

Town of Northfield, Vermont
Northfield Conservation Commission
Minutes of April 23, 2025

1. Roll Call: Debbie, Russ, Ruth, Jeremy, and Suz Stillinger
2. Updates to agenda: none
3. Scheduled public participation: Suz Stillinger
4. The minutes were approved on a motion by Russ, 2nd by Debbie. 2 yay, 2 abstentions; minutes approved.
5. Discussion:
 - A. Potential to expand NCC membership: Suz Stillinger joined the meeting to get a sense of what the NCC does as she is interested in joining the Commission. Although the Select Board would likely agree to approve adding an 8th person to NCC, it might be difficult to meet the quorum with this number. If Nigel wants to continue to actively serve, we can approach the Select Board about increasing our membership to 8.

Ruth moved that David speak to Nigel to ask if he has the capacity to remain an active member of NCC. 2nd by Russ. Motion passes.

Russ moved that we invite Suz Stillinger to join the NCC. 2nd by Jeremy. Motion passes.
 - B. Climate Smart Schoolyards Grant: Congratulations to Mariela as her proposal to plant trees for shade at the elementary school was awarded. This project was the sole project funded in Vermont. The first meeting of the group will take place next week. When additional details are known, this should be publicized.
 - C. VYCC Youth Trails Improvement Project: Jeremy met with the new VYCC coordinator and along with Andrew Padilla, walked the area for potential trail work in the Town Forest. The Butternut junction trail will be relocated to avoid a spring seep and brushy overgrowth. Work on this will start mid-May. The VYCC crew has completed clearing the blow downs on the Garvey Hill Trail. Andrew reported that NU has approved an engineering study to repair the Lybrand Trail.
 - D. Mad Dog Trout Unlimited Dog River Day: Plans are moving forward for a Saturday afternoon in October for a celebration of the Dog River. Jeremy has met with Clark Amidon to discuss the event. Debbie shared this event with the Riverwalk group who will participate.
 - E. Cross Brothers Dam Removal and Riverwalk Park Planning: There is not a lot new to report. The dam removal is on track. NCC has reached out to the Riverwalk Group and attended a meeting in March.

6. Updates:
 - A. AVCC Tiny Grant Application: Russ, David and Bonnie Donahue of the Dog River Committee submitted a grant to fund an accessible picnic table for the Park. We will hear the end of May whether this is successful.
 - B. Conservation Easement for Town Forest: see next item in updates
 - C. Conversation with Planning Commission: David and Jeremy met with 2 members of the PC. The PC would like to create a conservation overlay district for the Town Forest including Dustin's Pasture.
 - D. Town Forest Stewardship Committee: Jeremy reported that efforts to reach the leadership at NU and inform them of the allowed practices in the Town Forest are finally yielding results. Fires continue to be a problem. FTX training recently took place.
 - E. Lake Champlain Basin Program Grant:
7. No unscheduled public participation
8. Other Business:
 - A. Friends of the Winooski asked NCC to identify a time to hold a workshop to identify clean water projects. The group is unclear if this is a part of the underserved grant; Lake Champlain Basin Program. The group agreed that an hour before or after our next meeting on May 28th would work.
 - B. VOREC signage will be installed the week of May 5th. 2 members of the utilities department are working with Colin Bright and Wood and Wood to complete this project.
9. Items for next Agenda:
 - A. The group would like to reach agreement on whether parking should be allowed in Cheney field, part of the Town Forest. This has come up recently as the water tank replacement is due to begin and heavy equipment will be used to access this site. A study, the Town Forest Access Feasibility Study, completed with a grant from the regional planning commission studied the problem of forest access and concluded this site should not be used for parking. This study is on the municipal website.
10. The meeting adjourned at 7:15, motion by Russ, 2nd by Jeremy.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Debbie