

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
Northfield Conservation Commission
Minutes of April 25, 2024

1. Roll Call: Russ, David Debbie, Mariela, Jeremy, Ruth
2. Updates to agenda: none
3. Public Participation-scheduled: none
4. Approval of Minutes March 28th, 2024 meeting: Ruth moved approval of the minutes, 2nd by Russ, unanimous.
5. Election of Officers: Jeremy moved, 2nd by Ruth to elect a slate of officers as follows: David, Chair, Russ, Vice-chair, Debbie, secretary, with the understanding people will rotate through helping with minutes. Unanimous.
6. Discussion
 - A. The solar eclipse celebrations in Northfield were a success. Uncertain how many people were in Cheney field for viewing.
 - B. Partnership with VYCC: The VYCC (VT youth conservation Corps) is enthusiastic about working with Northfield. A crew costs \$7,500 per week and do carpentry, trail maintenance, forestry, and removal of invasive species. VYCC schedules one year ahead and a grant source needs to be in place. Bill from VYCC could help with grant writing like the RTP (recreational trails program). We discussed briefly whether the town could use revenue from timber sales if harvest takes place in accord with the forest management plan. There are questions about whether the town can obtain the right of way needed for this to happen. This also led to a discussion about whether to use any timber harvest that occurs as a opportunity to engage the public on the importance of active forest management
The survey on trail use at the Northfield School so far shows that the focus is walking and running.
 - C. Summer Projects: to be discussed at joint meeting with the TFSC in May. Jeremy reported that there are 2 public and 2 NU trail runs scheduled and the division 3 championship trail run will be held at NU on July 26th. We brainstormed ideas for engaging families with young children. One idea might be to coordinate with the North Branch Nature Center to host a story walk in the town forest. There may be VOREC funding. David will connect Debbie with NBNC director Naomi Heindel to discuss

7. Updates

A. Lake Champlain Basin Program Grant: David and Debbie have been in touch with Friends of the Winooski who are submitting a grant to this program and want to include a section of Northfield that qualifies. Ideas were to fund a portion of the signage for the Wayfinding plan or potentially assist in funding the VYCC project at the Northfield Schools.

B. TFSC Update: Cheney Field is open for use and the section of Paine Mtn trail to the Beaver Pond will open in a week or so. The mid-section of the trail is still wet above the pond and the NU trails are still closed to biking. The group is consulting how other areas deal with e-bikes.

A Spring clean-up day is being scheduled via doodle poll. Ray is creating a form to track volunteer hours that might be useful as grant in-kind services. Anyone volunteering to do trail work should complete the form Nelson sent for release of liability.

C. NMHS Trails Work Group Update covered in discussion, above.

D. Someone needs to check whether the existing tree planting grant has been closed out. \$630,000 is available for tree planting in 2 rounds of funding: deadlines of May 17th and January 17th. We discussed filing an application for a tree planting grant next January and possibly applying for a significant grant with funding to help pay for VYCC crews to do the plantings. Ruth is willing to write the grant and Debbie and Russ are willing to help interface with the town. Dog River Park and elementary school, soccer field edge on Garvey Hill are potential sites to plant.

E. Outreach to Planning Commission on Zoning Bylaws: there was no response to David and Jeremy's outreach.

8. Public Participation-unscheduled: none

9. Other business: none

10. Topics for Joint meeting with TFSC Wed. May 22, 2024: Summer projects and partnership with MAMBA and Berlin CC to link Irish Hill to Paine Mountain.

11. Meeting Adjourned at 7:22 on a motion by Jeremy, 2nd by Russ.

Deborah Zuaro, secretary