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Norfolk Conservation Commission
P.O. Box 552, Norfolk CT 06058

Regular Monthly Meeting — Draft Minutes
November 9, 2026

Call to Order

Chair Susannah Wood called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

Commission Members Present: Susannah Wood (Chair), Bill Ticineto, John Anderson, Nash Pradhan, Libby Borden

Absent: Becky Eaton (sent notes, which were circulated in advance)

Also Present: June Peterson, prospective member (arrived during the meeting)

Approval of Minutes

John Anderson noted that the September minutes still contain numerous typos and misspelled names and provided his marked-up notes to the Chair. A few minor name typos and spacing errors were also noted in the October minutes.

Motion: Bill Ticineto moved to approve the October minutes as amended, pending correction of typos. Seconded by Libby Borden. Approved.

Motion: Libby Borden moved to approve the September minutes as amended, pending correction of typos. Seconded by Susannah Wood. Approved.

Correspondence

Cassandra McKenna, co-founder of Save Connecticut Wildlife, met with the Town about rodenticide use and confirmed that the Town does not use rodenticides. She has followed up with the Chair. Members were interested in a possible presentation and asked that it be broadened beyond rodenticides to cover pesticide, herbicide and insecticide spraying generally and their impacts on local wildlife. Nash Pradhan mentioned a related article by Cynthia Rabinowitz recently published in the Goshen paper.

Action Item: Susannah Wood to contact Cassandra McKenna to discuss a potential presentation on rodenticides and broader pesticide use, possibly inviting her to a meeting first to outline her presentation.

Budget and Expenses

Becky Eaton reported that no spending votes are needed at this time. Marjorie Winters has not submitted a request for funds; Becky suggested a donation to the nature center Ms. Winters runs. Ms. Winters has presented for the Commission three times.

Motion: Libby Borden moved to donate $300 to Roaring Brook Nature Center in honor of Marjorie Winters. Seconded by Bill Ticineto. Approved.

Libby Borden reported that the remaining balance after this donation is $5,018.99.

Invasive Species Management

The Chair summarized Becky Eaton's report:

- Mugwort embankment: logs have been placed to prevent erosion.
- Playground roadside rose area: wood chips have been spread, thanks to Troy Lamere, with First Selectman Henry Tirrell's support. Rose planting is scheduled for November 21; time to be confirmed. Lauren will announce it at the PTO meeting to recruit parent volunteers. The Chair is unable to attend that day.
- Botelle: next steps, including a management plan that the Town approves and agrees to follow, will be taken up at the next meeting.
- Winchester Road: Wiley Wood helped with bittersweet removal. The next session may continue there or shift downtown to the area by the bank and post office. Becky has contacted Michelle at the post office and Tim at the bank, who are following up with their personnel.
- Cut-and-dab: Mike of the road crew is interested in doing cut-and-dab treatment, so a downtown session could be scheduled when he is available. Members discussed licensing: per DEEP guidance, Town staff may use over-the-counter products on Town property, but applying herbicides on another party's property (such as the bank's) requires a licensed applicator or the owner's own personnel.
- Nash Pradhan raised a safety concern about a dead tree near the chain-link fence on the border of the post office and bank properties and has notified Henry Tirrell.

Action Item: Susannah Wood to submit a town newsletter item about the November 21 roadside rose planting and confirm the planting time with Becky Eaton.

Programs

- Jess Toro presentation with the Norfolk Land Trust is planned for February; date to be confirmed.
- Becky Eaton suggested arranging for Tom Zetterstrom to give his bittersweet management talk in Norfolk. Members agreed; it will be raised at the next NNA meeting.

Project Signage

Members discussed informational signs at Commission work sites (e.g., Winchester Road and downtown), identifying the work as a Norfolk Conservation Commission project and its purpose, as distinct from caution signs used during herbicide application. Possible sources include Adcom in Torrington; Rails to Trails uses similar stake signs for its road race. Further discussion will wait until Becky Eaton is present.

Action Item: John Anderson to find out where suitable project signs can be produced.

Invasive Control Policy and Best Management Practices

The Chair proposed that the Commission adopt a policy that, as a Commission, it will not do wholesale spraying and will limit herbicide use to the cut-and-dab method, which puts a very small amount of herbicide into the environment. Discussion points:

- John Anderson suggested this be the first of a set of invasive-control best management practices (BMPs), which could be posted on the website alongside the mission statement as Commission position statements.
- Any statement should note that state law governs herbicide application and that Commission recommendations do not supersede it.
- Nash Pradhan expressed concern about long-term herbicide residue in soils near wetlands and about roadside spraying, and noted that treated areas must be replanted or invasives will return.
- Members discussed a public panel on invasive management, drawing on members' experience and outside speakers such as the owner of Helia, a nursery, who manages invasives without chemicals using winter work, small controlled burns and replanting with meadow plants. The panel is a possible 2027 program.

Members were asked to consider the proposal before the next meeting.

NNA

Nothing new to report.

Rails to Trails

John Anderson reported that construction began November 9. The contractor dug up the parking area, and mugwort-contaminated soil remains in piles on site. A contractor employee stated the soil will be hauled to the contractor's yard, sifted and resold as topsoil, and that good farm topsoil will also be hauled away. Concerns raised:

- State statute prohibits moving invasive plants from one property to another; mugwort roots in the soil make this a means of spreading the plant.
- The contract does not specify how invasive species are to be handled, and Bob Gilchrist has not yet responded to requests for a meeting with the contractor.
- Invasive honeysuckle and barberry along the trail must also be handled properly, and kept out of the wetlands.
- Uncontaminated topsoil could be reserved for the project's plantings.

John Anderson suggested that the Town adopt BMPs that all Town-funded projects must follow, since the Town is the grant applicant even where the state permits the work.

Action Item: John Anderson to raise these concerns at Thursday's Rails to Trails Committee meeting and advocate for appropriate best management practices.

Road Salt Testing

Bill Ticineto has mapped all testing locations on Google Maps and compiled them in a table, including route numbers. There was not enough testing to see trends this year. Bill is taking over testing, and the Chair will hand over the testing equipment.

Meeting Date and Location

June, a prospective member who has volunteered with the Commission, has a conflicting meeting on Monday evenings. Members favored finding a new night, keeping the 6:00–7:00 p.m.

time, and moving to Town Hall. Members preferred not to continue offering Zoom. The new Tree Committee is also choosing a meeting night.

Action Item: Susannah Wood to find available Town Hall evenings and circulate a questionnaire asking members (and June) for their availability.

Membership

Members welcomed June's interest.

Action Item: Susannah Wood to pursue June's appointment with Henry Tirrell.

Commission Outreach

- Programs: February program scheduled; possible pesticide/rodenticide presentation.
- Signage at project sites (see above).
- Website: last year new columns were added for invasives and pollinator natives; members will discuss further enhancements over the winter.
- A Norfolk Now article on the Town Hall pollinator garden explaining why plant material is left standing over winter for overwintering insects, with a suggested headline "Bugs Don't Go to Florida."

New Business

- Mission statement: members will review it at a future meeting.
- Informal discussions outside meetings are useful, but three members constitute a quorum, so no business may be decided outside a public meeting.
- Tree Committee: John Anderson reported that a Tree Committee is forming to develop a strategy for tree maintenance and planting and to consider establishing a permanent tree commission. Members include John Anderson, Nash Pradhan, Ted Hinman, Jim Stotler, Lawrence Davis-Hollander and Sandy Evans; ex officio members are Tree Warden Matt Klimkosky, Troy Lamere (Public Works) and Henry Tirrell. The establishing document should be available online. There will be overlap with Commission interests and recommendations. Crabapples were planted by National Iron Bank. Libby Borden suggested a grounds maintenance line in the Town budget; John Anderson noted this is already part of the discussion, including how the committee works with Public Works and the Selectmen's Office.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susannah Wood