



# Town of Newcastle

[www.NewcastleMaine.us](http://www.NewcastleMaine.us)

Kevin L. Sutherland - Interim Town Manager

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FROM: Kevin L. Sutherland, Interim Town Manager  
TO: Newcastle Select Board  
CC: Town Staff  
DATE: September 25, 2023  
RE: Town Manager Report

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## **PumpkinFest**

PumpkinFest is just around the corner! In fact next weekend will be the Volunteer and Pro weigh ins. They are taking place on 9/30 and 10/1 respectively at Louis Doe Home Center here in Newcastle (a change from previous years) The parade will occur the following Saturday starting at Louis Doe and proceeding down Route 215 and then down Main Street into Damariscotta.

## **PFAS near Town owned Landfill**

Seven properties along Jones Woods Road were tested. 3 came back with no pfas or negligible amounts. 1 resident denied access and three others came back above acceptable levels.

Of those three, the State DEP had previously worked with one of the residents through a different program and has resolved the issue. However, we'll need to establish an agreement for future maintenance and testing of their system.

As for the other two properties, the town will need to begin providing bottled water by October 1st. Then we will need work to install filtration systems and establish agreements. Much of my focus next week will be contacting the residents and looking to find solutions.

I will also be working with the Maine Municipal Association to develop ways to prevent further housing development where the risk of contamination is high.

## **Village Partnership Initiative**

The joint RFP with the Maine DOT for pre-engineering work along Route 1B and Route 215 has been drafted and reviewed by state officials. While we are waiting on the contract agreement with the state, we've been authorized to put the RFP out for consideration (after a few small corrections). Because the Purchasing and Bid Ordinance is still out there, I am holding off on putting it out to bid until I have a chance to get some direction from the Board.

## **Comprehensive Plan**

Michael and I received feedback on the comprehensive plan from the state. We still do not have a clean bill of health. We're working to review and edit as required. Mostly, it's about pointing the reviewer as to where in the document certain state required language exists in Newcastle's document. If anything of substance has to be modified, we'll look to bring to the Select Board's attention on how to address at the meeting on October 23rd.

## **Historic Preservation Ordinance**

The Planning Board met last week and held a public hearing on the proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance. They have made a recommendation to move it forward for the Select Board's consideration. We'll look to have it on the agenda for the October 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting as a New Business discussion item.

## **Broadband**

The Committee met with Tidewater a few weeks ago now. I am still waiting to hear back from Tidewater as to when they have a contract in place to start in on adding service. The contract for the previous round would provide access to about 76 underserved or unserved residents of Newcastle.

## **Joint Workshop with Damariscotta Select Board**

We discussed this potential meeting at our September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Damariscotta Select Board will join us in the Newcastle Community Room on Monday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 6pm for a presentation from the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission on the Housing Needs Assessment and next steps as well as a facilitated discussion on joint town priorities and opportunities to work together. I should have a survey out in the next few weeks to provide input and context for that discussion, but will formally ask the Chair to call a special meeting.

## **Letter of Support – Town of Damariscotta**

The Town of Damariscotta (Town) and Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (CRCT) are looking to partner to construct over 3,500' sidewalk, over 5,000' of trails, and the completion of the pedestrian improvements on Hodgdon St. They believe this project will serve as a great community connector and are looking for letters of support for a grant proposal to close the funding gap.

The project along Church St has been highlighted in previous plans/studies and advocated for by many. Hodgdon St improvements are necessary given its current condition and they are excited to complete the first Advisory Lane in town that will provide safer pedestrian use. CRCT has over 2 miles of trails at their Great Salt Bay Farm on Belvedere Rd that would be connected to the downtown community if this project is completed. The trail would serve multiple uses and be available for cyclists as well to cross under Rt 1 at the Great Salt Bay overpass.

This grant opportunity is offered through the US Department of Transportation and is called the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program. Its main goal is to support projects that advance community-centered connection transportation projects, with a priority for projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, by improving access to daily needs such as jobs, education, health care, food, nature and recreation; fostering equitable development and restoration; and reconnecting communities by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating highways or other transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, including to mobility, access, or economic development. Though there is additional design and planning to do prior to any construction, we feel as though we are at a good point in the project timeline to solicit funding to help make this a reality.

Attached is the letter of support we've put together to show our support for their grant effort and a map of the trail network they're trying to get funded. If you have any glaring concerns, please let me know! I'd like to send along tomorrow. (Grant is due at the end of the week).



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September 26, 2023

Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Letter of Support for 2023 RCN Grant Program: Damariscotta, Maine

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I write to you today to offer the Town of Newcastle's full support in the Town of Damariscotta's (Town) Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) grant application. The Town's project and partnership with Coastal Rivers Conservation Trust (CRCT) to create over one and a half miles of safe, accessible sidewalks/trails will enhance our community and make valuable connections between residents and the services critical to our community.

As a neighbor and sister community, there are a lot of synergies between our two towns. Residents from both communities are able to dine, shop, recreate, and access many services that are available in downtown Damariscotta. As a tourist destination and home to a growing number of retirees, our board is happy to have an existing sidewalk network in our community, but are even happier to know that the network will be expanded.

Newcastle also boasts a train stop that is set to resume regular service along the midcoast next year. Multiple excursion trips have run in 2023 with more to come this fall which make the improvements that Damariscotta is seeking your support of even more exciting. This stop will provide residents with access to Brunswick and Portland, ME as well as connections to Boston.

Finally, Newcastle is home to Lincoln Academy, a Town Academy that serves as the area's high school. From our town office, we see many of their students walking into town to grab a snack or to walk into Damariscotta. This project will provide safe access to CRCT's science programs, CLC YMCA after school programming and recreation complex, as well as the school's cross country trail system located on CRCT's Belvedere Rd property.

This project will support and create socio-economic, recreational, and community connections that will enhance our vibrant community. Thank you for your time and effort as you review Damariscotta's application. I hope you'll find the project meets your expectations as much as I know it will enhance our communities.

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Sutherland  
Interim Town Manager, Newcastle

# DAMARISCOTTA RCN 2023

