

NORWICH CONSERVATION COMMISSION ZOOM MEETING DRAFT MINUTES: 16 November 2021

Members Present: Craig Layne (chair), Lynnwood Andrews (Zoom), Cheryl Asa (Zoom), David Hubbard, Suzanne Leiter, Chris Rimmer, and Charlotte Tagupa (Zoom), Cody Williams (Zoom)

Guests: Lindsay Putnam (Zoom), Brie Swensen

Meeting convened at 7:05PM

Craig asked for any public comments, but there were none

Brie Swensen suggested the NCC consider participating in the Norwich Historical Society's "Discover Norwich" program this winter (January and February). Discussion of potential topics included local birding opportunities, information about identifying and eliminating invasive plants, and landscaping with native plants. Members will continue to consider topics to discuss at the December meeting.

Craig reminded members about Town protocols for participation of volunteers in NCC or Trails Committee activities. Brie will send volunteer waivers and forms to Craig for distribution to members. The group also reviewed protocols for purchases and reimbursements.

Lynnwood and Cheri suggested collaborating with the Norwich Bookstore and the Library for presentations to the community. Lynnwood gave an example of Doug Tallamy's new book, *The Nature of Oaks*, as a possible choice. Cheri mentioned the Library's offer to co-host Zoom webinars, which could be on any topic NCC proposed.

Cheri and Lindsay Putnam gave an update of the NCC joint project with MCS third-graders on living safely with bears. The second set of models created by the students is on display in the Library now. They also suggested some possible topics for future projects. The most appropriate topic might be vernal pools, highlighting the new pool created in the Milt Frye Nature Area, where students have already helped, e.g., gathering leaves for the pool to build organic material.

The topic of vernal pools could be a theme for a variety of activities, including a guided nature walk for the public to an area vernal pool, a Norwich Times article, a Post Office display, and a speaker from the Vermont Center for Ecostudies who works on vernal pool monitoring, as well as an MCS student project. Cheri will follow up with VCE.

Craig proposed that NCC re-join the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions, since our membership had lapsed. Craig moved that we re-join, Cheri seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Lynnwood gave an update on the Milt Frye Nature Area work. The vernal pool has been dug and is filling in with water. Lynnwood will arrange to plant wildflower seeds on the bare dirt berm around the pool. Craig moved to approve the purchase of the wildflower seeds, David seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Lynnwood proposed using the \$600 Women's Club grant to purchase trees and shrubs to plant around the pool to provide shade. David moved to authorize the purchase, Craig seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Lynnwood said that the two kestrel boxes need support poles. There also was discussion about erecting bat houses that might either be purchased or built as a student or Eagle Scout project. Lynnwood asked if someone on the Trails Committee might bring a chainsaw to take down some larger diameter buckthorn trees that still need to be removed. David will ask.

David gave an update for the Trails Committee. There was further discussion about which trails that cross the AT should be authorized by the Forest Service to remain in place. The NTC's letter to the Forest Service endorsed two of the three trails in question, but reserved judgement on the third to allow further comment. Discussions will continue at the December meeting. Cody reported that this past Sunday (Nov 14) there was a workday for water bar cleaning on the Gile Mountain trail.

David moved to approve the October minutes, Chris seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20PM.

Minutes compiled by Cheryl Asa