

Norwich Conservation Commission Draft Minutes

February 18, 2020

Present: Craig Layne, Norman Miller, David Hubbard, Mary Sellmann, Chris Rimmer, Cody Williams, Lynnwood Andrews

Absent: Cheryl Asa

Guest: Rod Francis

Commenced 7:05 pm

Forest block land conservation project discussed. Craig and Peg Merrens from UVLT recently visited the site. Next steps – acquiring grant funding, local fundraising, and apprising Select Board. Craig will setup with the Town Manager a meeting with the Select Board.

Wetlands protections discussed. Who is the final arbiter of what is a wetland? Rod explained that the VTANR officials make that determination. Every zoning classification follows the same rules regarding wetland protection and the presence of plant and animal life “of significance.” Norm asked if riparian areas are considered wetlands? Rod stated that it depended on the topography. Some streamside areas could include wetlands such as vernal pools, but others might be rock faces that would not be considered a wetland. Norwich has no Class 1 wetlands. It is not the case that only a large tract would trigger a wetland delineation. It could be triggered by a driveway application. New Hampshire and Massachusetts have offset programs for encroaching on wetlands, but Vermont does not have such a provision. Cody asked about the intent of mixed-use zoning. A mixed-use development plan for Norwich strives to protect forest blocks while allowing for continued development in areas that already have amenities such as public transportation and that are close to the town center. How the absence of water and sewer will continue to constrain development in Norwich was also discussed. Mary Sellmann raised the possibility of approaching an engineer about getting more information on the wetlands along Rt 5 South. Also, there is a teacher at Hanover High School who might be asked if students could do a project researching the Rt 5 South wetlands.

Roadside ash inventory discussed. Weekends through March are when David Hobson could be available to help. Craig will send out an e-mail to see who can come. The procedure used is to drive to set points, count all the ash in the right-of-way, repeat along one side of the road, and then down the other side of the road.

Craig reported that the letter concerning the call for CT river dam relicensing conditions was approved by the Select Board.

Members were encouraged to think about people who might want to fill the vacant position on the commission.

David Hubbard reported on the efforts by the Trails Committee to get funds to rebuild the Charles Brown Brook bridge. The committee is working on securing a grant. The cost of the bridge is increased because it will be ADA compliant.

January minutes moved for approval by Norman Miller and seconded by Mary Sellmann. Approved unanimously.

Lynnwood suggested collaborating with the bookstore and garden club on bringing Doug Tallamy for a talk centered on his new book.

Adjourned 8:25 pm

Minutes taken by Lynnwood Andrews