

**Conservation Commission, Town of Norfolk, P.O. Box 552, Norfolk, Connecticut 06058
Regular Monthly Meeting, Monday, June 13, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom**

Meeting called to order at 6:05 p.m.

In attendance: John Anderson, Martha Klein, Nash Pradhan, Sam Williams.

Review and approve minutes from last meeting or meetings: Motion made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve May 9 meeting minutes. In addition, three motions were made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve minutes of three special meetings: May 3, May 23 and June 7.

Budget and Expenses: Request from First Selectman for funds from NCC budget to replant roadside at North Colebrook Road and Doolittle Drive subsequent to road repair. The town DPW had previously applied "hydroseed", a combination of seed and mulch, to the roadside along North Colebrook Road from above Benedict Pond to the Colebrook line, which was partially successful. First Selectman Matt Riiska suggested using a Wildlife/Conservation seed mix from New England Wetland Plants.

John Anderson is concerned about the plant mix: there are many species that are non-native to our region. Non-native grasses in particular can be a problem because they can inhibit native vegetation. The best practice at this time would be to remove invasive plants which have moved into areas that were disturbed during road repair and roadside tree and vegetation removal. After removing invasives, mulch can be applied and the area monitored. When invasive plants pop up, they can be removed. Native planting should be done after areas have been mainly cleared of invasive plants. Appropriate seeding with plants that are native to this region is crucial to insure success of the planting plan.

Following discussion, a motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to request that the town not use the NCC budget for roadside planting at this time. Instead, the NCC recommends that the town plant natives after removal of roadside invasives or consider allowing native vegetation to return naturally after removal of invasives, mulching and monitoring. The NCC will offer to assist the planting plan with specific recommendations. **Action Item:** John will follow up with Matt to explain our suggestions.

Correspondence: See above.

Public comment period: No members of the public were present.

Old Business

Road salt testing: No updates

North Colebrook Rd./Road drainage: See budget and expenses.

NRI/ City Meadow: No updates

Village Green: No updates

Botelle School Wet Meadow: It is late enough in spring that it is questionable if the wet meadow should be mowed now. There is a risk to the summer and fall blooming rare perennials by mowing at this time. However, limited mowing is needed so the native rare plants are not crowded out. We need to spend money from our budget to get this mowing done as John has not succeeded in getting the town crew to mow at the proper time. **Action Item:** John will reach out to Matt about mowing Botelle School wet meadow.

Pollinators: Discussion of possible future native planted garden at Buttermilk Falls Park.

Buttermilk Falls Park/Invasive Plants: Martha and Sam did field work and assessment of area invasives. An extremely large thicket of invasives in the park should be brush-hogged in late fall or early winter. Removal of this patch of invasives in spring or summer risks vigorous re-growth. Discussion ensued and concurrence reached that the NCC should request that town continue with spring maintenance and mowing they have done in Buttermilk Falls Park, and that the DPW should remove the very large invasive thicket in the center of the Park in November when the plants are dormant.

2022 Activities: Invasive to Native Plant Exchange- Nash has 24 plants to bring to the town hall this Saturday at 8am. John will meet Nash at 8am to set up plants. Martha and Sam will arrive at 9:30 to set up table and handouts. John will table from 10 -11:30am; Martha will table from 11:30am to 1pm. John returns at 12:30pm for take down.

Waste Reduction Activities: Backyard composter will be given away at Plant Exchange.

Haystack Mountain EAB logging: State Bill passed which creates a more transparent process of notification to the public by DEEP regarding logging on public lands.

New Business

Solar Installation on Town Farm: Comments authored by Susannah Wood and unanimously approved by NCC were submitted to Michael Halloran of P&Z on June 10.

Document of Chair Responsibilities & Other Role Responsibilities: Deferred

Recruit new members: Outreach is ongoing.

Adjourn at 6:45 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Sam Williams, secretary

June 22, 2022