

# Norwich Conservation Commission

## Draft Minutes for May 17, 2022

**Members Present:** Craig Layne (chair), Alex Gottlieb, David Hubbard, Suzanne Leiter, Charlotte Tagupa, Cody Williams

**Guests:** None

The meeting convened at 7:15pm.

### **Public Comment**

Williams asked for public comments but there were none.

### **Woods Walk**

Leiter discussed the upcoming woods walk scheduled for June 11 at 2p (with rain date of June 12). The walk will be led by Tii McLane, who has significant familiarity with the Woody Adams parcel. The discussion will center on forest ecology and health. Attendees will park and meet at the Gile Mountain trailhead with a plan to hike along the trail then cut down to the Woody Adams parcel and return along the power line cut. The walk has been announced via the local list serve and some discussion was had about other sources of getting word out. The goal will be good turnout without being so large to make discussion difficult. A sign up form has been created on the Conservation Commission website: <https://norwichconservation.org/events/2022/06/11/woods-walk>

### **No Mow May**

Lots of general attention and awareness around this topic (VPR, the Valley News, national outlets etc). Some wonderful un-mowed lawns in bloom around town. Convenient alignment with the energy committee's electric lawnmower push. Leiter has prepared two types of yard signs and has given out 15 or so of them. Members of the public have expressed some concern over increases in ticks due to reduced mowing; Leiter has suggested mowing common paths through the lawn as a way to keep areas of travel clearer of ticks. Another concern expressed by the public has been reduced business for local lawn care companies, though the likely need for multiple passes in June after not mowing in May will likely negate some of this effect.

Hubbard mentioned an overall goal of mowing less area, essentially shrinking the area considered "lawn". Given the public interest in native gardens and converting lawn to meadow a further promotion for resources on native wildflowers will follow. If we continue next year, we will build on this momentum.

### **Nature Area Updates**

Layne, Leiter, and Andrews watered and planted on the berm surrounding the vernal pool within the Milt Frye Nature Area. Andrews is continuing to work her way around the meadow removing invasives and is now past the wagon. No kestrels have been spotted in the boxes yet.

### **Other Commissions, Committees, Boards, and Departments Updates**

No notable updates.

### **Social Media Outreach**

Content for no mow may and the forest walk have not yet been posted. Discussion around featuring common species found in un-mowed yards throughout the month during next year's no mow may. A goal of posting photos to promote events such as the vernal pool and woods walk as well as follow up posts with photos from during the event both on social media and the website. Discussion was had around starting to feature an invasive of the week or month starting with garlic mustard.

### **Affordable Housing**

Hubbard brought up the May 11 Selectboard meeting. The affordable housing committee presented potential affordable housing locations. One being along the right hand side of the crooked mile on a town owned parcel, another being within the fire district for which the town owns development rights in exchange for exempting the parcels from tax. The development rights make no mention of affordable housing and have limitations on development within the fire district lands. Some discussion was had about locations that might better align with the town plan, not be within large forest blocks, and would have better access directly to town center. No specific action to take just bringing awareness.

### **Vacant Committee Seat**

With her graduation, Tagupa will be stepping down in July. She has reached out to the school environmental club (as Sage had done before her), there are three possibly interested individuals who may attend future meeting.

### **Approval of April Minutes**

Layne moved, Leiter seconded, the motion passed unanimously (with Hubbard and Williams abstaining).

### **Huntley Riparian Planting**

The commission members present walked and discussed the riparian plantings recently completed by Redstart. Bark mulch has been completed along the Huntley side of the brook. A future work date will be organized to mulch the plantings on the opposite side of the brook.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Minutes compiled by Cody Williams.