they are willing to do the Piscassic River-Loiselle. **Tom** feels that any abutter issues are best adjudicated by a third party. The Chair checked with SELT and they do have time to monitor PR-L.

Action

Motion: **Colin Lawson** made a motion to add the Piscassic River-Loiselle property to the SELT contract for monitoring this year.

Second: **Tom Jones**

Discussion: none

Vote: **Unanimously Approved 6-0-0**

9. Projects

Heron Point Sanctuary: Hazard Tree Removal and Boundary Survey:

The Chair reported that the Town has agreed to pay for the hazard tree removal and the boundary survey. 1) We have an estimate for hazard tree removal from Jon Roy at Orion Tree Service for \$2,800. The HOA is paying \$800 for removal of trees definitely on their land. The DPW and Town will cover the cost for Orion. Jon is ready to schedule the work. 2) The boundary survey is slightly unclear. The Chair spoke with Judy, President of Heron Point Estates. The Chair and **Bart** suggest that we only need to set monuments and flags for the abutting portion. The Chair has asked for three proposals: Doucet Survey, Boudreau Land Surveying Plc., and Stake and Stones Land Surveying Inc.. All three firms are located in Newmarket! Stake and Stones was the lowest bid for \$4,200. Duane Hyde at SELT recommended Stake and Stones. After discussion, the members agreed on Stake and Stones.

Action

Motion: **Melissa Sharples** made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$4,200 from the Conservation Fund to pay Stake and Stones to complete the boundary survey for Heron Point Sanctuary as outlined.

Second: **Cris Blackstone**

Discussion: none

Vote: **Unanimously Approved 6-0-0**

Piscassic River – Loiselle: Fence Rails and Mowing: The Chair has spoken with the direct abutter, Tom Loiselle, who has been doing mowing of the trails every year. She spoke with DPW and they can pick up one to two mowings a month depending on summer part-time help in the rotation. She let Tom know and he was very thankful. New pressure treated fence rails were deemed the best option for replacement and we require 10 new rails. The rails are \$15.67/each.

Action

Motion: **Melissa Sharples** made a motion to approved the expenditure of up to \$200 from the Conservation Fund for 10 new pressure treated rails for fence repairs at Piscassic River-Loiselle.

Second: **Cris Blackstone**

Discussion: none

Vote: **Unanimously Approved 6-0-0**

The Chair will order the rails and have them delivered.

Old Lee Class A Trail Improvements: Suzanne Peterson at LRAC has requested an update. The Chair provided her several photos and information to show progress. Greg DiSanto is still planning the trail work.

Wiggin Farm: Boardwalk Replacement: Mark West is still working on the trail permits for the replacement of the boardwalk. He sent a request to the Natural Heritage Bureau and received information back. All good so far – it is just a long process for trail permits with NHDES. The work at Wiggin will also be funded by LRAC.

Ash Swamp Road Turtle Crossing/Aquatic Passage Grant Application: The grant has been submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Lindsay Butler is also submitting a grant to the Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund NH. She also sent an application to the Nature Conservancy. We may have application results in 2-3 months. We are very lucky to have Lindsay!

Mitchell Land Conservation Project: Duane Hyde has submitted all the grant requests for the funding and he may have results early in the fall.

10. Events, Outreach, and Education

TurtleFest 2025, May 10th; Planning Effort: **Cris** updated the members. She provided a worksheet of things and volunteers needed for TurtleFest 2025. The date is set: Saturday, May 10, in the Town Hall Auditorium 9:00-noon with bird walk before 9:00.

Tom has volunteered to clean-up! **Melissa** has volunteered as concierge! **Colin** has volunteered to set-up tables and inter-face with concessions. **Ellen** and Josh Megyesy will be working at the Rockingham Rail Trail off Ash Swamp Road! **Zach** has volunteered for publicity and poster posting around Town! **Julianna** has volunteered for the T-Shirt table (special TurtleFest 2025 logo) including inventory/sales. They then discussed lots of other 'needs'. They hope to make the event "plastic free" – i.e. no balloons, no small plastic toys (as giveaways) etc. Lots of ideas were tossed out and members helped identify other groups to get involved – the library, LRAC, American Horticultural Society, Newmarket Business Association, and more. The more the merrier! The programs include: NHF & G – Josh Megyesy on Turtle Habitat Ecology – followed by a guided walk along the Rockingham Rail Trail, the new NH Turtle Rescue in Nottingham [Home - NH Turtle Rescue](#) (they loved our traffic calming road work on

Ash Swamp Road!), and Lindsay Butler – speaking about the history of the Ash Swamp Road work. **Julianna** will be offering bird watching from 7:30-9:00 (or so) for Spring Migration! There are several sights to choose from right now. More info coming. Dave Steinberg, Senior Lecturer in the Biological Sciences at UNH- specialty in herpetology, is a member of LRAC. He would like to join the field trip with Josh Megyesy on the Rockingham Rail Trail. LRAC would like to speak with David Carroll, noted NH Naturalist/Artist, to purchase a book for a special raffle with the money going to the Environmental Club at the HS? **Cris** has asked that everyone mull over the ideas presented and be ready for more discussion at the October meeting!

Events:

- 1) Master Plan community meeting – this Saturday from 9:00-noon
- 2) The Downtown Riverfront Charrette – October 18-19 ...more info later.
- 3) Great Bay Changemaker Bootcamp Sessions:
 - o September 19th, 5 – 7:30 pm, Epping Library
 - o October 3rd, 5 – 7:30 pm, Newmarket Town Hall, optional walk prior
 - o October 17th, 5 – 7:30 pm, Epping Library, optional walk prior
 - o November 7, 5 – 7:30 pm, Great Bay Discovery Center, optional walk prior

Bookmarks: The Chair handed out the new bookmarks to each member. The set includes four different bookmarks. Thank you for paying **Bart!** The Library plans a special display using the bookmarks. Great work!

Newmarket 300 Committee: **Melissa** announced that she will be contributing to the writing of the commemorative book for the celebration. The book will detail the history of Newmarket and she would like to include a section detailing the conservation lands in Newmarket. **Ellen** suggested looking at the early families whose lands have ended up in conservation – like the Mitchell family who have held the land in the family since in the 1600's. The Hilton family is another. The Wiggin Farm has an interesting history of ownership - Carleton Fisk (not so long ago). Please pass along your ideas to **Melissa!**

11. Adjourn

Action

Motion: **Colin Lawson** made a motion to adjourn at 8:56 PM.

Second: **Melissa Sharples**

Discussion: none

Vote: **Unanimously Approved 6-0-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary

DCAT:

https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/XSekdEeRsk0JHQVHAvKJVka7_5VjxKP/videos