

Minutes Northfield Conservation Commission
July 23,2025

1. Roll Call: David, Mariela, Nigel, Russ, Debbie, Suz, Jeremy & Ruth
Members of the public: Laura Hill-Eubanks, Mary Nadon Scott, Janan Hamm, Bill Clemmons, Tim Swartz, Gerard Lavarney
2. No updates to agenda
3. Public Participation scheduled:
 - A. Cheney Field Access/parking discussion

Members of the public, including representatives from the Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety Task Force and the commission offered feedback on the idea that a heavy equipment staging area related to the water tank project could remain post-construction and serve as an accessible parking lot for Cheney Field and Town Forest.

Suz and Jeremy presented a number of questions that require answers prior to any development of access or parking in Cheney Field:

- Permit needed
- Need for an engineered plan, including what else is needed besides the surface (signage, a way to keep vehicles from entering the rest of the town forest, etc.)
- Timeline for the decision to be made in regards to the contractor
- Road crew feedback
- Water dept feedback
- What happens after parking? Accessible trail? USFS standards?

David proposed to draft a communication to the Select Board detailing questions raised in this discussion. 2nd by Russ. The motion passed, Jeremy abstaining.

There was general agreement that NCC supports improved access for the town forest and working with the Walkability Accessibility Safety Group was a step to address this issue.

David proposed that NCC schedule meetings with the Walkability, Accessibility Group to begin a work group process to discuss Town Forest Accessibility. 2nd by Suz. Unanimous.

4. Minutes of the June 25, 2025 meeting were approved on a motion by Russ, 2nd by Jeremy. Unanimous.
5. Discussion
 - A. Cheney Field Restoration: David summarized the role of NCC as serving to advise the Select Board using our experience and knowledge. Members expressed concern that the information provided by Town Manager regarding the contract language was insufficient to conclude whether the damage done to the field from the road would be restored by the contractor. David agreed to convey the NCC's concerns to the Select Board.
 - B. Clean Water Workshop and Reconnecting with Rivers Cohort Meeting: The cohort includes Barre, Winooski and Northfield. Idea to have speakers with river science knowledge was offered.
 - C. Upcoming Riverwalk Events: Appreciation expressed to Janan for organizing river walks and agreement that NCC would like to help support future walks and related activities to strengthen community connection to the Dog River.
 - D. Upcoming Meetings
 1. Berlin Conservation Commission re: Shared Northfield/Berlin Conservation Opportunities on September 3, at 4:30 Berlin Town Offices
 2. Meeting with the Mad River Valley Conservation Commission re: Shared Mad River Valley/Northfield Conservation Opportunities to be scheduled
 3. Jens Hilke, VT Fish and Wildlife re: Vermont Conservation Design Priorities in the Northfield Range August 1, at 11:00 a.m.

6. Updates: Postponed
 - a. Climate Smart School Yards Grant
 - b. VYCC Youth Trails Improvement Project
 - c. Town Forest Stewardship Committee
7. Public Participation Unscheduled: none
8. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 on a motion by Nigel, 2nd by Ruth.