

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
TOWN FOREST STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF JULY 20, 2021**

- I. **ROLL CALL:** Committee members in attendance were Russ Barrett, Lydia Perry, Colin Bright, Mike Donneville, and Brad Johnson. Nelson Hoffman joined remotely by phone and Debbie Zuaro, chair of the NCC, was in attendance as well.
- II. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):** None scheduled, none sitting in on this meeting.
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Notes from June 6th, 2021 were offered for approval. Colin so moved and Lydia seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- IV. **UPDATES AND NEWS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Colin reported that the closure sign at the top of the Postal Trail needs to be replaced. He noted that there is some foot and bike traffic at the bottom of the open section coming out on Slate Avenue.
- V. **CVRPC Transportation Study Grant Update:** Russ moved around the agenda here, and Lydia and others reported this matter is moving along slowly. In the next two weeks, there needs to be a great deal of progress made due to coming deadlines. DuBois and King will be working with the town of the transportation access study details. Under consideration will be a parking lot for the TF or other ways to facilitate public walking/riding access from Slate or Bynam access points. The grant money is unavailable after September, and VT Trans, regional planning groups, and the SB are all involved in the process.
- VI. **Committee Vacancies:** Debbie reported that she is working on filling John's vacated position on the TFSC. Lydia asked if it has to be filled with a member of the NCC, and Russ and Debbie said no, the current vacancy could be filled with an at large member. Debbie has requested that the SB update the TFP to give some further detail on the makeup of the committee. Russ affirmed that he will stepping down as chair in August, but will continue to serve on the TFSC. Brad expressed interest in serving as the new chair, though no decision was made. He also asked the note taking be shared by other members of the committee.
- VII. **WORKING GROUPS AND DISCUSSION:**
  1. **MASTER PLAN AND MAPPING:** Russ told the group that he and Debbie, along with Pam DeAndre from VRPC, walked the options for a reroute on this trail, and the options are not favorable for a suitable reroute due to steep sloping ground, moisture, and two necessary river crossings. In terms of relations with adjacent landowners, Jeff and the SB has approved the use of the landowner permission form as well as the TFSC's recommendations on trails. Lydia is working on getting the forms to and back from all the landowners, and the committee agreed with her that this request for use permission should involve the form as well as a conversation in person or by phone. There was talk about how far the committee was willing to go to accommodate requests from individual landowners that would facilitate permission being given to use their land, and Colin and others stated that we should be whatever they ask, within reason. This might include an in person walk on the trail sections in question with members of the committee. Russ and Debbie told the group that new signs are not expensive and could be ordered if landowners want them. Mike asked for clarification about whether these were all adjacent parcels, and was told they are. The discussion then came back to Postal and the difficulties of a reroute. The consensus is that the bridging options to avoid the private land are next to impossible, though Brad expressed interest in considering this idea further. Colin B. will continue talking with Colin O. at Norwich, as their land is along the existing Postal route.
  2. **NORWICH RELATIONS:** Colin reported that conversation about the parking area at the Shaw Center continue, as lots of TF users park there. It was noted that the boundary flagging on the line north of the quarry has "disappeared" and Colin B. will be talking to Colin O. and the cadet leadership about this matter.

**3. EDUCATION AND EVENT:** Mike was welcomed to his first meeting. He has a long history of getting young people outside in all seasons, and he works at the elementary school now. Mike told the group that he is eager to connect the school community and the TFSC. He requested that someone from the group come and present to the kids at an assembly about what the TFSC does and how they can use the TF for outside fun. He also offered some volunteer help in building a reroute on Postal, should that happen. Mike said that Luke Foley, who teaches at the HS, would be a great resource as well for educational efforts with students. Mike reported that the school has lots of outdoor classrooms on site and he is passionate about getting students outside for fun and learning.

**4. FOREST ACCESS:** Russ reported that he and Brad are meeting with Rose on Friday to look at this issue with regards to a potential timber harvest in the TF. Brad commented that the TFSC needs more direction from the SB about what the priorities for the forest. Colin and others agreed, saying that the TFP is vague and ambiguous. The controversy over timber harvesting in the Barre Town Forest came up, and all agreed that we should try to get a better outcome if we move ahead with a harvest. Lydia proposed a joint TFSC/NCC/SB meeting, and potentially an open public meeting before any plans are made. Colin advocated for using any income from potential cut for conservation efforts in the TF. Clearly, Jeff and the SB need to get involved on this matter.

#### **VIII. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**1. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY:** Lydia filled the committee in on the state funding available through VOREC and ERSA, noting that there is a great deal on money available this year. She reported that LOI's for project proposals are due by 8/27, which is a very small time window. Lydia told the committee that ERSA funding is focused on physical trail building and renovation, while VOREC is much broader in scope, with the potential for planning and execution funding on multi-town outdoor rec projects. \$50,000 is the minimum grant this year and there is no max limit. Lydia noted that the NRRR wants to put in a proposal, and Mike and Brad agreed to work on it with Lydia. There is a NRRR meeting on 7/29 at 7 PM. Lydia noted that without a paid development person in Northfield we are a disadvantage in this process. Nelson and Brad commented that perhaps a proposal could tie recreation in with access/trail issues. Lydia asked those interested to read the grant details in the link provided in the agenda, with an eye towards the "5 Pillars" required in the VORECT grant process.

**2. HAWK WATCH:** Russ told the committee that the structure is going to be rebuilt, and roofing materials need to be transported up to the site. Options were discussed, including volunteers on foot, horse power, or side by sides. Mike will talk to Matt Ritzer about supervising the project, as he is a builder by trade. Brad asked about opening up the view and dealing with invasives, and Nelson added his support for invasive management. Russ noted that funding for the rebuild has been donated by a local couple. Many thanks to them for the financial support for this effort.

**3. NCC/TFSC HIKES:** Russ reviewed his schedule for walks in other TF lands. He told us that the next walk will be to Dustin's Pasture, north of Paine Mountain. Russ will notify committee members as to dates and times. Lydia wants to do a family oriented hike in the fall on TF land, and Mike agreed to help with this planning.

#### **XI. ADJOURNMENT:** Colin moved to adjourn, Lydia seconded, motion passed 6-0.