

**Approved Town of Newport, NH**  
**Newport Conservation Commission**  
**July 20, 2022 6:30 PM**  
**Board of Selectmen's Room/Municipal Building**  
**15 Sunapee Street/Newport, NH**

---

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Barry Connell, Chairman and BOS Representative; Donald Schagen, Vice Chairman; Guenter Hubert *via zoom*; Lawrence Schissel

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ken Dennis, Linda Dennis

**STAFF PRESENT:** Maura Stetson, recording secretary

**VIDEOGRAPHER:** Alex Zander, NCTV

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Lionel Chute, Sullivan County Director of Natural Resources

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Connell called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a roll call of the Commissioners in attendance.

**AGENDA REVIEW:** ADD to New Business: Park at Corbin Covered Bridge (Schissel), financial report (Schissel)

**MINUTES:** June 15, 2022

June 15, 2022

On a motion by Mr. Schagen, seconded by Mr. Hubert; *the Commission approved the minutes of March 16, 2022 as presented. The motion passed with a roll call vote 4-0-0.*

**NEW BUSINESS:** (for full presentation go to: [www.nctv-nh.org](http://www.nctv-nh.org) ).

Lionel Chute, Sullivan County Director of Natural Resources Presentation

Chairman Connell introduced guest speaker Lionel Chute, Sullivan County Director of Natural Resources. Mr. Chute asked if Dr. Schissel could see him via zoom. Dr. Schissel assured Mr. Chute if it was primarily an audio presentation he was fine.

- 1) Mr. Chute appreciated the invitation and enthusiasm of the current Commissioners. He has two positions: Director of Natural Resources (he manages the county lands). Sullivan County owns more land (2200 acres) than any other county in New Hampshire.
  - a) He stated it was all on their website: [www.sccdnh.org](http://www.sccdnh.org) or Facebook: NHSCCD. Mr. Chute gave the Commissioners a synopsis of the information on the website and encouraged them to visit it.
  - b) Eco Ag Center at the County Farm Complex has: community garden, pollinator gardens, outdoor classrooms and workshops.

Chairman Connell asked how the activities are advertised. Mr. Chute said it was on their website, Facebook site; the County Commissioners Office has brochures. Mr. Hubert asked if Mr. Chute did press releases. He was told yes; with Patrick Adrian (print) and Steve Smith (radio).

- 2) His second position is head of the Conservation District for Sullivan County.
  - a) Involved in local food production, local food promotion,
  - b) invasive species,
  - c) soil and water health,
  - d) air quality

The Conservation District is to serve everyone in the county. There are partners and friends in Newport. Mr. Schagen asked what the mission (goal) of the Conservation District was. (*From their website:* The **mission** is to work with landowners & organizations to conserve natural resources, support local agriculture, and promote place-based education in Sullivan County, NH. Established in 1946, the Conservation District operates out of Unity, NH and connects residents of Sullivan County to resources, experts, and funding opportunities relating to our mission.

The **goal** is to connect residents to our local lands and help each one develop an understanding of the natural ecosystems we are a part of, an appreciation for the beauty that surrounds us and the natural resources that sustain us, and foster a sense of place and stewardship ethic.)

The three program areas that the Conservation District is involved with are:

- 1) Conservation
- 2) Support of organizations such as local Conservation Commissions
- 3) Promotion (educate the public, protect natural resources, invasive species)

Support would include outreach with PowerPoint presentations, connections to regional and national experts. Mr. Schagen stated that public outreach and education has been discussed by the Commissioners. It is one of his priorities and one set for the Commission. Mr. Chute passed out some brochures on the Conservation District and the projects and public resources of the District.

Chairman Connell stated that one thing the Commission as a whole is investigating is a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) for the Town of Newport. He asked if Mr. Chute could be of assistance with a NRI. Mr. Chute said yes, he has done them. He also knows of consultants that do them all the time. Mr. Chute asked how much land Newport Conservation Commission is responsible for. Mr. Schagen and Chairman Connell stated the NRI would be Town wide; it would encompass all land within Newport, not just the Conservation lands. Mr. Schagen said that Claremont had a NRI which encompassed all of the Claremont land. One part focused on all the wetlands in Claremont. Newport's Masterplan states there are approximately 2400 acres unidentified wetlands (based on the Sullivan County Soil Survey). It is the Conservation Commission's purview to oversee it. It is thus very important to identify the wetlands as part of the NRI.

Mr. Chute stated he could help; he can generate some GIS maps of Newport, highlighting the wetlands using the NWI (National Wetlands Inventory) and cross reference/overlap it with the soil mapping. Continuing, Mr. Chute stated if Newport was starting a NRI from scratch, the GIS mapping will be plenty. He offered to give a tutorial, using the big screen TV in the BOS room, how to access and utilize the free state GIS System (Granite View) and other available systems.

Chairman Connell addressed Mr. Chute and stated that before the Commission hires someone to do a NRI; he wanted to know what they want as a commission. The tutorial would be a good start to gather the information; then if the Town hires someone, the Commission can give them information to build on and price accordingly. There was a discussion between the Commission and Mr. Chute on wetlands and delineating them. Mr. Chute told them of a 3-5 day class on wetland delineation through the Cooperative Extension.

A tutorial he gave could show:

- ❖ Landscape of the GIS
- ❖ How to get in and out
- ❖ Focusing on wetlands
- ❖ Natural resources

The Commissioners and Mr. Chute held a discussion on various aspects of a NRI and the use of the GIS and NH Natural Heritage website.

Mr. Chute stated one way to find out the rare natural species of Newport was to put out a request to landowners. The Commission could put in one request with the approval of participating landowners. Mr. Schagen stated it might be worth writing an article in the Newport Times asking for participation by Newport landowners.

Chairman Connell asked for other items to focus on.

1. Soils

2. Prime agricultural soils
3. Old growth forests
4. Wildlife in general (ask fish and game)
5. Fisheries
6. Aquifers

Mr. Chute a date for a return visit at which time he will assist the Commission and do a tutorial. Chairman Connell stated that the Commissioners needed to discuss at the next meeting how to proceed (a strategy). After that they will contact Mr. Chute and set up a date for a tutorial.

Chairman Connell polled the Commissioners on having Mr. Chute return for a tutorial in September 2022. In discussion, Mr. Schagen said he would like it to be a special meeting. Dr. Schissel stated he wanted to keep the month open ended so the Commission could set some goals for their work. The others concurred with him. Mr. Chute concluded, saying he was available to the commission for anything; not just the tutorial. He looked forward assisting the group. He gave his business card to Chairman Connell.

Chairman Connell asked him one last question. The Town had just planted some new trees on the Common. They were planning on putting 8-10 benches on concrete pads in front of some of them. He asked if the trees will be harmed by the concrete or benches. Mr. Chute said if the benches were not close to the trees they will be fine. The biggest problem with the Newport Common is soil compaction from foot traffic. They discussed compaction, ways to stop it, and reseeding the Common.

Mr. Chute reminded the Commissioners they were volunteers. Their work was a gift to the Town. Mr. Chute took the Conservation Commissioners emails. He will add them to the Districts newsletter.

Mr. Chute would like to connect the Newport Conservation Commission with the Claremont Conservation Commission (very active group). He would love for them to have a meet and greet. Chairman Connell said that would be a good goal; bringing the Conservation groups together. Mr. Chute was thanked by the Commissioners for attending. They thanked Dr. Schissel for having Mr. Chute come.

#### CC Sections of Master Plan Review

There was a discussion on the Master Plan review by the Commissioners. Mr. Schagen stated he understood that the Planning Board had had a meeting with a representative from the UVLSRPC. They had not been invited to the meeting. The Commission was told that it wasn't until the representative was talking and repeatedly mentioned NRI and conservation that it clicked (the Conservation Commission had just begun talking about a NRI in their meetings). It was not a slight on the part of the Planning Board. There was a discussion on the Conservation Commission attending one of the Planning Board meetings. Mr. Schagen believed the Commission should be working with the Planning Board. It is a big undertaking for the Commission and the Town. There was a discussion on the process to take to undertake the NRI for the Master Plan. Chairman Connell stated that apparently there would be no financial assistance from the Town for the NRI. Budgeting would come in the next fiscal year. Chairman Connell spoke on finances from the timber tax. He has been told the Conservation Commission will have to write and have a Warrant Article passed regarding it.

Mr. Schagen stated that there had been a quorum of members in attendance during some of their work sessions. He read the following into the record:

The Commissioners met on:

June 22, 2022: Barry Connell, Guenter Hubert, Ken Dennis and Don Schagen met with Dode Gladders to discuss the invasive plants and the possibility of spreading them by performing work on the boardwalk that starts at the base of the ski jump.

Because there were four commissioners in attendance it needs to be on record; nothing of any business was discussed, it was strictly educational. The Commissioners did not conduct any business, no decisions were voted on; it was strictly educational.

June 24, 2022: Barry Connell, Guenter Hubert and Don Schagen worked with the Rec Department personnel PJ Lovely and Ryley Skarin and helped to install signs that were obtained by the Town for the purpose identifying the trailheads and their parking areas. They posted signs at the trailheads at Summer Street, Cheney Street, Town forest at the high school, entrance (Route 10) to the football field, a sign at the Corbin covered bridge trailhead and rail trail near the Rec Center.

July 14, 2022: Larry Schissel, Guenter Hubert and Don Schagen worked on cutting back the vegetation around the Pinnacle and improving its scenic views.

July 29, 2022: is the next scheduled work day at the Pinnacle. The public is welcome.

Chairman Connell asked what the next step will be for working on the Master Plan. Ms. Donovan had given the Commission a lot of information (pages of the Plan) and stated there was more coming. When asked, Mrs. Stetson stated there was nothing additional in the Planning and Zoning Office for the Commissioners. Dr. Schissel did not receive any information, he will be given a copy of the pages the Commissioners have.

Chairman Connell polled the members with the suggestion that everyone look over the pages before the next meeting and jot down any items that are important. They concurred with Chairman Connell's suggestion. The Commission discussed holding a meeting designated to working on the Master Plan.

Chairman Connell was asked if the Town budgeted money for the Master Plan. He was not aware of any, but it was an excellent question. The Conservation Commission should receive some if money was budgeted. Chairman Connell would ask the finance director if the Town budgeted money for the Master Plan. Chairman Connell asked for a date for a special meeting for the Master Plan and for the Natural Resources Inventory (tutorial with Mr. Chute).

- Cover the information the members already have from the Master Plan that concerns the Conservation Commission. No date was set.
- NRI: tutoring by Mr. Chute. No date was set.

#### Rules of Procedure

The Commissioners discussed the revised Rules of Procedure (ROP). Mrs. Stetson gave the Commissioners additional changes to consider. She also stated a signature page had been added to her considerations. The Commissioners will review the ROP before the next meeting and state their consent on adding the changes to the Rules of Procedure. On a motion by Dr. Schissel, seconded by Mr. Hubert; ***the Commission tabled the Rules of Procedure action item to the August 17, 2022 meeting. The motion passed 4-0-0.***

#### Priority List from Members

The following list was made by members in attendance:

1. Land conservation, review of conservation land boundaries LCHIP
2. Money line item:
  - Land conservation fund (purchase land);
  - Operating budget
3. NRI:
  - focus on wetlands

- meet with Planning Board; develop relationship
- 4. Public relations and education
- 5. Conservation District Ordinance

Newport Ordinance that protects and lists properties in the Conservation District. There was a discussion on whether the Commission should monitor the land. Copies of the Conservation District will be acquired for all members.

Park at Corbin Covered Bridge

Dr. Schissel said that in 2019 the Memorial and Monument Committee heard a proposal to name the park by the covered bridge The Reid/Andrews Park. There is a new kiosk at the site and new signage will be erected. He asked if a decision was made by the Memorial and Monument Committee. He was told yes; there being no decision of the committee's decision in public minutes he was asked to contact Mrs. Virginia Irwin who was Chairperson at the time, ask for the decision. The appropriate procedure to take to officially name the park would be known to her. Dr. Schissel will contact Mrs. Irwin.

**ADMINISTRATION:** none

On a motion by Dr. Schissel, seconded by Mr. Hubert; *the Commissioners voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:09 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson, Scribe

Approved: August 17, 2022

**ACTION ITEMS FOR AUGUST 17, 2022:**

- 1) Approve and sign the Rules of Procedure
- 2) Master Plan Review
- 3) Strategies for the 5 priorities

*Italicized are old agenda item requests for consideration*

- 4) *Financial Report (quarterly)*
- 5) *NRI work by Commissioners continued:*
- 6) *Ms. Donovan: bring copies of the Forest Management Agreement and four deeds*
- 7) *Update on forestry work (cutting and invasive species) at Gilman Pond by Todd Cartier*