



TOWN OF
NEWMARKET
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Conservation Commission

February 8, 2024 at 7:00 PM

Town Hall Auditorium

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ellen Snyder (Chair), Melissa Sharples (Vice-Chair), David Bell, Jessica Cann (Alternate), Jeffrey Goldknopf (Planning Board Rep.), Tom Jones (Alternate), Sam Kenney, Colin Lawson (Alternate), Julianna Tyson, and Brian Ward (Town Council Rep. ex officio)

Members Absent: Cris Blackstone

Town Staff Present: Bart McDonough, Director, Planning and Community Development

Guests: Autumn Scott from SRPC, Lynn Vaccaro, The Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (GBNERR) and Emma Tutein, UNH Extension Specialist

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

[time on DCAT 3:10]

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

The Chair appointed Alternate **Jessica Cann** as voting member this evening. The seven voting members this evening include **Ellen Snyder, David Bell, Jessica Cann, Jeff Goldknopf, Sam Kenney, Melissa Sharples, and Julianna Tyson.**

3. Public Comment

There was no one present for public comment.

4. Approve Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2023

Action

Motion: **Melissa Sharples** made a motion to approved the Minutes of December 14, 2023 as drafted.

Second: **Sam Kenney**

Discussion: none

Vote: **Approved 7-0-0**

5. Financial Summary

[time on DCAT 5:07]

The Chair reported that the Conservation Fund has a balance of \$134,868.84. The Richard Schanda Fund has \$4,621.11. Together the fund totals: \$139,489.95. There was some interest recorded with no expenditures last month. The General Fund has a balance

of \$2,123.95. The General Fund has part-time salary expenses and the SELT contract was paid out.

6. Master Plan Update

[time on DCAT 6:16]

Natural Resources, Water Resources, Open Space Chapter- Progress Report

Present this evening to make a presentation are **Bart McDonough**, Town Planner, and Autumn Scott, Regional Planner with SRPC. Later on, Lynn Vaccaro, The Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (GBNERR) and Emma Tutein, UNH Extension Specialist will discuss the checklists and scoring for conservation land prioritization using three local communities as examples.

Autumn updated the ConCom: 1) Angela Cleveland (Senior Planner, SRPC) met with the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Commission this week to kick-off the Arts, Culture, and Historic Resources Chapter, 2) Lisa Murphy (Senior Regional Planner, SRPC) will be leading the work on the Community Facilities and Utilities Chapter this month, 3) she and Lindsay Butler, Newmarket Town Engineer, will be meeting with the Energy and Environment Advisory Committee to discuss the best way to incorporate in March, 4) to date 400 survey responses have been received. The Workshop has been scheduled for March 16 and this will include the topics of Visioning, Housing, and Open Space. There are many community engagement opportunities planned. Autumn is asking any member(s) who might like to facilitate or volunteer to please contact ascott@strafford.org. The week of April 8, there will be 'virtual visioning week' at the monthly meetings of the River Front Advisory Committee, Master Plan Subcommittee, the Conservation Commission, and the Planning Board. **Ellen** said that the March ConCom meeting will host Lauren White who completed the Ash Swamp Road Turtle project and Lindsay Butler will attend.

Bart introduced Emma Tutein and Lynn Vaccaro who helped us in the past put together the maps for the 'connect to protect' project. They return this evening to help the ConCom create checklists and scoring for conservation land prioritization. Rochester, Dover, and Chester have created checklists and the members all had copies to review. The Town 2002 Open Space Bond checklist was also included in the packet. The goals for a checklist include: 1) formalizing the process, 2) justify a yes or no decision, 3) communicate your values and process, 4) be proactive and strategic, 5) integrate local values, 6) include flexibility, and 6) reflect the Master Plan and public input. The members participated in a discussion of the three checklists before them and the Chair read the 2002 checklist and goals for Newmarket at that time. Members discussed what was positive about the old checklist and what might be included and/or improved. The members discussed the pros and cons of using a numbering system. Most felt that a numbering rank would not be valuable.

[time on DCAT 42:52-1:25:10]

All members participated in the process of merging the Rochester form (determined the most useful) with the old 2002 Town checklist. Additional categories were included and discussed. Autumn kept accurate track of all the suggestions. Three members agreed to review the changes once ready: **Ellen, Julianna, and Melissa.**

[time on DCAT 1:26:21-1:45:02]

Autumn mentioned that the draft goals and strategies now need a bit more refining after discussions about the water resources chapter and the draft checklist proposed above. Revisions can be reviewed at the next meeting. The Chair and Autumn wanted to hear members thoughts on strategies and goals. **Bart** and Autumn suggested that the new checklist might be used on planning board site walks so that the ConCom would have input on any new proposed developments in Town. The SRPC provides a service to communities of traffic and pedestrian counters for trails and parking lots...all we have to do is ask. Autumn outlined the next steps in the process: 1) Jackson will return and update the map set, 2) she will revise workshop outline scheduled for March 16 (and, if you wish to facilitate, please let her know), 3) prepare the draft checklist and have the SRPC team review, and 4) revise and review actions where appropriate.

7. Committee/Board Reports

[time on DCAT 1:46:15]

Town Council: **Brian** reported on important issues before the Town Council at the meeting of January 17. Please see the minutes at: [01172024 approved minutes.pdf \(newmarketnh.gov\)](#) He also mentioned that the public hearing for the budget was held on January 16: [town council approved public hearing minutes 01162024.pdf \(newmarketnh.gov\)](#). All warrant articles were supported by both the Budget Committee and the TC – they are now being placed on the ballot. **Brian** reported on the meeting of February 7 as well: [02072024 approved minutes.pdf \(newmarketnh.gov\)](#). New covers for the waste water treatment have been ordered. The Chair mentioned that one of the approved warrant articles is for \$75,000 for the contamination study for Moonlight Brook. Please be sure to vote and support this article!

Planning Board/Town Planner: **Jeff** reported about the recent meeting. The PB discussed the Master Plan and they also discussed some changes to the site plan regulations. The members discussed the possibility of completing a Technical Review Committee review (TRC) prior to the site plan being brought before the PB for consideration. The TRC team for the 3-5 Railroad Road project is watching the stormwater runoff from this property and the proposal will likely be continued to the March or April meeting. They are also having a new traffic analysis/study completed. The PB is recommending that the TRC include a representative from the Conservation Commission for each review. **Bart** was asked about the parking by **Melissa**: the owner proposes 61 cars for Railroad Street and there will be 30 cars at the newly approved senior housing at 242 Main Street (across from Grant Road).

Riverfront Advisory Committee/Schanda Park: **Sam** reported that **Bart** is looking into parcel ownership and easement status for the Park. A big thank you to **Bart**! The verbiage for the “duck/wildlife” signs are being worked on right now before finalizing the signs for printing and posting.

8. Conservation Easement Monitoring

[time on DCAT 1:58:11]

Tom reported that all reports for 2023 have been completed! Thank you so much **Tom**! A few ‘follow ups’ on issues have been resolved by **Ellen** and **Tom**.

9. Land Stewardship

Wiggin Farm Kiosk Panel Review

The members reviewed the proposed sign provided. **Sam** had a suggestion that the date of purchase be added to the first line. **Ellen** will be sure to also add the sentence about

indigenous language to this sign as we did for the Heron Point sign. The plan now is to have the sign ready for installation on the Earth Day work day on April 20. Other activities for Earth Day include replacing the steep ramps to the bridge and putting down hardware cloth to help with slipping issues. **Ellen** will purchase the supplies from remaining kiosk funds. Vic Bilodeau has agreed to take the downed trees along the stone wall – he will remove and keep the wood. Thank you Vic!

Sliding Rock Assessment Proposal

The Chair sent the proposal from Tom Ballestero at Streamworks, PLLC to all members. She sent this proposal to LRAC and they reviewed it just today. LRAC is not willing to pay for the entire assessment cost of \$20,000 if they cannot see how Newmarket would pay for the entire project at \$100,000. The Chair will send the LRAC comments to the Town Engineer, DPW, **Bart**, and Recreation for their input on funding as the Sliding Rock area is prone to flooding and stormwater runoff. **Colin** asked if we might consider in-Town completion of this project. She will see if Lyndsay has any suggestions.

Heron Point Sanctuary

There are several tree issues at the Heron Point Estates. They have had a tree expert assess the boundary trees and they are worried about several. **Colin** will also go along and will show them where the boardwalk is rotting.

Ellen would like to determine if there could be a 'hazard tree' line item added to the annual budget in the next cycle. The discussion would be among **Bart**, Rick, **Ellen**, and Lyndsay.

The Chair provided spread sheets for five Town properties (Heron Pt., Piscassic River-Loiselle, Schanda Park, Sliding Rock, and Wiggin along with several smaller properties) which will be discussed at a future meeting. In the meantime, she would like individual members to think about 'adopting' a property or two to keep track of the routine annual stewardship, any projects completed or needed, keeping track of spending, etc.

10. Trails

There has been some leaf blowing at several properties in Town. No leaf blowing is allowed on any trails! **Tom** encountered a local who was raking out leaves at Piscassic-Loiselle who was adamant that it was necessary for his running the trails. The ConCom will put information out in e-news about the problem and encouraging users to not disturb the trails by raking or blowing.

Colin reported that the fence is now down along the Boulder Creek Trail and the posts would soon go as well.

11. Other Items

[time on DCAT 2:17:37]

Disc Golf

The Chair received an email inquiring whether or not disc golf is permitted on any Town lands in Newmarket. Disc golf is played much like golf except, instead of a ball and clubs, players use a flying disc. Members spoke about this and felt that disc golf requires very large properties with varied terrains to be successful and would not be aligned with the goals for any of our conserved lands.

12. Adjourn

[time on DCAT 2:20:08]

Action

Motion: **Julianna Tyson** made a motion to adjourn at 9:18 PM.

Second: **David Bell**

Discussion: none

Vote: **Approved 7-0-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Frick, Recording Secretary

DCAT:

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