

**Call to Order:** Chair Hislop called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**Present:** Chair, Sandy Hislop, Jack Pare, Denis Hebert, John Frink, Peggy Lamson, Gail Klanchesser, Chris Cross, Selectman, Cos Iocovozzi and Town Planner, Tom Morgan. Conservation Committee members included Jane Hislop, Kaye Ackerley, Peg Lamson, and Barb McDonald.

**Public Hearing:** Proposal to designate Prime Wetlands. Mark West of West Environmental was present to give the public an overview outlining the prime wetland process to include the wetland function, how evaluation and mapping occurred and how this affects local landowners through local regulations and state regulations. He informed the group that he has worked with the towns of Exeter and Newmarket and the City of Manchester on similar projects. He stated that the Prime Wetland report is a report that gets submitted to the State if, in fact, the Town votes to approve the report. He gave an overview of wetland functions, wildlife habitat, types of wetlands and breakdown of wetland locations. He outlined a map that depicted wetland designations in Newington. There are 252 acres of Prime Wetlands; 28 acres of tidal wetlands and 224 acres of freshwater. Each is evaluated differently. He presented a breakdown of wetland locations and wetland functions in each of these locations. He stated that he looked at each of the 31-wetland designations to determine function and importance. They did not look at the wildlife refuge habitat as they felt the Federal Government already protected it. Public asked why certain areas were named and what was the effect to landowners under local regulations. West stated that the structural set back stays the same. Wetland buffer of 75' must be maintained. It will affect parking lot setbacks, which must be 100 ft. All other permitted uses such as agriculture, forestry and driveway access will not change. There was a lot of discussion regarding requirements of landowners if prime wetlands are designated. Ms. Pickering felt the wildlife refuge has already been designated and feels this new addition puts a very onerous burden on property owners. Several residents had questions for Mr. West regarding prime wetland designation and impact on owners who want to improve their property. Paul and Connie Clark, Ann Graciano, Dick Spinney and Al Smith all had questions for Mr. West. Residents were concerned that if they wanted to improve their property, wetland designation would devalue their property. Mr. West said it would not. Residents also wanted to know if the Town had a plan to reconsider the value of property with wetland designation. Response was no, but thought it a good idea and needed more work and thought. Pickering felt that the Conservation Commission was trying to limit property owner's use of land. West reminded audience that the State of NH and the Town of Newington already protect the land that is being proposed as Prime Wetland. Land on the edge could not be built on now. Commission Board member, Jane Hislop stated they started looking at wetlands because of what happened with the Pease Golf Course and they wanted to be able to protect the lands of Newington in the future.

Conservation Commission member Ackerly said we shouldn't just sit and argue the point but let residents ask questions so they can understand the process and effect. West outlined what the state requires presently and how this proposal will affect landowners. West reminded public that the Town would have to vote on designation at the March meeting. Karen Chick, Educator at Seacoast Science Center stated that D.E.S. wants to designate more land as wetlands. Are there grant monies available to help property owners? There was discussion regarding restoring wetlands to function. West said the goal is not to restrict property owner. This is the process to inform the public and look at more specific issues. Smith questioned PDA's agreement to maintain road and who gave PDA right to post McIntyre Brook. There was discussion concerning this issue. Conservation Commission and Planning Board members felt good issues had been raised and Selectmen will need to look at these issues. There was other discussion regarding beaver dams and impact on brooks in Prime Wetlands. Ms. Upson stated she owned land with brook on it and they had to have 100 ft. setback when they built 10 years ago. They have perimeter of trees and can only cut 50% of trees within 20 years, so there's already an impact on property owner. West said because of tidal wetland this property was already protected by the State. McDonald told those present, that the Conservation Commission did not look at these designations with an eye toward limiting development. They did this to take a look at the wetlands and how to protect. Most is in PDA land and under their control. They do not have to go by our requirements. If we have a prime design, then PDA would not be able to develop without looking at designations. West said this is a final step. Need to look at the whole and bring before the Town. Mr. Wood had questions regarding boundaries and how would someone know if they were in violation. He was concerned about being able to cut trees. West stated it would not restrict cutting or mowing if it doesn't impact soil. Can cut 50% over 20-year period. West said the goal it to protect habitat. There was a question of whether there was a "grandfather" provision. Hebert asked what the outcome of this Public Hearing would be. Morgan stated the Planning Board has three months to make a decision. Mr. Jack was concerned that this would take 1/3 of his property, how can the entire Town vote to decide the outcome. Ms. Upton wondered if this was something the town was undertaking, could the state come in at some point and overcome local designations. West said if the Town had no regulations it would be a problem. New mapping would mean less impact. There was further discussion regarding current ordinance and effect on property now. Frink felt the current wetland ordinance was more restrictive. West suggested that he conduct a field trip and map a specific property. Frink suggested this be done on Mazeau's proposal to look at what has already been done under current regulations and compare with proposed new prime wetlands. Iocovozzi made a motion to continue the hearing pending results from field trip. Hebert seconded, motion carried. Hearing will be held on Monday, November 22. Several members of the Public thanked West for the information he presented.

**Correspondence:** Morgan referenced letter from Guilford Transportation regarding proposed land use in Newington. Regal Cinemas called to clarify whether the Board was asking for a traffic study. After some discussion, Hebert moved and Cross seconded that a traffic study be required. Pare, Cross and Hebert and Hislop approved, Frink and Iocovozzi abstained. Motion carried.

**Adjournment:** Hebert moved, Lamson seconded that meeting be adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted.

Sandra W. Sweeney, Secretary