

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
VOREC Grant Implementation Committee
Minutes of June 12, 2023

- I. Roll Call.** Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) Grant Implementation Committee Chair Deborah Zuaro, members Russ Barrett, Kimberly Caldwell, Melody Currier, Lucas Herring, and Lydia Petty. Also present were Town Manager Jeff Schulz, Emily Lewis (DuBois & King), Andrew Padilla (Director, NU Shaw Outdoor Center), Colin Bright, Jason Endres, and Casey Cutkomp.

Committee Chair Zuaro called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. Public Participation (Scheduled):

- a. Emily Lewis, DuBois & King.** Please see the discussion below.

- III. Approval of Minutes: May 22, 2023.** Motion by Committee member Petty, seconded by Committee member Barrett, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 6-0-0.**

IV. Discussion

- a. Review of Draft Map.** Committee Chair Zuaro said Ms. Lewis was provided with the committee members recommendations for revising the draft map at a previous meeting (05/08/23). Ms. Lewis said those suggestions were incorporated into the current draft, which she showed on the shared computer screen. For example, the draft map provides slightly different shades of green to visually differentiate the Town Forest from Norwich University (NU) property. In addition, Town Forest trails and NU trails were shown with differently colored dots. Sample map labels were provided for the Paine Mountain summit and for "Maple Junction." Based on committee member feedback, additional map labels indicating points of interest will be added. Committee member Herring suggested adding trail names and/or numbers in case map users were color blind. Committee member Petty thought the trails should be indicated by color and labelling. Committee member Barrett felt there really was one main Town Forest trail and the rest were just connectors. Ms. Lewis said the main trail could be colored white in order to set it apart from the others. Mr. Padilla would like the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) trails located on NU property indicated on the map. He also will provide Ms. Lewis with additional information about the NU trail system, etc. Ms. Lewis said the various trails and other features could be put on different map layers that can be turned on and off to avoid cluttering. There also could be indications whether certain trails are seasonal only. Board member Petty would like the trail access points near the end of Kingston Road shown on the map. Committee Chair Zuaro said there remains to be a legal determination as to whether the municipality has easements and/or rights-of-way for the access point on Turkey Hill that is located on private property. Board member Petty thought dotted lines could be used for the trail access paths.

Committee member Caldwell would like additional points of interest located along the trail system indicated on the map. This would include junction points where trails intersect, etc. Board member Petty thought it might be good to add a distance scale on the map to indicate the distance between points of interest. She also felt there should be greater difference between the color schemes that specify the Town Forest and NU property. Committee Chair Zuaro would like some indication of the streams and ponds located along the trail system. There was another suggestion that the parking areas encouraged by the municipality (i.e., the Shaw outdoor Center) should be shown along with the areas where parking is allowed but limited and not recommended (i.e., Turkey Hill, Slate Avenue, etc.). Ms. Lewis will incorporate tonight's suggestions into the updated draft map.

As for the large scale map of the Northfield community, the trail system will be indicated but without much detail. It was suggested that the public parks, the municipal pool, and other recreational facilities be shown and labelled by name on the map. The public trail system located near the Northfield public schools near Garvey Hill also should be shown. There also should be icons representing the locations of Northfield's covered bridges, as they are a major tourist attraction. Key roads should be labelled. Ms. Lewis will review the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Class 4 Road list in order to properly indicate trail access points other than the Shaw Outdoor Center. It was noted that this community map would be put on the kiosk to be located on the Common and would provide an overview of Northfield. Town branding will be incorporated along with emergency contact information, public parking areas with trail system access, perhaps sponsor logos, etc.

- b. Review of Signage Options.** Ms. Lewis showed updated examples of sign configurations based on the committee members' previous suggestions. This included signage for the trailhead kiosks, color-coded trailway signs, etc. Committee Chair Zuaro thought it might be good to include GIS mapping coordinates on trail system signage. Of the different signage configurations shown, the committee members expressed preference for the one called "Option A." The current timeline for installing the new signage is next spring. The thought is to finalize the designs by this fall, seek quotes for the new signage, and have them built over the winter months and ready for installation when weather permits. Committee Chair Zuaro will keep the state grant administrator informed of the committee's progress and is fairly confident there will be no problems with the proposed timeline.

Ms. Lewis will take tonight's suggestions for the mapping and for the signage and provide revisions at the committee meeting scheduled for Monday, July 10, 2023.

- c. Confirm Date of 1st Public Meeting.** Committee Chair Zuaro would like to present the work done to date on the wayfinding masterplan project and the new signage at a future Select Board regular meeting. This would allow the Select Board members and members of the public to provide some input before any final decisions are made.

After some discussion, it was decided that this prestaton would occur at the Select Board regular meeting of Tuesday, July 25, 2023. Ms. Lewis confirmed she would be able to attend. Committee Chair Zuaro also plans to provide Select Board members of the committee's work so far at their next regular meeting, which will be tomorrow night (06/13/23). Manager Schulz thought it was a good idea to inform the Select Board members as well as Northfield residents regarding the committee's recommendations for the wayfinding master plan and signage in order to lessen the possibility of last-minute objections.

V. Updates

- a. **Invasive Species Removal and Vista Clearing.** Committee member Barrett said the first application of herbicide has been done and some brush has been cut down and removed. Another herbicide application will be done later this year and there also will be a need to have the site monitored in future years to prevent new growth. He is willing to help coordinate any volunteer effort that might include NU students, etc.
- b. **Equipment for Library and Snowshoe Rack.** Committee Chair Zuaro said her husband (Joseph) is willing to assist with the design and construction of equipment storage racks to be located in the Brown Public Library. She confirmed this project is moving forward.
- c. **Programming Options: Summer Hikes, other ideas.** Committee Chair Zuaro said one of the goals of this committee is to organize and publicize public events such as group hikes, educational excursions in the Town Forest, etc. Committee member Petty noted there are funds in the grant budget for these events that could be used for posters to advertise them, provide beverages to participants, etc. Committee member Petty noted the will be a NU Trail Race on Paine Mountain held on Friday, September 22, 2023. It might be possible for this committee to assist with the event organization, publicity, etc.
- d. **Trail Counters.** Board member Herring reported that the three (3) trail counters previously purchased now have been installed in the Town Forest. The data will be downloaded periodically and the results will be very useful for future planning.

VI. Public Participation (Unscheduled). There was none.

VII. Adjournment. Motion by Committee member Petty, seconded by Committee member Herring, to adjourn. **Motion passed 6-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

These minutes were approved at the regular meeting of June 26, 2023.