

NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the meeting on May 13, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Russ Barrett at 6:41 pm.

- I. **ROLL CALL:** Present were Commissioners Russ Barrett, Ruth Ruttenberg, Christine Barnes, and Laura Hill-Eubanks. Pam Knox arrived at 7:20
- II. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA:** Addition of one topic at section V.d.
- III. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (scheduled):** None
- IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** April 7, 2015 minutes approved 4-0-0
- V. **DISCUSSION**

- a. **Forest Stewardship Plan:** Reviewed the results of the Forum that was held to get public input on the Draft Visions and Goals for the Forest Stewardship Plan. Christine will make additions and corrections to the results and finalize a draft for the NCC. There were more than a dozen attendees. Attendees made suggestions regarding the Visions and Goals and offered comments, suggestions and questions about the town forest and management plans. Christine did a great job of organizing the forum. The town manager supported the efforts for which the NCC is very grateful.

The idea of using the proceeds from timber harvesting to go back into the managing and conservation of the forest was popular. Signs and maps needed. Education regarding the forest and conservation concepts would be valuable.

Russ will write a proposal on use of the money from the future timber sale.

NCC discussed the importance of ensuring that the timber harvest is carried out in such a way as to maximize and conserve important wildlife habitat, and protect surface waters and their buffers. The 2000 timber management plan and the Audubon Bird Habitat Assessment will be used in guiding the timber harvest.

Russ will see about preparing a map of trails with a Natural Resource overlay. There are some wet places in the forest that should not be used for trails. There are some very steep places near Hawk Watch that would probably not meet the standards for biking trails. These areas should be surveyed and mapped.

The NCC will plan a series of hikes in June to look over the forest and sensitive areas and trail use. NCC will plan to lead a public hike in July, tentatively the 18th. We will finalize the date at the next meeting.

Discussed the possibility of meeting with Norwich U to inquire about their plans for the 2nd Phase of their trail system. Would also like to ask them whether the Shaw Recreation Center area can be used for access and parking for the town forest.

Russ provided documents from his research on the history of the town forest and how it was created. Laura will write a summary for the Stewardship Plan.

Leslie is working on a report of the results from the public survey regarding the town forest and we expect the results soon.

Pam and Christine are planning to hike Paine Mountain with 4th graders.

b. Urban Forestry Grants:

Ruth has prepared an application for the AVCC Tiny Grant. If successful the grant will be used to make educational/conservation and trail signs for the Town Forest. The grant application was approved for submission by 4-0-0

Pam will work on finishing the project with students on educational posters for the mini tree grant.

We are waiting to hear about the NCC grant application for a natural resources inventory on the Town Forest. Notification will be in June.

- c. Water St. riparian thoughts:** Plans are being reviewed for the Park on Water Street. NCC discussed the options.
- d. Planning Commission, ZA Braun, and Bylaws update:** Laura will check with the PC about their progress on the Zoning and Bylaws update. Michele Braun is leaving her position as ZA and the NCC would like to thank her for the wonderful work she has done and the help she has provided. Michele will be missed a great deal.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (unscheduled): None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Hill-Eubanks, Northfield Conservation Commission.

These minutes are subject to changes and approval at the next regular meeting, but are substantially correct.