

NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
December 17, 2014

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m.

Present: L. Matthews (Acting Chair); R. Ruttenberg; L. Hill-Eubanks; C. Barnes

Absent: D. Wallace; P. Knox; R. Barrett

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from meeting of November 12, 2014 approved: 4-0

3. Discussion of Agenda Items

a. Town Forest Stewardship Plan: members of the Commission reviewed Draft 2 of the Stewardship Plan. There was considerable discussion regarding next steps for this document. Members decided that the Commission needs additional expertise in order to pull the Plan together. Decisions before the Commission include:

1. contacting a member from either the Waitsfield or Middlesex Conservation Commissions, and requesting time with one or more of these Commissioners to offer some guidance
2. determining whether we can obtain grant money to support our efforts to produce an effective Stewardship Plan
3. determining whether an experienced planner would be an appropriate use of grant money
4. determining at least 2-3 goals as our priorities for the Plan.

Christine will contact the Waitsfield Conservation Commission, and we will go from there. Christine stated that we need to work together diligently to fulfill this goal of a Town Forest Stewardship Plan.

b. Outings for Winter: Snowshoe Activities during Winter Carnival: Tabled.

c. Planning Commission Changes to Zoning Regulations: Laura gave an update and we will review the first draft of the zoning regulations upon receipt.

d. Town Report: Leslie will draft the NCC section of the Town Report for our review. Commissioners please send to Leslie any information regarding our own individual role in NCC activities in the past year. Please send this information to her by the next meeting.

4. Discussion of Additional Items

e. Facebook Page: Members briefly discussed the recent exchange regarding a citizen's concern about the forest habitat for deer. It is unclear whether:

- 1) deer population has truly been reduced (there is anecdotal evidence to support this, but a scientific survey has not been conducted)
- 2) assuming deer population is reduced, is this due to:
 - i. Lack of early successional forest habitat
 - ii. Lack of understory due to lots of ski trail clearing
 - iii. Other?

- 3) there are other fauna and flora besides deer for which the forest needs a revised management approach.

Conservation Commission needs to consult with professional wildlife biologist(s) to sort out the above questions as part of development of the Stewardship Plan.

f. LANDS: Members briefly discussed the article in the local newspaper about the LANDS intern visit to document the natural resources on the Dog River, and the earlier visit of a separate LANDS team to document the health of the community's trees, as requested by the NCC. The article, written by Christine, is an effort to have the work of the NCC be more public, as suggested by its members in past meetings. Ruth suggested we maintain a record to document our work, and Christine volunteered to collect items for a scrapbook.

g. Dog River Geomorphic Assessment: Christine will remind LANDS interns that they may use the geomorphic assessment (already completed and on record) as supporting information for their report.

h. Project Review: Commissioners expressed interest in knowing where the NCC stands on project review. Laura and Christine will work on completing a draft of a project review checklist to guide Commissioners in the review process.

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m. by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted

Christine Barnes