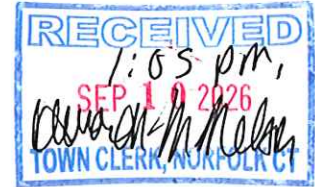


Norfolk Conservation Commission
P.O. Box 552, Norfolk CT 06058
Regular Monthly Meeting — Minutes



August 10, 2026

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Commission Members Present: Susannah Wood, Chair; Becky Eaton; John Anderson; Bill Ticineto.

Also Present: Sophia Nathanson, Summer Intern; Avice Meehan, representing the Foundation for Norfolk Living (FNL).

Budget Discussion

The Chair reported receiving updated budget figures from Town Hall and shared them with the Commission for review ahead of the next meeting. The Commission discussed possible reorganization of budget line items — for example, replacing a narrower "tree replacement" category with a broader "native plantings" category that could encompass plant materials, invasive plant removal, and contracted labor. No decisions were made; the Commission agreed to revisit specific category recommendations at the next meeting.

Public Comment / Haystack Woods (FNL) Update

Avice Meehan attended on behalf of the Foundation for Norfolk Living (FNL), the entity overseeing the Haystack Woods development, at the request of Bill Ticineto, standing in for Kate Johnson, who was unable to attend. Ms. Meehan noted she is also covering the meeting for Norfolk Now, specifically regarding public interest in the proposed removal of a tree near the post office — a separate matter outside the Commission's purview.

A Commission member reported walking the Haystack Woods grounds and finding invasives limited mainly to disturbed soil along the perimeter. Four species were identified:

- Sweet clover — can be hand-pulled; currently kept low by mowing.
- Mugwort — requires herbicide treatment.
- Knotweed — requires herbicide treatment; some resprouting observed from last year's treatment.
- Colt's foot — requires herbicide treatment.

Becky Eaton reported that Native Habitat Restoration treated knotweed and mugwort at Haystack Woods last year (the Commission co-funded a portion of the cost, sharing a discounted rate with the Town and the cemetery), and that knotweed typically requires at least two treatment rounds. She raised the question of which areas along the roadside fall under Town responsibility versus Haystack Woods/FNL responsibility, noting the road itself is Town-owned but the adjoining retaining wall is maintained by Haystack Woods.

Avice explained that the Haystack Woods property is divided into three areas of responsibility: the homeowners' association (HOA) area, a 23-acre parcel conveyed to the Norfolk Land Trust, and a larger parcel retained by FNL for future development — meaning invasive management responsibility will vary by location. She noted FNL raised private funds (including through Northwest Corner Gives) for landscaping and equipment, since the state Department of Housing does not fund native plantings, and indicated a willingness to continue supporting treatment costs. It was agreed to hold a follow-up meeting between the Commission and the FNL board to coordinate further. Avice noted a landscape-education booklet is being developed in partnership with a homeowner (Jordan Seibert).

Action Item: Becky Eaton to draft a written invasive-treatment proposal for Haystack Woods and circulate it to the FNL contacts.

Action Item: Becky and Avice Meehan to coordinate scheduling a follow-up meeting between the Commission and the FNL board.

Invasive Species Management — Town Properties

Becky Eaton provided updates on several ongoing sites:

- Botelle School — Mugwort was cut, tarped, and covered with wood chips with help from the Town crew (Sean, Darryl, Mike, and Eric) and Bill Ticineto. A longer-term barrier (logs, burlap, or similar) is still needed to keep wood chips from washing off the bank during heavy rain; suggestions are welcome. A group also began cutting back bittersweet and porcelain berry on the embankment previously cleared by Phil Lovett, preventing this year's seed spread; Phil Lovett is expected to return to continue that work.
- Embankment area planned for roses — timing issues have delayed wood-chip application; regrowth has been an ongoing problem. Becky Eaton requested additional help finding a solution before the fall.
- Transfer station / town garage — Will Russ provided an estimate of \$1,000 to treat mugwort ringing the gravel/wood-chip piles using a product referred to as "crossbow." Becky Eaton recommended this expenditure from the Commission's \$2,800 invasive-species budget given that material from these piles is distributed for construction use Town-wide, potentially spreading mugwort to other sites.
- Mountain Road, along the Nathanson/Brown family's property — property owners are treating knotweed themselves; the Commission previously budgeted for follow-up knotweed respraying in areas already treated.

Action Item: The Chair will continue to follow up with John Tinelli, representative of NJR Clean Energy Futures, re the solar field at the transfer station.

Motion: Becky Eaton moved to approve \$1,000 from the Commission's invasive-species budget to have Will Russ treat mugwort at the transfer station/gravel piles. The Chair seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Roadside Coordination with Town Crew

The Commission discussed the need for clearer, written coordination with the Town road crew and with Sean Mzullin regarding mowing schedules for roadside invasive-management areas, noting this year's late and limited mowing (weather delays and equipment issues) meant guidance developed by Becky Eaton and Sophia was not fully usable. Members agreed the goal is an ongoing, collaborative working relationship with the crew (Sean, Troy, and Henry) rather than an adversarial one, and discussed requesting a follow-up meeting with Henry to review this season and establish a schedule/communication process for next year.

Action Item: Becky to request a follow-up meeting with Henry Tirrell to review this season's mowing coordination and establish a schedule/communication process for next year.

Becky Eaton also noted a communication gap regarding the transfer station compost pile (managed informally by Jimmy Powelzyk contaminated with knotweed and mugwort, and proposed reaching out to Jimmy directly — approached collaboratively — and developing clearer signage for what can and cannot be placed in burn and compost piles at the transfer station.

Action Item: Becky Eaton to reach out to Jimmy regarding the compost pile and to develop clearer signage for the burn and compost piles at the transfer station.

Mowing of the wet meadow behind Botelle School did not happen in early spring because of wet conditions. It happened later than is best for preserving rare plants there. There was a lapse in communication with Sean Mzullin.

Action Item: Becky Eaton to work up a best-practices mowing plan for the Botelle Meadow in coordination with Town Hall and Sean Mzullin.

Roadside Invasive Species Survey

Sophia reported extensive progress mapping roadside invasive species Town-wide, with assistance from John Anderson. Findings included:

- Japanese stiltgrass — extensive on Ashpohtag Road and Doolittle Road, with additional patches on Parker Hill Road.

- Mugwort — largest patches on West Side Road and Parker Hill Road, with smaller infestations scattered Town-wide.
- Bittersweet — present on nearly every road surveyed, with especially large infestations on Winchester Road and near the lake entrance on Doolittle Road.

Once Sophia's survey work concludes, Becky Eaton plans to contact Stacy, who manages the EpiCollect5 program at Housatonic Valley Association, to have the collected data compiled into a map/chart for planning purposes. The Commission discussed the aggressive spread of Japanese stiltgrass from roadsides onto private forested property, including on Ashpotag Road near Parker Hill, and the need to get a plan in place.

John Anderson noted the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) has been providing mapping support and will invoice the Commission separately if/when payment is needed; HVA recently produced a map for the Commission at no charge to date.

Action Item: Becky Eaton to contact Stacy at HVA regarding compiling the EpiCollect5 survey data into a map/chart once Sophia's survey work concludes.

Guardrail Spraying / Inland Wetlands Coordination

Becky Eaton flagged upcoming guardrail spraying (addressing bittersweet obstructing sightlines) planned by the Town, much of which occurs near water; she has been unable to find substantial research on aquatic impacts and raised concern about proximity to water bodies. The Commission and the Inland Wetlands Commission will share these concerns at a confirmed joint discussion scheduled for August 18 at 4:00 p.m. at Town Hall with TruGreen, the treatment company.

Correspondence

The Chair noted correspondence (from Vicky) regarding an upcoming volunteer research project on wild/woodland bees, led by Kass Urban-Mead, previously described to the Commission as "the bee tree climber."

Action Item: Chair to forward the Kass Urban-Mead bee research correspondence to members who have not yet seen it.

Henry Tirrell requested any suggestions for replacing a tree by the post office that provides shade for patrons. The Chair asked John for input, given that the honey locust cultivar suggested by others is not native to this area.

Action Item: John Anderson to contact Henry Tirrell with alternative native tree suggestions, including black tupelo and hop hornbeam.

Billy Gridley asked the Commission to co-sponsor a talk on leaf miners by Aton Forest Fellow Charlie Eiseman on September 18 at 4 p.m. at the Hub.

Motion: Susannah Wood made a motion to co-sponsor the talk. Becky Eaton seconded, and the motion was agreed to unanimously.

Rails to Trails Update

John Anderson reported a Rails to Trails committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, with construction expected to begin this month. He has raised the Commission's concerns about invasive species and handling/relocation of grubbed material with the committee and with Bob Gilchrist, and plans to meet directly with the construction crew to identify invasive locations and confirm handling procedures.

Action Item: John Anderson to meet with the Rails to Trails construction crew to identify invasive locations and confirm material-handling procedures.

Road Salt Testing

The Chair reported that road salt testing (planned in collaboration with Bill Ticineto and Jill Chase of the Inland Wetlands Commission) has been delayed due to a personal mobility issue/ongoing physical therapy; timing remains to be determined.

Self-Promotion / Signage

Members thanked Bill Ticineto for the invasive-species posters and signage produced so far this year, including temporary mugwort-treatment signage posted for WIN Weekend. The Commission agreed to continue producing signage as an outreach and awareness tool.

A member noted the Town mowed the meadow at Botelle School later than in past years; Becky Eaton explained this reflected wet conditions and coordination timing with Sean Mzullin, and reiterated the importance of clear, written scheduling going forward (see Roadside Coordination, above).

Norfolk Nature Alliance (NNA)

The Chair had no substantive updates to report on Norfolk Nature Alliance (NNA) business this month. Separately, members noted an upcoming NNA event with Margery Winters on Morticulture, September 5 at 4:00 p.m. at the Hub, which the Commission is sponsoring.

Action Item: Bill Ticineto to design posters for the NNA Morticulture talk once a description is received from the speaker.

New/Prospective Members

The Chair reported a conversation with Trish Coffey, a manager at the Salisbury Nursery (which carries Doug Tallamy Keystone Species natives) who lives in Norfolk on John Curtis Road. Ms. Coffey is licensed to work under the supervision of a fully-licensed applicator on invasive-species treatment and has expressed interest in becoming more involved with the Commission once her daughter leaves for college.

Action Item: Chair to meet informally with Trish Coffey, then invite her to a future Commission meeting.

Presentations and Outreach

WIN Weekend wrap-up: Bill reported strong turnout at his and Jill's garden open house held in connection with WIN Weekend (11 a.m.–4 p.m.), including visitors even after official closing time; the garden setting included before/after signage and was considered more effective at engaging visitors on invasive-removal and native-planting information than the table at the Town plaza, which was described as adequate but less well-attended than in prior years and made more difficult due to high winds. Plant giveaways were popular, though most visitors were less interested in extended conversation.

Becky reported visiting ReWild, a small native-plant nursery in Simsbury, with Margery Winters; the nursery owner is also a Xerces Society representative. The Commission discussed potentially inviting the nursery for a fall plant sale and/or an on-site invasive-removal demonstration, ideally at a visible roadside location (West Side Road was suggested), pending property-owner permission.

Action Item: Becky Eaton to follow up with ReWild nursery regarding a fall plant sale or demonstration, or defer planning to next year if timing does not allow.

Members discussed a possible fall "bittersweet" awareness push (e.g., a Norfolk Now announcement inviting residents to help cut back roadside bittersweet), noting timing should be earlier than October to be effective before berries are ripe. Colleen Gundlach is the September Norfolk Now editor.

Native Plant of the Month will continue for at least one more month.

New Business

Bill will continue work on the Commission's website, including a draft mission statement (one page, distributed at the meeting for review).

Action Item: Bill Ticineto to continue website and mission-statement work; Chair to add the mission statement to the next meeting's agenda for discussion.

Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.