

Northfield Conservation Commission Minutes of 3-24-21 Meeting

1. Roll Call: Russ, Ruth, Brad, Debbie, Dave Packie, member of the public
2. Adjust agenda: Ruth added an arbor day grant and tree order update
3. Public Participation: none
4. Approval of Minutes: Ruth moved, 2nd by Russ to approve the minutes of the 2-24-21 meeting. Unanimous.
5. Updates
 - a. Town Forest Stewardship Committee:
 - i. A trial trail review was conducted on the Summit Trail with a majority of members voting to adopt the trail. Ruth moved, 2nd by Brad to affirm the decision of the TFSC and give the Summit Trail official status. Unanimous.
 - ii. The Hawk watch rehabilitation project was reviewed by the group and approved by a vote of 4-0. A local couple would like to help fund this effort. Collin O'Neil, NU, has also offered to help with this.
 - iii. Brad suggested restoring Westerly views from the Hawk watch location. Last work in this area was in 2008. Two options are to hire a large, "Brontosaurus" machine or to hire a horse logger with volunteer assistance. Ruth stated that an AVCC tiny grant of \$600 would help fund this work so she will put in an application with Brad's input. It would be good to look at this area in near future.
 - iv. NU has requested permission for 15 students to do a night hike to top of Paine Mountain on April 3rd. After discussing this it was agreed Russ should discuss with Jeff, but we will support this activity unless trail conditions are an issue.
 - b. Conversation with Kate Forrer, Nelson Hoffmann: Debbie spoke with Kate Forrer, UVM Community Forestry Outreach Specialist, and Nelson Hoffman regarding a concern that potential infrastructure changes in the town forest would adversely affect conservation efforts by increasing usage. Kate recommended using the Town Forest Recreation Planning Toolkit for guidance as well as the Trails for People and Wildlife from NH Fish and Game. Links below.
<https://vtcommunityforestry.org/places/town-forests/recreation-planning-initiative/recreation-planning-toolkit>
<https://nhfishgame.com/2019/09/25/trails-for-people-and-wildlife-now-available-online/>

- c. Arbor Day Grant and Tree Order: Ruth has applied for a \$1,000 Arbor Day grant and spoken to Tom Trombly about a tree order for 3 red oak, 2 little leaf linden and potentially 11 crab apple trees if we are awarded the grant.
- d. Volunteer Project Work: Eden Morris, a Jr at NHS is working on an American Heritage Girls, Stars and Stripes award and is proposing to do 100 volunteer hours this Summer. She will plant and maintain new trees and perform trail maintenance & education. Ruth will be the point person for this work.
- e. Natural Resource Inventory Webinar: Ruth & Debbie attended the webinar sponsored by AVCC. It was helpful in reviewing what resources exist presently and what process is used to create this inventory for a town. It typically requires a \$15,000-20,000 municipal grant for a consultant to perform this work. A joint effort by the NCC and the Planning Commission to hire a consultant could begin with Laura and Debbie discussing with Jeff.

6. Discussion Items

- a. NCC involvement in zoning review: The town plan specifies a role for NCC in zoning review. It was agreed that Debbie and Ruth would speak with Mitch Osiecki, zoning administrator for Northfield to develop a simple process to provide feedback on projects before the DRB (Developmental Review Board). This will be shared with the group at a future meeting. Maps showing natural resources would be helpful in this process.
- b. Support for a VOREC grant and Falls Connector Trail: An active group of Falls citizens is working on gathering information regarding a connector trail from Northfield Falls to Northfield Village Common. The CC voiced its support for such a trail; motion by Brad, 2nd by Ruth. Unanimous.

7. Election of Officers: Ruth moved, 2nd by Debbie to appoint Debbie, Chair, Russ, Vice-chair and Brad, secretary for the upcoming year. Unanimous.

8. Adjournment at 7:00. Motion of Brad, 2nd by Ruth.

Respectfully submitted: D. Zuaro, 3-26-21