

TFSC February 15, 7PM

Called to order 6:05pm by Brad

I. ROLL CALL

In attendance: Nelson Hoffman, Brad Johnson, Mat Katz, Lydia Petty, Mat Katz, Colin Bright, Caroline Zeilenga. Russ Barrett joined at 6:14.

There was a brief introduction conversation to welcome our potential new member Caroline. She's excited about the possibility of bringing her experience in outdoor recreation and her experience with VT-FPR to discussions about the town forest.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

None.

III. COMMITTEE MEMBER NEWS AND UPDATES

Brad has resigned his seat on the NCC but will maintain his seat on the TFSC. We'll need to figure out what this does to the NCC/non-NCC member ratio per the plan. The TFSC requested that the NCC and SB amend the plan to allow for a seven member group with a majority of non-NCC members on October 7. Has this been approved? If so we don't need to worry about it.

Discussion ensued about the difficulties in finding volunteers that are willing to serve on both the NCC and the TFSC. Is it worth pursuing a different organizational structure? This conversation needs to involve the NCC.

We'll explore whether it wouldn't be beneficial to have the NCC chair attend the TFSC meetings and vice versa.

Feasibility study: the group met today. A draft of the report is nearing completion and will be posted soon for public review. There will be a final draft in March with the goal of an April presentation to the Selectboard. We'll add a review of the draft study to the agenda for the next meeting.

IV. NEW MEMBER UPDATE

The TFSC has asked the NCC to approve Caroline joining the group.

V. SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDAS FOR 2022 AND STATUS UPDATES

a. Trails/Master Planning (Russ, Lydia, Nelson)

Three big areas of unfinished work:

Mapping (with its own sub-pieces: CVRPC GIS project, static map to make available on Northfield website to replace current version that is missing information

Landowner communications and finalizing landowner agreements. We're not sure where that is in the process with the town attorney.

Trails: Spring closures and openings based on trail conditions and ecological conditions. Consideration of relocation of trails where necessary. Unsanctioned trails.

1. Updating current static map to correct trail information, where access and parking is. The current map lacks trails in some places, and shows some that are potentially no longer in use (i.e. private access through Kingston).
2. Working with CVRPC to clean up the GIS map so some portions of the information can be shared. For instance, we'll need to make sure that private landowner information and unapproved trails on private land aren't published.
3. We need a dedicated group responsible for trail maintenance, both the administrative parts of keeping track of what work has been performed and when other work will be taking place, and the actual performance and oversight of the work.

The bulk of the subcommittee work is happening in this group. Should we consider splitting the group, or would it be more helpful to have TFSC meetings specifically geared towards this group's work to help make some of the decisions that are impeding progress?

The group feels that splitting this working group so that the more trail-based components have their own dedicated group. The new groups will be "Trails and Master Planning" and "Trails Maintenance".

At the next meeting we will discuss approval of seasonal trail closures, and how the closures would be communicated to the public.

b. Trails

This item was the placeholder for the new maintenance group that is going to be formed. The group will be comprised of Brad, Mat, and Nelson.

c. Norwich University Relations (Russ, Colin)

Norwich has apparently moved their training exercises entirely onto the Shaw Center. Colin will check in with Collin O'Neill about whether there have been any requests for small group training activities.

d. Forestry (Brad, Russ)

Robert Nelson (WC Forester) has received the request from the Selectboard to help the town rewrite the management plan and weigh in on the potential for harvests in the town forest. The logistics of access for a forestry plan will be intensive and require significant planning and conversation.

There will be a walk-through this spring to address feasibility with SB, NCC, and TFSC members invited to attend.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

There was a discussion about how we can best carry through the mission of education. There are a number of other tasks that need to be accomplished to help facilitate this like formalizing access, and potentially forming an education committee. With the resignation of one of our other members we no longer have a TFSC member from the education committee.

We also need to continue the conversation about dog policies. The select board is working on rewriting the dog ordinance, which would be a good opportunity to address the issue as part of a larger policy. There needs to be clear communication around the subject, particularly given that the Shaw Center has a leash rule.

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Russ, Second by Mat 6-0-0 at 7:04pm