



TOWN OF
NEWMARKET
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Conservation Commission

November 13, 2025 7:00 PM

Town Hall Auditorium

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Present: Cris Blackstone (Chair), Colin Lawson (Vice-Chair), Ellen Snyder (Treasurer), Jessica Cann, Zack Angelini, Luke Fromm, George Anderson (Energy and Environment), Michal Zahorik (Alternate), Jeff Goldknopf (Planning Board Representative), Brian Ward (Town Council Rep. ex officio), Emma Fortin (School Liaison)

Absent: Elizabeth Dudley (Alternate), Andrea Frey (Alternate)

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

The voting members will be: **Cris Blackston, Colin Lawson, Ellen Snyder, Jessica Cann, Zack Angelini, Luke Fromm, Jeff Goldknopf**

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

3. Public Comment (None)

4. Approve Meeting Minutes

- October 9, 2025

Action:

Motion: Ellen Snyder made a motion to approve the October 9, 2025, minutes as written.

Second: George Anderson

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved 7-0-0

5. Regular Business

a. Rosa Property

Ellen reported about the property on Wadleigh Falls Road. The commission has been working with the property owners for about a year to conserve land. The budget for the project is around \$400,000. One part is a conservation easement in Newmarket, and the property extends into Durham. There will be an acquisition fee, other smaller project costs and a stewardship fund.

Funding so far includes: \$100,000 from LRAC, \$20,000 from the Field Pond Foundation, some from the conservation fund, and a \$145,000 warrant article going through the process for next spring, Two outstanding grants that will be heard from in a few weeks: LCHIP and Moose Plate.

The commission is applying for one more grant in April. SELT has been giving guidance on grant applications and there will be public outreach to explain why this is a good project.

b. Turtlefest

Cris noted that save the date cards are in the process now and the steering committee has had one meeting so far. There will not be a meeting in December and voting on ideas will come to the Commission with support from the steering committee. There has been a promise from the Sneaky Miles Band to come back and play again. They helped coordinate other bands last year but are unsure if they can get anyone else this year. Chris O'Neal said he would be interested in playing for the fest.

Jess and **Zach** will be coordinating with the Stone Church about the costs. The Commission will give the Stone Church a check and admissions paid will go toward turtle fest donations. It will be titled Turtle Fest 26 and artwork is being completed by John Herman. In January the Commission will start looking for more volunteers.

Date: The Saturday Before Mother's Day - May 9th, 2026

Last Years Attendance: Approximately 70 came to hear the presentation. 17 people attended the morning and afternoon hikes and a couple hundred were at the fundraiser at the Stone Church.

c. Monitoring Reports Information – Ellen

Ellen summarized the monitoring reports. There are 10 properties in town that the Commission either owns the land or has a conservation easement. Some people who were monitoring previously have left the commission and Ellen has picked them back up, but others can complete the monitoring in the future.

- Bald Hill Reservation.
Owned by SELT and the Commission holds the easement. It is off the Hayden Place subdivision. Monitored in November with no issues.
- Piscassic Greenway.
Owned by SELT and the Commission has an easement on the Gaziano Track. SELT monitors and submits a report to LCHIP. No issues this year.
- Hilton and Nostrom Farm off Doe Farm Lane
Both are privately owned and have been contracted to SELT. Monitoring is scheduled for November 25th.
- The Piscassic River Loiselle Conservation Area
Monitoring has been contracted to SELT and is scheduled for December 2nd.
- Smith Sisters on Neal Mill Road
Owned by NH Audubon and is on Wadleigh Falls Road, but goes across Follett's Brook into Durham. Ellen Monitored in November and there were no issues.
- Schneer
Owned by SELT and is 5 acres. Monitoring was completed this past weekend and there were no issues.
- Silverman on Neal Mill Road
Owned by Jeffrey Barnett. There was a timber harvest completed on the property at the same time as SELT. A few issues related to the easement with the timber harvest. A conversation was had with owner and a letter sent, the issues is considered resolved.
- Dearborn, off Grant Road
The commission owns the site, the state monitors and fish and game hold the easement. Monitoring has been completed and there weren't issues, but a few things came up with the boundaries.
- Wigen Farm Conservation Area on Grant Road

Ellen went out with Fish and Game in October and there were a few issues with third party encroachments.

Ellen noted that some of the reports need to be sent to LCHIP or DES. If it's a group, like Audubon, they get the report. If it is private property, the commission sends a letter that everything is alright. After some questions **Ellen** pointed out that all the properties are open to the public to enter except for the farm areas of Nostrom. PPE should be worn during hunting season.

Cris suggested that a future meeting should cover monitoring and education related to monitoring. This will be completed in January from 6:30-7:00.

d. NHACC Annual Conference Reports – Ellen, Cris, Elizabeth, and Luke

Cris suggested members summarize what they learned during the NHACC Conference. **Elizabeth** sent information about the Envirothon display she saw and wanted to share information with **Emma** in case the high school is interested.

Luke summarized that he attended basic talks about getting used to the conservation commission and NH wetland rules. Most were open discussions where specific attendees issues were discussed. A key take away was that the entire department for Inland waterways of NH DES has four staff for the entire state, so feedback they received from the Commission is very useful.

Ellen summarized two talks she attended. One was by Brain Hotz, a primary land protection person at the forest society, about landowner outreach. Some tips included listening to the landowner and keeping communication going to build rapport and trust to help make people more willing to participate. The other talk was a highly technical talk related to modeling beaver systems. She pointed out that meeting others at the conference is beneficial.

Cris discussed the learning opportunities through NHACC such as information about updates to bills that are related to the Conservation Commission and Lunch and Learns, like a recent one about recycling.

Cris attended a talk about old growth forests in New Hampshire and the biggest take away was that old growth forests do not need to have very large trees. Sometimes smaller trees replace the large ones.

Cris also attended a trip related to iPhoto and how to take photos that will give the most information.

6. Financial Summary

Ellen reported the latest financial summary, as available in the meeting materials document:

<https://newmarketnh.portal.civicclerk.com/event/2362/files/attachment/6504>

Ellen noted that the Conservations Fund, a non-lapsing fund, will likely go down because 50% of the land use change tax goes to this account and Newmarket has fewer lands still in current use. This is a big source of income. This year one property contributed \$11,000. These funds are frequently used to leverage other funds and the commission has responsibility for stewardship in perpetuity. It was also noted that the Richard Shanda fund is specifically for the park downtown. The general fund account is a lapsing annual allocation.

Jeff asked what the year-to-date interest has been and noted that there was a significant increase this month. The statements come from the finance office, and an answer could not be provided.

Ellen noted a membership invoice has not been received for NHACC yet.

Action:

Motion: Colin Lawson made a motion to approve up to \$500 for NHACC membership.
Second: Luke Fromm
Discussion: None
Vote: Approved 7-0-0

7. Committee/Board Reports

Town Council: Brian reported that Town Council met on November 5th and voted to have Geraldine Bresnin join the Arts Culture and Tourism Commission. The 2025 town property tax rate was set at \$19.42, or an increase of \$1.14. This means that the bill for towns will increase approximately \$741. There is a warrant article to get rid of the solid waste fund and have money sent to the general fund since the solid waste fund is not producing enough money to keep it going. There was an approval of fiscal 2026 budget with an additional \$5,000 going to direct assistance.

Planning Board: Jeff reported that the Planning Meeting was held on October 14th. The project out on New Road was not presented because it wasn't complete, but it did have a technical review. There was a presentation of the prime wetland maps by Mark West. The maps were well received. Planning board did not vote but they recommended it to the Town Council. Jeff asked if the commission would be willing to put together a letter of support. The maps will go in front of Town Council in December. Jeff noted that during the talk Mark stressed the importance of buffer areas and vernal pools and suggested the buffer zones are increased.

Bart McDonough reported that during the planning board meeting there will be some site plan regulation amendments to match zoning. There will be a technical review committee for projects prior to filing for planning board review. This is to create consistency and bring together more people to review with different lenses, such as conservation or transportation. The idea is to make it a consistent, smoother process. The public hearing for those changes will be next week. The technical review committee will be made up of staff such as DPW, Engineering, Planning, and others can be invited depending on project needs. Major projects would have peer reviews.

This type of review was needed once this year.
 The technical and peer review would be paid for by a fee to the applicant.

Bart reported on zoning updates around 108. This area is considered the Village Corridor Distract and utilizes form-based code. The board is currently looking at abutting neighborhoods to assess if form-based code would be appropriate. When the plans are advanced, they will be sent to the Commission for review.

Bart reported that the Masterplan is about 85% complete. One chapter is reviewed at a time, and he is anticipating planning board will ratifying it in March. The Master Plan will be online to be more accessible and engaging.

Bart updated the Commission on the 23 unit Condominium project. It includes two bedroom units that are approximately 2,000 SF. The Site is 34 acres, approximately 9 acres will be developed. Approximately 9 acres are wetlands and the remainder are upland. Water will be brought across Forbes Road, under the railroad. The stie will require a lot of grading but they plan to use local soil on site. There will be a recreation area, but it has not been designed yet. It may be more traditional with some natural recreation areas. Currently there are 12,500 SF of total impacts, 2,600 SF of direct wetland impact. There are a lot of stormwater and nutrient loading issues that still need to be worked out. Bart noted that the town does not regulate septic systems but does have regulations related to stormwater. Currently, the project is over the disturbance threshold and needs to present off site mitigation and that was not clear in the last submittal.

The project is still going through technical review, and it may take a few meetings before it moves forward. Currently, wetland flags are being updated after a site walk with the staff environmental scientist and technical reviewer.

Ellen requested the Commission be given time to review the plans prior to having to make a decision.

Bart reported that it will likely be a month before comments are addressed, and the Commission will likely see the project in January or February. The recently received material is available online.

Energy and Environment: **George** reported that clean energy NH attended the Energy and Environment meeting last month. They serve as energy advisers for public entities. Currently, the Committee is creating a glossary of items that can be recycled at the curb or taken to the facility. It was reported that the recycling contamination rate is generally low.

There was a general discussion related to what can be recycled, costs and implications related to incorrect recycling. The Energy and Environment Committee will join at 7:00 for the December meeting and will be part of the agenda.

Colin offered that the Commission could do educational outreach on the subject.

There was a general discussion about when the Rochester Landfill is expected to close.

Cris asked **Brian** to verify with Town Council when the landfill is officially going to close.

Riverfront Advisory Committee: **Bart** reported that the town recently purchased 11 Creighton Street, the house next to the pump house. There was a meeting earlier in the day to discuss the future of the parcel. The Riverfront Committee would like to come to the next meeting to discuss stewardship of Shanda Park and if it should be transferred back to the town. Currently, buildings and grounds does the maintenance in Shanda Park. This will be included with the agenda items for December.

Chris noted that it will be several years until anything can happen with the new parcel. First, baseline data needs to be collected and that process is starting.

Ellen noted that Shanda Park was a town park, but the conservation commission has been responsible since 2005.

Cris noted that visibility and signage related to the park will need to be discussed.

Bart reported that the Lamprey River Advisory Committee isn't involved with the riverfront committee or the park. Typically, the Riverfront Committee will go to the Lamprey Advisory Committee for funds.

School Liaison: **Emma** reported that on October 24th about 40 students picked up 60 bags of trash from Wadleigh Falls Road to downtown. Currently, the students are in the process of getting a new rain barrel. Additionally, they planted perennial bulbs in front of the school last week and they are planning the bike / walk to school day and clean ups for the spring. There will be a clothing drive happening at the school next Tuesday and Emma will send more information.

8. Old Business

Invasive Park Cleanup

Ellen reported that the invasive workday is at 10:00 AM on Saturday morning. The location is right next to Follett's Brook. The event was posted on Nature Groupie and there are currently eight sign-ups. There are several different species of invasive plants that will be pulled, stockpiled, picked up and brought to the transfer station. Treatment will start at street and move back as time allows.

Luke noted that a neighbor said previously access was allowed further into the site, along the river which had been blocked by other neighbors. **Ellen** noted this is likely part of subdivision open space.

Brian noted there will be cemetery clean ups happening in May and it would be helpful if someone from the Commission could come and note any invasive plants that should be removed. The next cleanup will be at Burley Cemetery on Bald Hill Road. **Ellen** volunteered to assist.

9. New Business

Cris brought out the 2025 Lamprey Plan and noted that it would be beneficial to read, since funds are frequently requested from them and applications need to refer to their plan.

Goerge suggested the plan be made available at the library. The plan is also available online.

10. Looking Forward

December meeting: Energy and Environment. Sam Kennedy, Bart.

11. Closing Comments

Ellen noted that the America The Beautiful grant is a go for the Ash Swamp Road crossing project and they can move forward with the project.

Jeff asked if the Wigman Farm picnic table is bent.

Chris responded that it was bent before being moved to the new location.

Ellen noted the Piscassic Greenway trails are open again after the timber harvest and there will be a site walk on December 5th from 2:00-4:00. There were some trails affected by the harvest so the Conservation Commission is going to work with SELT on repair.

Colin noted that Heron Point has not had leaves cleaned up yet, and this can be completed as a volunteer day. **Ellen** noted that DPW does not do that work.

Jess recently visited Burley Farms and Piscassic Greenway.

Emma is creating an ECO column as a part of her environmental studies class. Also, there will be a craft event at the school on Saturday December 6th.

Colin noted that boulder holler trail is getting a lot of use. It is still stable, but he would like to consider moving it across Dame Road which would require coordination with the landowners.

Bart said he could review and provide information about connecting to landowners.

Jeff noted that Elm Street has been a popular place for turkey vultures. There was a general agreement and discussion about species. **Brian** suggested they use the updraft from the baseball diamond on Nichols Street.

Cris noted that if you see plants with leaves still on at this time of year, it is likely an invasive plant.

Zach shared that he has been doing cold plunges in the Lamprey River.

12. Adjournment

Action:

Motion: **Colin** made a motion to adjourn at 8:48 PM.

Second: **Zach**

Discussion: None

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

314 Respectfully submitted,
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318 DCAT:
319 https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/XSekkdEeRsk0JHQVHAvKJVka7_5VjxKP/videos