

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
RIVERWALK WORKING GROUP MEETING**

Minutes of September 30, 2024

Full meeting recording is available at

https://youtu.be/D_Vf9rlf5Kc

- I. ROLL CALL.** Participants: Dan Anderson, Kaitlyn Keating, DeLane McIlvene, Patrick Meehan, Charlie Morse, Mary Nadon Scott, Merry Shernock, Carolyn Stevens, and Tim Swartz.

The meeting started at 6:00 p.m.

- II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):** None.

- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** The minutes from the August 21, 2024 meeting were approved without objections.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Reports on Action Items from Previous Meeting. Merry said that Jeff McMahon (Community Assistance Specialist, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation) previously reported to the working group that Act 250 permit renewals probably would be required for this project. Charlie said that it is the Town Manager's responsibility to receive a determination whether or not Act 250 permits will be required. Merry will ask Manager Jeff Schulz to resolve this matter. She added that Economic Development Director Tom Davis has been trying to contact the Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) regarding whether they would have any objections to the path section that would abut the Green Mountain Apartments senior housing complex. Unfortunately, he has been unable to get any straight answers. Merry volunteered to initiate direct contact with VSHA about this. She also has spoken to project contractor Timber & Stone, which has asked for an RFP from the municipality. Charlie said the RFP probably couldn't be drafted until after the Cross Brothers dam removal has been completed next year. That project would create improved river access to facilitate the dam removal and those access points could be left in place afterwards to help with this project. Charlie felt that in any case, any additional work on Section D should be delayed until after the Act Permit issue has been settled. Patrick noted that access to Dollar General property will be required to construct this path segment and there probably should be a written agreement reached that will guarantee perpetual riverside access. The working group members felt Dollar General might benefit in the long term from the riverwalk project with increased nearby pedestrian traffic producing greater patronage.

Merry felt we also should stay in contact with the contractors for the dam removal project. Charlie agreed, stating that the riverside access created for the dam removal could provide much of the preliminary work needed for the riverside trail. Patrick already has sent them a copy of his design concept for this riverwalk section.

Decide Exact Course of Phasing A B C D. Charlie recommended that work on the other riverwalk sections should be put on hold until it has been determined whether Section D will require a new Act 250 permit. He felt if this relatively short trail segment does require an Act 250 permit, the other sections definitely will require one as well.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Develop Community Engagement. Charlie believes that the community engagement should wait until after the dam removal and/or an access agreement with Dollar General has been achieved. The working group members agreed that should an access agreement be reached with Dollar General, that development should be widely advertised in order to let the general public know that this project is moving forward.

Reaching Out to Abutting Landowners: Obtaining Rights-Of-Way. As noted earlier, this is an ongoing process involving the Dollar General, VSHA, etc. Kaitlyn wanted it known that the reason trail section C has been put on the backburner is not just because of the nearby railroad property but mainly because there a large number of abutting landowners along this trail segment. That is why this probably would be the last patch section to be completed. Merry noted that the order in which the trail segments probably would be completed is Section D first and then followed by sections A, B, and C in that order. Charlie felt that the Act 250 permit issue really needs to be determined before this project can proceed much further at this time. He suggested that the Select Board members might formally task Manager Schulz with addressing this concern as soon as possible. Merry will ask to have this matter put as an action item on the agenda of the next Select Board regular meeting (10/08/24).

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Unscheduled). There was none.

VII. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: October 16, 2024.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT. Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.