

Norwich Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes November 18, 2025

Attendees: Craig Layne (Chair), Lynnwood Andrews (VC), Peg Merrens (Treasurer), Chris Rimmer, Alex Gottlieb, Cody Williams, Lindsay Putnam

Agenda items:

1. **Energy Planning Request:** The Planning Commission is forming a subcommittee to be an “enhanced energy planning” group. They request members from the Conservation Commission and the Energy Commission. Andy Torkelson and Lynnwood volunteered to represent NCC.
2. **Outreach:** Listserve: Lynnwood is planning another listserve post. She proposed the topic of outdoor night lighting and its effect on wildlife species, particularly insects.

Post Office display: Lindsay has put up a new post office display titled, “What a Hunter Sees”. It includes information about the importance of hunting for woodland management and the State program on how to reach out to hunters if you would like to invite them to hunt on your land.

3. **Milton Frye Nature Area:** Lynnwood has received her native seed order for the next section of prepared ground. She has 1/3 of the area ready for seeding. Lynwood will be reimbursed for \$131.50 and \$29.20 for seeding project, billed under Milt Frye account.

Meadow was mowed by the Town, but not entirely. Downhill of the kestrel box was not mowed.

There was discussion of bringing in the bird nest boxes for maintenance and to get them out of the weather for the winter. It was suggested that maintenance could be a winter project. The plan to build shelving in the Rec Dept Ice Rink shed where we have been granted some space for storage was discussed. The bird boxes could be stored on the shelves. (Amphibian team supplies, and invasive tools are already stored here.) Craig moves to spend up to \$200 for shelving; Alex seconded the motion. Expenses will be billed under “Project Restoration”. Motion passed. Lynwood will get back to us about the project of pulling the birdboxes out of the meadow and when that could happen.

Redstart Forestry might come this fiscal year to work on buckthorn mitigation, but this is not definitive as of yet.

4. **Educational Beehive:** Lynnwood has spoken with an anonymous person who would like to financially support a beehive project in town. This person recommends a beekeeper who

would like to maintain a hive. The Melendy Parcel location was proposed. Craig will ask the Town Manager about this location. Lindsay will ask Willing Hands, who currently uses it for agriculture. Competition with native bees was discussed. The thought was that a small operation wouldn't be too much competition. If the Melendy is not acceptable, Peg suggests locating it in the garden area at Brookmead via collaboration with the Upper Valley Land Trust (Cassie).

5. **Christmas Tree Chipping Project:** Andy Scherr of the Solid Waste Management Committee asked if NCC would like to collaborate on recycling Christmas trees. Lynnwood proposes a project to collect the trees, chip them, and get the chips to the Milt Frye meadow for Lynnwood's native plant restoration projects. Various possible ways of doing this were discussed. Craig is going to reach out to TM about creating a space at the Transfer Station where people could drop off their trees to be later chipped in the spring, or brought to the meadow in the spring and chipped there.

6. **Trails Report:** Nov 16 trail work project on Gile: Cleaned out drainage ditches so spring runoff could happen appropriately. 6 people attended from the Trails Committee. Cody cleared branches away from the Gile tower which were growing very close from the surrounding trees. At the Trails meeting, projects for 2026 were discussed: 1. Protective coating on Tower treads. 2. Schmidt Bog. Trails is waiting to see what the proposed management plan says about the Bog. 3. Replace the bridge crossing from St Barnabus to the Nature Area. 4. The stone staircase on Ballard Trail has an erosion issue in one section that is affecting the structural integrity of the stairs. They are hoping to hire Hermit Woods Trailbuilders, from Sharon. \$2500 estimate. A grants could be written for this, but all grants require special Selectboard approval, or may not be allowed. The gift policy needs to be clarified before any decision is made in terms of where the funding will come from.

7. **Emerald Ash Borer:** Chris reported that Doug, Steve Long, Peg and Chris have been busy. They created a draft of RFP and a land owner approval document which they submitted to TM. However, in the discussion with TM, issues emerged: a)winter removal is not possible due to snowplowing. b)The Committee was hoping have dangerous trees slightly out of the Town ROW taken down because they would come ultimately down on the road. This is considered to be problematic in terms of town vs landowner responsibility.

Some blue x'd trees are determined to be out of Town ROW. These will have to be remarked somehow. Marking of high priority hazard trees is completed with the possible exception of Beaver Meadow road.

Summary: "moving along steadfastly". Expect to need more money in next year's fiscal budget and might need another warrant article. Hoping to show people some progress, but the

timeline won't allow for that. 560+ priority trees have been marked. Possible that \$110,000 which has been approved might be enough for these trees, but Chris considers that unlikely. Committee suggests starting removal from the town center, in terms of prioritization. A lot of the trees are in the utility corridor, but not within 10 feet of the wires (the designated distance for GMP responsibility). GMP has not indicated they are planning to do any preemptive removal.

8.Approval of October minutes: Craig moved to approve; Cody seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10.