

March 17, 2026; 7:00 PM; Norwich Historical Society

Norwich Conservation Commission DRAFT March Minutes

Attending: Craig Layne, Peg Merrens, Chris Rimmer, Andy Torkelson, Lynnwood Andrews, Lindsay Putnam

1. Earth Day Film update: Caterpillar Lab film. "The Extraordinary Caterpillar". 6:00 PM, April 22, at the Nugget. Lindsay is helping organize (with Hanover Garden Club). Chris volunteered to be at the Q and A session afterwards to speak about birds in the context of gardening. Craig moved to increase our contribution to \$250; Chris seconded.
2. Vernal Pools:
 - a. Walk with Vt Land Trust: Brookmead April 11; back-up on April 18.
 - b. Big Night Walk: We would organize people to help with road crossings, using the equipment we purchased (vests, headlamps, traffic cones, buckets, sandwich boards, gloves). Lindsay will advertise for people who are interested via listserve and post office display. "Conservation Commission may have a gathering on the first warm rainy night". We would meet at Park/Ride and go to 2 sites: Union Village height of land pond and New Boston/Norford Lake intersection.
 - c. Lindsay will post on listserve asking people to try to avoid driving on first warm rainy night and if driving, to go slow to avoid herps crossing the road.
 - d. Craig will contact Police Dept.
 - e. Craig will make plywood inserts for the sandwich boards to go along the roadside.
3. Regional Conservation Commissions: Andy and Lynnwood went to regional Conservation Commission gathering in Thetford. Primarily discussed trails and education projects. Many towns reported struggles with funding for major projects, such as EAB mitigation and invasive species removal.
4. Road salt usage discussion: Andy spoke to TM about reducing salt usage and found him to be interested and already aware of Best Practices. State of VT is moving towards legislation to reduce usage, implement brine technology, etc. Our goal now is to keep reaching out and keep educating the community about the adverse environmental impacts of road salt and the ways we can avoid using more than necessary for safety.
5. Enhanced Energy Committee: Andy and Lynnwood are representing NCC on Enhanced Energy Committee (EEC) (a subcommittee of the Energy Committee). Lynnwood is working on developing suggestions for things that should be changed or updated in the energy chapter of the Town Plan (as tasked by the EEC.) Several examples of her comprehensive suggestions: updating the biomass section of the document; encouraging cleanest combustion systems possible; defining aesthetic parameters of solar siting decisions so that CO2 reduction gets appropriate priority; install heavy duty EV chargers at Town facilities.
6. Milt Frye Nature Area: Lynnwood is working on how to best smother large sections of the Milt Frye Meadow non-native grasses in order to replant with native flowers and grasses. Free wood chips are not available. We discussed using sheets of plywood on top of black plastic to weight down and smother the (non-native) grasses. She will purchase a few sheets of plywood and experiment with the effectiveness of this method.

7. Emerald Ash Borer Committee: \$60,000 request approved by voters. RFP's have been posted on the Town website, and EABMS members will additionally send it to individual tree service companies. Town Manager Brennan Duffy will serve as Project Manager. He and other Town officials will select the contractor(s) for roadside ash removals, with input from EABMS members. Work is planned to begin along the 4 main town roads (Union Village, New Boston, Beaver Meadow, Hopson-Elm) by mid-May and will be complete by Oct. 1. EABMS has received nearly all of the ~75 forms which were mailed to landowners seeking acknowledgement that hazard trees in the Town ROW on their property will be removed and asking their preference for keeping or removing downed wood. Additional roads will be mapped this summer by the EABMS, in hopes that removal of other hazardous trees in the Town ROW can be conducted during 2027.
8. Nominations of New Officers: Chair: Chris nominated Lynnwood, Peg seconded. Vice-Chair: Chris nominated Andy; Lindsay seconded. Peg will continue as Treasurer; Lindsay will continue as Secretary.
9. February Minutes: Craig moves approval; Chris seconds. Motion passed to approve last month's Minutes.
10. Meeting adjourned at 9:15.

Submitted,
Lindsay Putnam