

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
JOINT MEETING OF THE
NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION AND THE
TOWN FOREST STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
Minutes of June 28, 2023**

I. ROLL CALL

- a. Northfield Conservation Commission (NCC) Russ, Nigel, Mo, Deb, Jeremy, Ruth
- b. Town Forest Stewardship Committee (TFSC) Colin, Jeremy, Russ, Ray Crowder

Public: Carl Pinkham, Caitlyn Keating, Carolyn Stevens

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

- a. Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN): Discussion of the Freight Yard Way Trail III. History of trail; Natane Economic Dev. intern started planning for this trail behind freight yard way in association with NU. Goal is for an ADA approved trail. Wetlands are involved. Current status: areas are cleared of knotweed, begins at Road, goes to rugby pitch. Bridge over the stream has been built, beaver dam removed. Trail follows the sewer line ROW. Accessibility would require walkways. Josh Ryan has looked at this trail (VT Timber and Stone). To apply for a grant a formal wetland delineation is required. Money and manpower are needed to complete the ramps on the bridges. Work is happening this weekend at 9:00 and the weekend following. The NCC recommends that NCCDC consult with Green Mountain Club and/or a DEC Wetland Specialist before constructing any structures over a potential wetland.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. NCC & TFSC: May 24, 2023 (Joint Meeting) Minutes were approved on a motion by Nigel, 2nd by Russ. Motion passes unanimously.

IV. DISCUSSION

- a. Reports on Issues Facing the Town Forest
 - 1. Conservation Easement: Russ met with SB and got consensus to go ahead and explore a CE. Colin suggested abutting property owners be surveyed to see if we can expand the TF as monetary incentives may be available. Nigel asked if we want to have a subcommittee handle this project. Possibly Laura Hill Eubanks could join the subcommittee. Nigel moved that at the next NCC meeting we appoint a 3 member subcommittee to research a CE for the town forest. 2nd by Russ. Unanimous. Report back on progress to SB in Fall.

2. **Status of Town Zoning:** Russ reviewed minutes of the Planning Commission and they have not considered our request to change zoning in TF.
3. **Report of Working Group on Forest Uses and Town Forest Stewardship Plan:** Nelson needs a chance to review. Colin feels an update is indicated. It might be helpful to create a rubric to help in decision making; manager, TFSC, NCC etc. Also, much has been accomplished on the to do list. Mowing in Cheney is not happening according to the plan's directions so possibly revise the goal for this work. David has suggested an Audubon scientist to help advise us on this. We want to reach out to Arrowood for a working copy of the TFSC plan. Also need the updated forest management plan from the county forester.
4. **Dogs in Forest Areas:** Couple walking 6 med-lg dogs, at least 2 unleashed, approached Russ leading to an uncomfortable situation. Signs addressing the requirement for on leash or under control are up.
5. **Other Forest Topics**
 - i. **Mike McGrann, XC coach from NU met with TFSC to share that NCAA sanctioned XC races will be held and the Paine Mtn trail race will be held again.**
 - ii. **The TFSC is going to apply for ARPA funds for some maintenance of gates etc.**
 - iii. **Trails at Northfield schools are in rough shape. TFSC could help with maintenance. Mo will find a contact at the school to make this happen.**
- b. **Knotweed Removal at Dog River Park:** Russ reported this is on hold as a contract specifies who will handle removal at this site.
- c. **Slate Brook Site Visit:** Debbie reported that clean-up work to remove old culverts would be an improvement but that an overall stream restoration would be extremely complex as the stream goes underground in several places.
- d. **Dead or Dying Trees near Dog River Park---**Trees were damaged by weed whackers used by town staff. Town will replace the trees. Russ will talk to Tom Trombley.

V. UPDATES - Tabled until next meeting

- a. **VOREC Grant**
- b. **New Tree Planting Grant: Planting in the Fall.**

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

VIII. TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETINGS

IX. ADJOURNMENT 8:00 on a motion by Debbie 2nd by Jeremy.