

Draft Minutes of Norwich Conservation Commission Meeting of May 19, 2020

The meeting was conducted by Zoom

Present: Craig Layne, David Hubbard, Cody Williams, Lynnwood Andrews, Cheryl Asa, Chris Rimmer, Sage McGinley-Smith

Absent: Norman Miller

Public Present: Peg Merrens, Brie Swenson

Agenda approved as is by general consent.

There were no public comments.

Mary Sellmann has left the commission. We will miss her insightful comments and her hard work. Mary organized and oversaw the acquisition and installation of the Conservation Commission display case at the post office. She worked on displays for the Post office case, and she wrote several Norwich Times articles. Thank you to Mary from all the members of the Commission.

Craig noted that there remains an opening on the commission and encouraged members to reach out to individuals who may be interested in applying through the town website. Additional list-serve advertising of the position was discussed.

Woody Adams Conservation Forest - Craig reported there was very little comment about the project at the Select Board meeting. The members of the Select Board seemed generally in favor of the project. The actual vote will be held at their next meeting. The decision about the VHCB grant should come in June. The plan is to fund raise following hearing about the grant. In evaluating the strength of the grant application, Peg Merrens noted that the agreement to commit \$130,000 from the Conservation Trust fund was a strong show of public support for the project. Peg also reported that the UVLT is working on how to handle sharing a list of potential donors for the project and assessing the effectiveness of a town-wide mailing. Craig commented on the need to fund raise after the project in order to replenish the Trust fund for future conservation easements.

Craig held meetings with the neighbors to the Woody Adams Conservation Forest. He reported that they expressed concerns about traffic and parking on Turnpike Rd and motor vehicle use on the logging road. They requested that the commission prepare a plan to address these concerns. The advisability to working on a comprehensive management plan for the forest was discussed. Peg Merrens stated that VHCB likes to have a plan in place before closing. Such plans generally cover recreation, forestry, education, and research to cover a 5-10 year period organized into chapters and including maps. Peg will send examples for the commission to review. David Hubbard asked about the time frame for developing the plan. Vernal pools on the property need to be confirmed. Peg stated she had GPS coordinates for the vernal pools she saw when hiking the property 2 weeks ago.

Lynnwood Andrews reported on the Milt Frye Habitat Restoration project - Notifications and permissions were secured from the Trajman's who own land on and adjacent to the work area and from the UVLT, which holds a conservation easement on the Milt Frye Nature Area. Work has begun removing invasive plants by commission members and Lindsay Putnam. Deer fencing has been installed on part of the area protecting approximately 46 tree saplings (*Prunus serotina* and *Prunus virginiana*) and shrubs (*Corylus Americana*, *Aronia melanocarpa*, *Amelanchier canadense*). *Cephalanthus occidentalis* was planted near the stream and will be treated with Liquid Fence to deter deer browse. A \$1000 grant application was submitted to the Norwich Women's Club for deer fencing and trees and shrubs for a spring 2021 planting. Invasive removal work will continue over the summer in preparation. Brie advised that before opening up removal work for public participation, Herb Durfee should be consulted.

Milt Frye Nature Area Vernal Pool Project - Craig reported that he and Lindsay Putnam have some potential sites chosen for constructing a vernal pool. The pool will need to be lined. Craig consulted with Jason Berard from the UVLT who stated that the management plan would need to be amended, but he did not foresee any difficulties with that. Peg Merrens noted that a vernal pool had been constructed on another UVLT property in Lebanon. It was designed by Jim Kennedy.

Phragmites Management – David Hubbard talked with Herb Durfee. Herb would like another quote in addition to the one from Redstart. David has approached Polatin Services for a quote for both the Beaver Meadow and Ompompanoosuc sites.

Cory requested material for the website.

Craig stated that election to offices would take place at the June meeting.

David would like to have an update from Ron Rhodes on the Charles Brown Brook Dam Removal Project.

Minutes taken by L. Andrews