

Norwich Conservation Commission Minutes: 17 September 2024

Members present: Lynnwood Andrews, Craig Layne, Peg Merrens, Alex Gottlieb

On Zoom: Cody Williams

Member of the public: Gerry Plummer

No public comment

No additional agenda items

NHS community resource day – Discussion of materials to present at the fair on September 21 from 1-3PM at the Norwich Historical Society: Banners with NCC, Trails and MFNA committee names, hand-outs, descriptions of projects to be placed on table easels. Gerry Plummer described a Trails committee video display on a laptop, that could be used and may have some t-shirts for sale. Cody will create sign-up sheet for people interested in NCC work. Children's activities – Doug Hardy may bring ash "cookies," drawing materials. Craig will ask for 2 tables. No need for electricity.

Milt Frye Nature Area – Lynnwood summarized the MFNA subcommittee meeting. Projects discussed were the biodiversity project. This includes planting wildflowers in the field and adjacent woods, and protecting tree saplings from deer in the woods. Invasives needing professional work include follow-up of the chervil work from this year as well as the dense stand of buckthorn in the southeastern section of the field. Craig will contact Redstart about the buckthorn and whether it should be cut this year during mowing. Oriental bittersweet is also becoming a problem in the woods.

Creating a long-term mitigation solution to chervil encroaching from Main St was discussed. Lynnwood would like to experiment with creating a dense hemlock canopy, starting with a small planting on each side of the stream to see if hemlock will thrive there.

Trails Committee – Cody reported 2 successful work days on Bradley Hills trail to improve trail and reduce erosion potential.

Future projects – one more Bradley hill day, Will see how it works in spring and make additional repairs, if needed.

Reroute on lower Ballard trail – more benching and repair work

One more work day TBD. Maybe on Gile trail to prepare for crowds

Have Selectboard-approved subcommittee now.

New member, John McCormick, would like to join. Craig will ask Brennan on how to have him officially appointed.

Peg asked about bottom of Bradley Hill trail at connection with Ladeau Rd. She expressed concern that there is now an area of hard pack wide enough to allow for a car. Trails committee will examine the situation at work day on Sunday.

Emerald Ash Borer

Chris Rimmer reported that another infested tree fell came down in road on Hopson. It didn't hit wires, but underscores the accelerating problem of dead trees falling on roads. Matt Hall, Chris Rimmer and Doug Hardy decided to modify inventory work in short-term to identifying

most high risk trees only. Chris, Doug and Matt have started marking trees, 17 today. Red and blue extreme risk, just red at high risk. The committee will recommend to town that extreme risk trees should come down this fall. Expect some concern about who will do work. Matt will deputize Chris and Doug as tree wardens to mark trees. Doug will work with town to make this official. Expect to identify 40-50 extreme risk trees for this year. Chris wants another EAB subcommittee meeting next week to elect chair and get plan of action finalized. Chris is concerned action plan is too long and detailed for this year. Would like to create an executive summary version. It would be ideal to present both detailed plan and executive summary. The inventory work will end in next 2 weeks as leaves fall and crown damage can no longer be assessed. Have inventoried about 600 trees so far. Peg asked about grants available for tree removal. Chris said Norwich too wealthy to qualify for grants. We do qualify for replanting money. Concern was expressed about how town will fund tree cutting. Matt had 3 businesses come to look at cutting 30 trees. About \$30,000 was estimated. Craig asked if ballot initiative to fund tree removal should be considered. Craig, Lynnwood and Chris meet on zoom Wednesday morning with Jonathon Rosenthal to learn about the Lingering ash program.

Administrative concerns - Craig warned committees and subcommittees still required to post paper copies of agendas 3 days before meeting at PO and Tracey Hall kiosk and basement. Minutes are approved by subcommittee at next meeting.

Conservation conference - Peg described Sowing Seeds Conservation conference Oct 7th In Randolph. The conference focuses on resilience, but covers a wide range of other topics as well. Peg will look into group rate if more than 2 people wish to attend. She can carpool.

Minutes - Lynnwood moved approval of Aug 20, 2024 minutes. Chris seconded. 5 yes, Cody politely abstained because he was not at meeting. Minutes approved.

Submitted by Lynnwood Andrews