

Newmarket council approves easement on Neal Mill Road

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NEWMARKET— Town councilors recently approved a \$275,000 conservation easement for 40.5 acres on Neal Mill Road, including more than 1,200 feet of Piscassic River frontage.

The town will pay for the easement with a \$100,000 grant from the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership and \$175,000 from the Newmarket Public Water Supply Land Protection Fund. Local voters established the fund several years ago to protect water supply sources, including wells, aquifers and the Lamprey and Piscassic rivers. The conservation easement prevents the property from being commercially or residentially developed. The acreage is on four parcels owned by Jean Silverman and Cecil Schner. The frontage is on the Piscassic River as it enters Newmarket from Newfields. In addition to protecting drinking water sources, the easement protects floodplain forest, prime wetlands and upland forest, according to the local Open Space Commission, which recommended the easement.

Neal Mill Road, in a largely undeveloped part of town, offers outdoor recreation, including walking, jogging and mountain biking, the commission said earlier. Also at the Aug. 17 council meeting, the panel forwarded to next month's business meeting approval of a grant to connect, via a trail, two town-owned properties — the Packers Falls Road complex and the Loiselle conservation property. A \$12,500 NH Trails grant has been awarded to the town, which is providing \$4,800 of in-kind improvements as a grant match. The council wants to see the plan before approving the grant.

In other business, the council opted to leave in place the current ban on outside water use.