

NORWICH CONSERVATION COMMISSION ZOOM MEETING DRAFT MINUTES: 16 February 2021

Members present: Craig Layne (chair), Lynnwood Andrews, Cheryl Asa, Courtney Dragiff, David Hubbard, Sage McGinley-Smith, Norman Miller, Cody Williams

Guest: Brie Swenson

Meeting convened at 7:10 PM

Craig asked for comments from the public, but no members of the public were present.

Craig updated progress raising funds for purchase of the Woody Adams property, which is now only \$10,000 short of the goal. Letters were mailed to Norwich residents explaining the proposed purchase and offering the opportunity to contribute. Donations are also still being accepted through the UVLT website.

Brie said she was asked by a trail user whether any changes were being considered for the Woody Adams property that would affect the Blue Ribbon Trail. Craig assured her that no such changes are planned.

Craig has spoken with the owner of the property abutting the Milt Frye Nature Area about proposed changes to its management plan, such as the mowing schedule. Lynnwood submitted a list of wildflower seeds, shrubs and trees she ordered for the upcoming season. Some of the seeds have already been sown, but the rest will be planted in spring when appropriate. After consulting with local farmers about the best type, she will buy black plastic sheeting to cover buckthorn stumps to prevent regrowth, as part of the effort to remove invasive plants on the property.

Cody gave an update from the Trails Committee. They are discussing an event for spring to commemorate the passing of Liz Russell, who was a founding member and benefactor of the Trails Committee. Several Committee members presented a successful webinar on Winter Hiking and Trails, as part of the Norwich Historical Society's Discovering Norwich series. They have some funds remaining that can be used for work still needed along various trails and for scoping Gile Mountain parking lot expansion. A group from the Trails Committee is developing signage standards for kiosks, parking, and trail markers.

Craig asked Cody if our NCC agendas and minutes are posted on our website, as well as on the town website. Cody confirmed that they are.

David gave an update on plans by the USDA to deploy four trail cameras on Norwich Fire District land as part of their survey around the state of possible presence of feral swine. They will share photos of other notable wildlife species.

There was a discussion of possible educational programs the NCC might organize that could be presented using Zoom, since there are still restrictions on in-person gatherings. In addition to considering potential speakers, Norm suggested producing a video of NCC and NTC activities. Sage proposed expanding public outreach through social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, in addition to our website. In particular, Instagram would be more likely to reach a younger audience, both to inform them about conservation in and around Norwich and to invite them to participate in NCC

projects, such as invasive plant removal. Further discussion of these possibilities is planned for the next NCC meeting in March.

Norm gave an update of his efforts to acquire and conserve the McLain property, located at the confluence of Blood and New Boston Brooks, by establishing a nature area. He has explored several options, but to date he hasn't obtained sufficient financial commitment.

Norm moved to approve the January 2021 minutes, David seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:19PM.

Minutes compiled by Cheryl Asa