

NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Minutes of the Meeting
February 16, 2016

The meeting was called to order by Pam Knox at 7:10 PM

I. Roll Call: Present: Commissioners P. Knox, N. Miller, J. Pekol, L. Hill-Eubanks, L. Matthews.

II. Set/Adjust Agenda: Additional items: Water St. park; economic development group.

III. Public Participation: None

IV. Approval of Minutes: Minutes of January 13, 2016 were approved 5-0.

V. Discussion

a. Land Conservation: Nathaniel updated the NCC on the land conservation project. He and Laura met with Liza W of Vermont Land Trust to follow up on the conservation project. Suggestions included: Finish town forest management plan before pursuing easements, and provide for land conservation in the management plan; look into grants from the VT Housing and Conservation Board – these funds can be used to purchase properties for conservation; research potential conservation properties and ownership; use other towns' conserved forests as example when presenting the idea of conservation easements (especially Bradford); find the access and entry points for the town forest and define them in the management plan in relation to the town forest versus Norwich U property, and the corresponding intensity of uses. NCC will plan to look at the Whetstone property with Liza.

NCC discussed the status of access and entry points to the town forest.

b. Town Meeting: NCC will have a display table at Town Meeting this year. It will include information on invasive species (Ruth), a survey on community solar projects (Jane), the results from last year's town forest survey (Leslie/Christine) which will also be posted online, and information on the town forest management plan and related natural resources survey (Laura). Laura will reserve the table, and contact NCC members to schedule their times to be available at the table. Pam will contact the town regarding help with the survey preparation.

c. Natural Resources Inventory: Arrowwood has updated the NCC on the town forest natural resources survey. Good progress has been made but they are waiting for more snow to complete tracking data.

d. Trail Grant: Ruth is going to submit an application on behalf of the NCC to get on the 2017 work schedule of the VYCC.

e. Winter Carnival: Pam and Christine will assist with the Northfield Winter Carnival this year. Activities to include cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and animal track education.

f. Solar Projects: Jane updated the NCC on the status of potential solar projects in Northfield that she and the NCC have been involved with. Projects include one for the school and one for the community. NCC members are encouraged to provide assistance with the projects. A survey will be conducted on the community's interest in solar projects; the survey will be available at town meeting day and online. Leslie will help set up the online survey.

g. Water St. Park: Ann from Friends of the Winooski River has offered to answer any questions the NCC has about potential design elements of the Water St Park, primarily as they relate to establishing and maintaining an appropriate riparian buffer. The understanding at this point is that the proposed design will include a riparian buffer with native plants. NCC will rely on Ann's good judgment in the matter. If Ann needs support in that regard the NCC will assist.

A river flume educational demonstration will be set up in Northfield.

h. Economic Development Group: Pam has been asked by Nate Freeman to act as NCC liaison to the economic development group in Northfield. One issue the group plans to work on is the new climate change economy. NCC discussed its role and the importance of conservation in economic development issues.

VI. Public Participation (Scheduled):

VII. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 9:07 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.