

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
Northfield Conservation Commission
Minutes of the February 22, 2023 Meeting

- I. Roll Call: Debbie called the meeting to order with Russ, Jeremy, Debbie, David, & Mo in attendance at 6:05. Nigel arrived at 6:15 and conducted the rest of the meeting.
2. Members of the Public: Brian Voigt from CVRPC was invited to join the meeting
3. Approval of minutes of the January 25, 2023 meeting moved by Russ, 2nd by Jeremy, 5 members voted in the affirmative.
4. Updates
 - A. VOREC grant- Debbie reported that a contract from the state has finally been received. Russ informed the group that the committee met with Jason Enders, a local graphic designer, and discussed map and signage options.
 - B. New Tree Planting grant- nothing new to report. Still planning on a Fall tree planting.
 - C. Watershed Grant Application- this process was more complex than anticipated and an application was not pursued. In the future, we need to start this process with more lead time.
5. Discussion
 - A. Meeting with CVRPC representative Brian Voigt to discuss river-oriented projects and possible grant funding: Brian shared 3 topics:
 - i. Slate Brook Restoration: this project is now listed in the Watershed database. Folks from DEC are interested in walking this stream including, Staci Pomeroy, new river scientist, and Keith Fritschie, the new Winooski River basin planner. It was the consensus of our group that a walk up the Slate Brook would be a good idea before leaf out. Brian offered to reach out to the state to schedule this.
Note*A date of March 31st has been proposed for this site visit.**
 - ii. CVRPC is a designated clean water service provider and suggests municipalities become prequalified to propose projects to be evaluated for funding. FY 23 has \$900,000 in funding available, 1 million estimated in funding over the next 6 years. There is currently a six-week period to become prequalified although there will be opportunities in the future.
 - iii. CVRPC will call for additional board members for the Clean Water Advisory Council; Nigel and Russ are currently members. A bimonthly, 2-hour meeting is the typical commitment. This council has a key role in updating of the basin plan.
 - iv. Additional discussion led to comments that riparian buffer planting is needed, projects are mentioned in the NRRRR plan, a Dog River Natural Resources study that recommends projects will be shared by Russ, perhaps we should reach out to Roxbury or Friends of the Winooski to participate with us. CVRPC can assist towns in managing projects and work on proposals. The group requested a master list of funding sources and Brian assured us he would keep us in mind for these opportunities. The group would also like to know the priority of dam removals in our area. Brian said he would send previous stormwater reports/maps that might suggest projects.

<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/DEC/SWMapping.aspx>

- B. Town Forest Stewardship Committee- The group met Tuesday. Jeremy reviewed some of the agenda items covered. This group would like to have a joint TFSC/NCC meeting and make this an annual event. Town forest protections will be discussed at the joint meeting. This group also supports sending a letter to the Select Board or manager regarding proposed zoning changes.
 - C. Town Zoning Changes-Letter to Select Board

Both TFSC and NCC support sending a letter regarding zoning changes to the town. It was decided that in the absence of a planning commission, the letter should be directed to the town manager with a copy to the select board chair and the consultant working on the changes. Discussion took place as to whether the letter should be narrowly focused on changing the status of the town forest to a recreation/ conservation status (present zoning is medium density residential) or other appropriate designation. David suggested the wording describe such a change as a “technical correction”. On a motion by Nigel, 2nd by Debbie, the NCC authorizes Nigel and Jeremy as chairs of NCC and TFSC respectively, to draft a letter on zoning status of town forest (including Dustin’s Pasture) to be send to the town manager, ASAP, with cc to chair of select board and consultant.

Nigel reminded the group that at our last meeting Ruth’s overview of zoning changes included: riparian buffers, set-backs for streams, having NCC comment on cases before the DRB and obtaining an overlay of wildlife corridors, and focusing development where water and sewer currently exist. We may want to comment on these changes as well.
 - D. Protections for the Town Forest- the group agreed to table this item until such time as a joint meeting of the NCC and TFSC can take place. Possibly do this at May NCC meeting when Russ is back in town.
 - E. Informational Display for Town Meeting-Nigel offered to host a table offering information on EAB and other topics. Let him know if you can help out. Nigel also stated that as the NCC report did not make it into the town meeting report, it will be posted to the NCC web page.
- 6. Public Participation Unscheduled-none
 - 7. Other Business- David reported he had spoken to Carina Daley and Michelle Braun concerning clean water projects. We could hold a work session with them and Trout Unlimited folks.
 - 8. Topics for March 22, 2023 Meeting
 - A. Follow up on Clean Water and River Projects:

Determine whether to seek prequalification status from CVRPC for clean water and river projects. We may want to have several NCC members meet with Jeff and Brian. We should determine the number of projects we want to pursue as this will impact whether to pursue prequalification.
 - B. Protections for the Town Forest- It was originally suggested to move this item to the next NCC meeting, but also proposed as a topic for the joint meeting.
 - 9. Adjournment-The meeting adjourned at 7:57 on a motion by Russ, 2nd by Jeremy, unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie Zuaro, Clerk