

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
VOREC Grant Implementation Committee
Minutes of February 13, 2023

- I. Roll Call.** Present were Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) Grant Implementation Committee members Russ Barrett, Kimberly Caldwell, Melody Currier, Lucas Herring, Lydia Petty, and Jeff Schulz. Also present were Colin Bright and Jason Endres. Committee Chair Deborah Zuaro and Committee member Colin O'Neil were absent.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

- II. Public Participation (Scheduled):** Graphic designer Jason Endres will hold a work session with the committee members regarding the Wayfinding Master Plan Project. The engineering firm DuBois & King has been hired to do this project and at the last meeting there were some questions from them on how to proceed.

- III. Approval of Minutes: December 12, 2022.** Motion by Committee member Herring, seconded by Committee member Caldwell, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 6-0-0.**

IV. Discussion

- a. Work Session with Graphic Designer Jason Endres to Review Sign and Map Options.** Mr. Endres provided the committee members with copies of maps he had previously produced that indicated the Town Forest trail system, the trail system on Norwich University (NU) property, and maps of the community that indicated various local attractions (i.e., stores, restaurants, etc.). Committee member Petty said the DuBois & King employees (Chris Yuen and Emily Lewis) had asked this committee to make a few design decisions including the dimensions and layout of the trail signage, the coverage area for the maps to be produced, etc. In addition, Mr. Endres was asked to participate in this project in order to create the proper look for the maps produced. Committee member Petty believes the new trail maps should show more of the surrounding community than the ones Mr. Endres did before. Mr. Endres said he provided the old maps as examples of his work and their appearance was not intended to push the committee members in any particular direction. One issue to be resolved is the orientation of the trail maps, i.e. whether the northern compass point should be at the top of the map or if the main trailhead should be at the bottom of the map regardless of compass position. In his previous trail maps, Mr. Endres had the trailhead at the map's bottom, which put the eastern compass point at the map's top. However, after reflecting on this further, Mr. Endres thought it would be best in future to have north at the top of the map as that is what most people are accustomed to seeing. He also noted that the sample maps he provided were for specific audiences. For example, the community map with indicated local attractions was mainly designed for NU parents visiting during Homecoming and Family Weekends. Had this map had been intended for hiking enthusiasts, it would have shown more trail system details. Committee member Currier said there seemed to be consensus at the last meeting that the new trail maps should have Turkey Hill Road as the northern terminus since that area is used as a trail entrance for many hikers. Committee member Caldwell said there probably should be at least one large-scale base map of the community that would include Northfield Falls, the local schools (and their trail systems), the Dog River Park, etc. Other smaller-scale maps could focus on the Town Forest trail system.

Committee member Petty noted DuBois & King will provide the map files to the municipality at the conclusion of the project so perhaps they can be manipulated in a number of ways. She added that the VOREC grant application did indicate that the wayfinding project would focus on the Town Forest region and the area near the NU Shaw Outdoor Center. Mr. Bright said DuBois & King probably would be able to merge Mr. Endres' aesthetics with GIS mapping. As much geographic information as we would like could be added at a later time. There probably will be different map versions that show the basic components of the community. Mr. Endres confirmed he would be able to work with DuBois & King on this. Committee member Petty would like to be sure that any produced map would be both informative and readable to the general public. Mr. Endres added that he does have some experience with GIS mapping software. As for the trail maps' southern limit, Committee member Petty believes it should include the intersection of Barrows Road and Kingston Road as that area provides valuable Town Forest trail access. Committee member Barrett thinks perhaps Vermont Route 64 should be included as well as that would provide a valuable reference point for people coming from outside the community on the interstate highway. Committee member Barrett then asked if Town Forest boundaries should be indicated on the maps. Mr. Endres said his earlier trail maps were produced before the COVID-19 pandemic so it didn't seem necessary to differentiate between municipal and NU property. However, during the pandemic NU did close off its property to their general public so this did become a concern then and probably should be indicated on future maps. Committee member Barrett felt it would be good if people would know when they are crossing from public lands to private property. Committee member Petty agreed that there might be new land use restrictions in future so it would be good to show the boundaries. She also felt it seems that different types of maps should be needed for different purposes, i.e. downtown maps for visitors, trail maps for recreational usage, etc. Mr. Endres agreed that it would be good to provide different perspectives of the community. As for the fixing map orientation according to compass directions, Committee member Petty thought perhaps DuBois & King could be flexible on this and allow for variations depending on the particular map's purpose. This can be discussed further when the DuBois & King employees another one of these meetings. Mr. Bright said it also could be made clear how much DuBois & King will be held responsible to do as part of this project. Committee member Schulz said the project contract still needs to be finalized so this concern could be discussed at that time. Committee member Petty understands that since the last meeting, Mr. Yuen has left his job at DuBois & King. Committee member Schulz confirmed he did take another position elsewhere. Mr. Bright felt with this change in project personnel, there needs to be a full discussion on whether DuBois & King is still capable of completing this project as originally envisioned. Committee member Schulz, who also serves as Town Manager, said he and Committee Chair Zuaro already had this conversation with DuBois & King and they still feel they will be able to complete the mapping portion of the project to our satisfaction. Mr. Bright would like the new maps to employ proper color schemes so that there is proper differentiation between the different hiking trails. This should be discussed with DuBois & King at the next meeting. Mr. Bright also felt there should be proper color coding so that map users can tell the difference between Town Forest and NU hiking trails.

Committee member Petty felt the sample community maps provided by Mr. Endres did a good job of showing local points of interest while also providing an overview of the trail system. However, we do not need to include everything on every single map. The trail system maps will need to be simple enough to make them navigable while also including such useful information as nearby parking areas, etc. Committee member Caldwell said there also should be some consistency on what certain trails are named so there is no confusion. Committee member Petty then thanked Mr. Endres for providing the sample maps in order to demonstrate the various options available.

Committee member Petty then turned to the topic of the new kiosks to be constructed along the trail system. She asked if there were any opinions regarding how they should appear and what kind of signage should be included with them. Committee member Barrett believes the simpler the better. There should not be extraneous material included that would become unneeded distractions. Committee member Petty felt the kiosks installed at trailheads and other significant locations should be larger and more elaborate than other dotting the trail system. The signage certainly will include the community logo that Mr. Endres designed at the request of the Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN). Mr. Endres confirmed he would be able to attend the next meeting with DuBois & King to clarify certain graphic design matters.

Committee member Petty noted there had been a discussion of a site visit at the last meeting; has this been scheduled. Committee member Schulz said it had not. Committee member Petty thought the next meeting with DuBois & King would be more productive if it occurred after the site visit. Committee member Schulz will discuss this with them. Committee member Caldwell thought it might also be useful if DuBois & King provide some sample mapping examples of their own so the various options can be made clearer. Committee member Schulz said if any of the committee members have any other concerns that they would like addressed to DuBois & King, they should contact him as soon as possible and he will forward them. Mr. Bright also felt there should be some clarification about the project timeline, which had to be deferred due to delays in receiving the VOREC grant agreement from the State of Vermont. As part of his outreach to DuBois & King, Committee member Schulz will confirm whether or not they would be able to attend the next committee meeting in two weeks (02/27/23).

V. Other Business. Committee member Schulz again confirmed the State of Vermont has provided to us a copy of the VOREC grant award agreement. This is about seven (7) months after the announcement that Northfield had been awarded these funds. He has reviewed, signed, and returned the agreement to the State. He can provide copies to the committee members if they like. Now that the agreement is in place and the grant funds will be available, the committee can move forward on purchases that had been delayed, such as the purchase of recreational equipment to be made available for loan at the Brown Public Library. Also, as mentioned previously, now that the grant funding is in place, the DuBois & King contract can be finalized. Committee member Schulz will work with Committee Chair Zuaro on this. He noted municipal funds were used for some grant-related projects that are in progress or have already have been completed. Those funds will now be reimbursed from the grant monies. Committee member Petty thought it was good that not everything was at a standstill while we were waiting for the grant funds to be delivered. According to the grant agreement, the municipality has until the end of 2024 to totally expend these funds.

Committee member Petty then noted Economic Development Director Tom Davis did submit by the deadline the two (2) grant applications for Recreational Trails Program (RTP). One application was on the behalf of the municipality and if successful, the grant funds would be used for further enhancements of the Slate Avenue/Lybrand trail. The other application was on behalf of the Paine Mountain School District and would be used to improve the trails by the Northfield schools that are used by cross-country runners, etc. It is unlikely that both applications will be successful but Committee member Petty thinks the Northfield community certainly will benefit if one is.

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

These minutes are subject to approval at the next regular meeting.