

NORWICH CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING DRAFT MINUTES: 19 December 2023

Members Present: Craig Layne (Chair), Lynnwood Andrews, Cheryl Asa, Alex Gottlieb, Suzanne Leiter, Lindsay Putnam, Chris Rimmer, Cody Williams

Guests: None

Meeting convened at 7: 05PM

Approve Agenda: Three topics were added to the agenda. Lindsay reported that the Norwich Public Library contacted her about another tree project, in a collaboration with the Historical Society, for the NCC to consider; Cheryl asked that an update be added about signage for the deer exclosures; and Lynnwood mentioned a program on Forest Health and Biodiversity that could be important for NCC to learn more about.

Public Comments: No members of the public were present

Post Office Display: Suzanne has posted information, including a map, about the revision in Plant Hardiness Zones needed due to warming temperatures.

Educational Presentation: There was a discussion of possible topics and speakers for 2024. There was support for a presentation on bats, that could complement the NCC bat house installation project. Possible speakers include the state bat biologist or people from the Bat Center. Another focus could be on the effects of deer overpopulation on forest regeneration, which could highlight the progression of vegetation changes inside and outside deer exclosures. Efforts to address deer overpopulation could also include encouraging landowners not to post their property to prevent hunting.

Climate Club for Kids: Craig reported on the Climate Club for Kids that has been created by 5th graders at MCS. They're interested in having someone from the NCC come speak to them. Suggestions included also recruiting Trails Committee members and to propose that Club members help remove invasive plants in the Milt Frye Nature Area.

Budget Updates: Craig reported that, although the fiscal year is half over, less than half the allocated funds have been spent to date.

Milton Frye Nature Area Committee: Lynnwood reported that there hasn't been much activity on projects recently, due to the weather. There was some discussion of perhaps planting some acorns inside and outside the deer enclosure there to see if they would germinate and provide a demonstration of growth when protected from vs exposed to deer. Lindsay suggested that we might also consider transplanting maple seedlings in the same way.

A question was raised about whether the NCC proposal to officially change the name to the Milton Frye Nature Area had been approved by the Selectboard. Chris will submit the letter again and attend the meeting to answer any questions.

Trails Committee: There were no updates from the last meeting, but questions arose about the condition of the Ballard Trail following the recent heavy rain. Trails Committee members will be checking on it and recommend any work that is needed.

Updates from Public Forums, Meetings, and Minutes: Lindsay reported from the Rec Council that neither Parcel 5 nor Brookmead ski trails will be groomed this winter. The grooming equipment can't fit onto the Brookmead trail and there weren't sufficient funds to cover Parcel 5 grooming. However, Huntley Meadow ski trails will be groomed.

Approval of October Minutes: Cody moved to approve, Chris seconded, and the motion passed; Suzanne abstained.

The meeting ended at 8:12 PM

Minutes compiled by Cheryl Asa