



TOWN OF
NEWMARKET
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Conservation Commission

July 9, 2026 7:00 PM

Town Hall Auditorium

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Present: Zack Angelini (Chair), Luke Fromm (Vice-Chair) Ellen Snyder (Treasurer), Jeff Goldknopf (Planning Board Rep.), Colin Lawson, Scott Blackstone (Town Council Rep.), Andrea Frey (Alternate)

Absent: Michal Zahorik (Alternate), Cris Blackstone (Alternate), Jessica Cann, Elizabeth Dudley (Alternate), George Anderson, Emma Fortin (School Liaison)

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

The voting members will be: Zack Angelini, Luke Fromm, Ellen Snyder, Colin Lawson, Jeff Goldknopf, Scott Blackstone, Andrea Frey

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Call

3. Appoint Alternates as Voting Members (if applicable)

Zack appointed **Andrea** as a voting member for the night.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Approve Meeting Minutes

- The June 11, 2026 meeting minutes have minor edits. Edits include:
 - Line 64 - Nostrom instead of Nostrum
 - Line 67 – 1,2000 should be 1,200
 - Line 177 – Should read: the church is currently using the school.
 - Line 185 – The property should be the town property.
 - Line 296 – Should read: up to 50 baby turtles.

Action:

Motion: Ellen made a motion to approve the amended June 11, 2026 minutes.

Second: Andrea

Discussion: None

Vote: Approved 7-0-0

6. Marsh Restoration Presentation

Lynn Vaccaro with the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and **Joanne** from The Nature Conservancy gave a presentation on a marsh restoration project.

Lynn explained they are in the process of trying to develop a series of restoration plans throughout the Great Bay area. There currently isn't money or a timeline to implement improvements but they are gathering input at this point. The project is looking at many marshes around Great Bay and considering historic degradation and farming. The current presentation focuses on Lubberland Creek but there is another sites close by, Chapmans Landing in Stratham, that may be of interest and they would welcome ideas.

Joanne presented that Lubberland Creek is owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy and is part of a 400 acre preserve. There was a culvert replacement project at this site in 2019 that allowed for salt marsh migration up stream. There is also natural migration from the salt marsh occurring into adjacent fields. Salt marsh sparrows are nesting at the site and the project team wants to preserve habitat for this species. UNH is doing research on the species right now to make sure their habitat requirements are understood. A rare plant survey was completed for several species by Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens. Many of the marshes in the project have a long agricultural history, and there have been previous efforts to drain the marsh. There are embankments, culverts and rocks installed historically in the marsh to try to control water movement.

A series of metrics were developed for how to assess the marsh and come up with goals for the site. This helped identify areas of concern. A large component that came out of this included qualitative change over time which includes changes visible in aerial imagery. Of particular concern is the high density of ditches at this site. When there are a lot of ditches there is more oxygen which causes more decomposition resulting in subsidence and more marsh loss over time. Additionally, from 1962 to 2024 it is obvious to see part of the creek widening over time causing a loss of marsh. Elevation data is also being collected. This will help identify low pockets and make it possible to create good drainage patterns. There are ponds on the marsh surface mostly associated with man-made impoundments. If some of the impoundments can be removed, it is likely the vegetation will reestablish. This site has good opportunities for marsh migration.

Joanne shared a sample of ditch restoration at Filbert Pond that was completed by moving mowed vegetation into the ditch and staking it down. Over time the ditch fills in and vegetation starts to grow in these areas.

Lynn shared that they are currently doing outreach to make sure all aspects of the marsh are understood. There will be focus meetings with groups like bird watchers and duck hunters. **Luke** attended a meeting to provide some initial feedback.

Lynn asked how people use and interact with the marsh and if there are specific things appreciated about this site.

Jeff shared that he uses the sweet trail but has not kayaked in the creek.

Zack clarified that it is located off Bay Road.

Ellen shared that she uses the sweet trail and that the culvert replacement was a very successful project. Ellen asked about the difference between a runnel and a ditch.

Joanne explained that a runnel is very shallow, typically about 30 inches deep, and the ditches are very deep, below the root zone. They want to avoid creating more ditches but need to move water off the marsh. At Filbert Pond they have been making little mounds with the excess runnel material. These are intended to help the Marsh Sparrow with slightly higher elevations for nesting. The other option with the material is to put it into the ponding areas.

Andrea asked if all the ponding at Chapman Landing is unnatural.

Joanne said it is difficult to know because there isn't a record of what the marsh was like before people started making adjustments. Frequently the ponding is behind some of the ditches where material was deposited.

Andrea brought up the small fish and habitat in the ponding areas and asked if removing the ponds affects the mosquito population. She has heard previously that the ditches, when properly draining water, can prevent mosquitoes. This could be a focus group for outreach.

Jeff asked if there are untouched marshes that could be used as a sample.

Joanne said they will look into other sites but there is a lot of variation between different locations.

Jeff shared that the ditches are to drain ground water.

Joanne said the first round of ditches were from early settlers creating agricultural land, the second were the mosquito ditches. There is research showing embankments in the upper watershed that were used to impound fresh water and to plant agriculture crops up slope.

Jeff asked if the stone berm across the creek was originally from a mill.

Joanne thought it wouldn't be large enough to function as a mill.

Andrea appreciates that the eroded area is being addressed.

Joanne said they might be able to restore some areas but might not be able to everywhere. The real focus is on not losing any more.

Jeff asked if salt plants have started to move above the culvert.

Joanne said they are seeing the water fluctuate but it is all fresh water.

Zack asked if they have seen benefits for the salt marsh sparrow.

Joanne said they don't have information yet because the mounds are very new.

Andrea asked if the nesting sites are elevated on a pole.

Joanne said they are not. The sparrow is a specialist that makes nests under little tufts of grass on the ground.

Jeff said the research center was going to put in rods to monitor the surface.

Joanne shared that they are monitoring the sediment elevation table to track how much sediment is building up over time. It is building, but not at a pace that will match sea level rise. In other locations (not the current project) sediment placement is used to build up sediment. The material is typically from a local dredging project. There isn't currently a dredging project in the Great Bay.

Lynn said there is an online survey that can be shared. The project team would like to hear what everyone is noticing, what people want to see, and would like as much input as possible.

Zack asked if the pools in the marsh are used for recreation.

Lynn said birdwatchers benefit from the pools but few others. They are very shallow and narrow so they are not frequently accessed by kayakers.

Joanne said the marshes are most frequently used for birding, hunting, walking and enjoying the view.

Andrea has previously been in the marsh during events and the intrinsic habitat value is important. Some neighbors might be concerned about water in basements or water making it to other locations.

Joanne said at Chapmans Landing the abutters are mainly farmers, and they have been open to conversations. It can be a good place to watch marsh changes and things that can be done to help facilitate change in a positive way and adapt.

Lynn will be reaching out to the community at Moody Point.

Jeff asked if turtles were there and pointed out that it would be a great Turtlefest talk.

Joanne said there is nesting near the culvert and she has seen snapping turtles.

Lynn shared handouts that provide information about salt marshes for the public, as well as a mailing information for people who are close to salt water.

Ellen said this can be brought to the planning office.

7. Treasurer's Report

Ellen summarized the treasurer report:

Conservation Fund

The conservation fund balance is \$139,752.83

Funds were passed through to the rain barrel company and two students donated funds for the Heron Point bike racks.

LRAC provided 50% of their grants in the beginning and this has been deposited.

General Fund

General fund balance is \$2,413.42

With the end of the fiscal year, these funds will go back into the Town general fund.

Shanda Fund

Shanda has been moved out of the commissions account

Action:

Motion: **Ellen** made a motion to change the agenda and move up Land Stewardship.

Second: **Colin**

Discussion: None

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

11. Land Stewardship

Ellen shared that grants were received and the Follett's Brook NRI and Wiggin Farm Plan are fully funded. RFPs were sent out and the new submission date is July 31st. There is a sub committee with Bart, Bridget, Ellen, Lindsey Butler, and Jeff to review the RFPs and come back to the commission with the recommended proposal.

Ellen noted that at the last meeting the commission approved contracting with Veronique to help with land stewardship.

Veronique introduced herself. She is the Durham stewardship coordinator, enjoys working with groups of people and looking forward to working on projects with the commission.

Ellen said they will pull together a simple contract that will focus mainly on trail maintenance and stewardship.

11. Land Protection

Rosa Property

Ellen shared that the town boundary survey is underway and the surveyor flagged it on the site. The family cemetery and several stone piles are on the Newmarket side so they will be within the easement. Currently the survey is being wrapped up and there should be final numbers to write up the easement shortly. The tax parcel says 24 acres are in Durham and 16 acres in Newmarket. The goal is to close on October 1st. The town attorney is working on the parcel information.

Mitchel Property

Ellen attended the closing on June 12th. SELT had some complicated work to close and acquire the property. Newmarket contributed \$87,500 from the town bond from 2002. They are not saying it is closed because the conservation easement is not yet in place but there will be one on the property by Fish and Game eventually. Hopefully the easement will occur at the same time the state acquires the property on the opposite side of the road.

11. Committee/Board Reports

Town Council

Scott said they are in the summer schedule and have not met.

Planning Board

Jeff shared that **Andrea** volunteered to be the full-time member to the long range advisory committee and Elizabeth would be an alternate. He is unsure of the process to move forward. **Jeff** suggested **Andrea** follow up to the email chain that **Jeff** sent recently related to interest.

Jeff said there will be a public hearing on the Master Plan at the next meeting.

Andrea noted that not every portion of the Master Plan is available online. The environmental category is listed but there wasn't a link to read the material.

Jeff said that it should be in the link for the meeting on Tuesday.

Ellen asked if there will be a table of implementation steps. The commission hasn't seen the final implementation chart.

Jeff said the table should be included as well. The last review was just minor clean up.

Jeff asked about TRC meetings, and if there has been anything about the Spring Street Project.

Luke said there hasn't been anything recently.

Technical Review Committee

Luke nothing to report.

Energy and Environment

George was not present to report.

Riverfront Advisory Committee

Jess was not present to report.

School Liaison

Emma was not present to report.

14. Other Business / Updates

Zack shared that he reached out to Word Barn and The Harris Center to see what dates could work for them and has not hear back yet

FY28 Budget Request

Ellen noted the budget for the next financial year needs to be submitted. There has been a small reduction in the part-time funds, because the amount requested before has not been needed. Since there isn't a meeting in August it would be good to vote and get the budget to Bart.

Andrea asked if the hourly rate for part-time work has been reduced.

Ellen said it has not, the rate is set by the town.

Action:

Motion: **Ellen** made a motion to approve the budget.

Second: **Luke**

Discussion: None

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

Scott asked if the \$16,000 would go to the general fund.

Ellen replied that this would come from the Town and go to the general fund. Other funds raised, like the money from Turtlefest, would go to the Conservation Fund. The general fund is for things like part time work, easement monitoring, and supplies.

Meeting Minutes

Zack shared that the commission will need someone new, or a new way to take meeting minutes. There are three options: have someone attend the meetings, have someone listen to the recordings, or use AI software to produce minutes.

Ellen noted that the recordings can be hard to hear at times.

Zack noted that AI would be more work on the council.

Other Business

Andrea shared that at Schoppmeyer Park there is an area broken near the water. There was a hoop that went around to allow better accessibility. She asked who is responsible for repairing this area.

Ellen said DPW is responsible for upkeep and maintenance.

Colin noted that the pipes and the piece that was broken have been removed.

Jeff shared that the grate was pulled out of the culvert on Ash Swamp Road. He is unsure what the plan is for putting it back. The water level didn't seem to change when the grate was pulled out even though a lot of muck was removed.

Zack reminded the group that there will not be an August meeting.

13. Adjournment

Action:

Motion: **Zack** made a motion to adjourn at 8:14.

Second: **Andrea**

Discussion: None

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

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen Biegert

DCAT:

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