

NORWICH CONSERVATION COMMISSION ZOOM MEETING DRAFT MINUTES: 15 February 2022

Members Present: Craig Layne (chair), Cheryl Asa, David Hubbard, Suzanne Leiter, Chris Rimmer

Guests: Brie Swenson

Meeting convened at 7:03PM

Craig asked for any public comments, but there were none.

Chris gave an update on purchase and installation of a kestrel nest box in the Milt Frye Nature Area. The box has been purchased, but he's investigating options for a suitable pole that's needed for mounting. Plans are to place it in the brushy area along the upper edge of the meadow.

Craig reported on the last Trails Committee meeting. Roger Arnold, Select Board chair, attended to discuss increased interaction and coordination between the Committee/Volunteers and town staff. The Trails Committee is preparing a summary of trails in Norwich that will be presented to the Select Board.

Cheryl gave an update on plans for the vernal pools presentation by Kevin Tolan of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, scheduled for March 8 and hosted by the Norwich Public Library. Roger Arnold, Library outreach coordinator, has prepared an announcement for the Library's website and will post it on the town listserv. Cheryl will also place hard copies of the announcement in the Post Office and other locations around town. Chris offered to look into posting it on the VCE website.

Craig asked whether the NCC should co-sponsor presentations that the Norwich and Thetford Energy Commissions are organizing. Current topics being discussed include conversion of lawn to meadow, electric landscape maintenance equipment, pollinator hands-on work, and forest carbon management. It was agreed that this would be a good partnership.

Craig led a discussion about fund-raising that relates to forest connectivity for wildlife and for carbon storage. Suzanne suggested partnering with UVLT and using their maps of conserved land to look for connected parcels. UVLT is collecting data on how wildlife are using conserved land, which could document the importance of connectivity of parcels. Craig also suggested the Linking Lands Alliance could be a resource.

Craig asked that each NCC member monitor the minutes of Norwich commissions, boards and committees whose activities might be relevant to NCC. It was agreed this was an important effort to keep us informed. Members present stated their choices; Craig will communicate with those not present about the remaining groups that should be monitored.

Craig reminded members that when communicating with anyone about issues discussed in NCC meetings, they need to be explicit about whether they are expressing their individual opinions or reflecting advice of the Commission.

There was some follow-up discussion about the proposed solar array project that had been brought before the Commission at our last meeting. There was general agreement that the NCC doesn't have enough information to make any advisory recommendation at this time.

Chris moved to approve the January 2022 minutes, Suzanne seconded, motion passed with one abstention.

The meeting adjourned at 7:53PM

Minutes compiled by Cheryl Asa