

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

1. ROLL CALL 1800

Russ Barrett, Suz Stillinger, Mo Swiech (no quorum)

Bill Dell'Isola, Janan Hamm, Ginny Kunkel, Sam Puddicombe, Tim Schwartz, Mary Nadon Scott, Merry Shernock

2. UPDATES TO TONIGHT'S AGENDA

Friends of the Winooski Riparian Buffer Planting Project:

Sam Puddicombe runs the tree-planting program with FWR. He has identified the well field on 12A as a site that would benefit from increased vegetation. There was a post-Irene planting around 2013 along the Dog River. He proposes filling in some bare spots in this planting as well as a 35 foot buffer along the perennial drainage.

FWR would do the grant-funding and procure the trees and shrubs. The work of planting could be included in the funding or could be volunteers. He envisions this could happen in the Spring of 2027.

Sam would like to see the NCC vote to approve this conceptual proposal with a landowner agreement to follow in order to proceed with planning.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):

a. Bill Dell'Isola & Town Forest Accessibility Work Group: Update regarding Discussions with Town Staff (Steve McKenzie, Interim Town Manager, and Jim Russo, Utility Manager)

Bill reported that construction is scheduled to be complete around July 1, 2026. This includes the restoration work; the hard pack road is the only thing that will remain. Everything else will be graded to original contours, covered with 4-6" of topsoil, reseeded and mulched. Seed mix is yet to be determined but will include native species.

The new tanks will stick out of the ground 5-10 feet. If there were to be a permanent parking lot, a security fence and alarm system would be required. There is not a problem with having parking for events. There should be room for about 10 cars and a shuttle.

Picnic tables/benches could easily be placed in the area of the apple trees. Tim Schwarz offers to share the plans for a wheelchair accessible picnic table he designed.

The Work Group would like to start with two events for this year, perhaps late summer and fall.

Improving the turn from Byam Road into Cheney Field is not feasible due to ledge. However, it may be possible to improve Baym for parallel parking.

Parking at the top of Slate Avenue can't be increased but it could be made handicap only.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 25, 2026 postponed due to no quorum

5. DISCUSSION

1. Cheney Field Restoration & Proposal for Re-seeding See above

2. Town Forest Conservation Easement – Next Steps

Suz reported that the third public forum on Sunday March 29th was a success. Four people came, including two landowners interested in finding out more about easements.

Mo reported that the high school group is still interested but has not settled on a date. She thinks it will be late May.

Next step is to get Select Board approval to proceed. Merry said that the request to be added to the agenda should be in by May 7th or May 21st, depending on which meeting we will make the presentation.

6. UPDATES

1. Reconnecting with Rivers update

Janan stated the group was divided into subgroups at the last meeting. The group she joined focussed on increasing the awareness of the "Nature Passport" and access to the Bridges Program.

2. VYCC Youth Trails Improvement Fundraising update No update

3. Town Forest Stewardship Committee (TFSC)

Russ reported that a new member of the community, Steve Shenk (sp?), attended the last meeting to propose the idea of a "Biodiversity Trail". This would require grant-funding.

The Shaw Center disc golf course is complete and work has begun on the landslide area behind the building (with FEMA grant).

4. Berlin Conservation Commission Coordination

Russ stated that the BCC is holding an amphibian program May 16th.

5. Roxbury Outdoor Committee Meeting No update

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

Tim Schwartz stated that the Accessibility, Walkability and Pedestrian Safety Task Force may have a picnic table to donate to the Town Forest. He noted that the materials are about \$900 per table.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

9. AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING (May 27, 2026)

10. ADJOURNMENT Moved by Mo and seconded by Suz; Adjourned at 1845.