

**Town of Northfield, Vermont  
Conservation Commission  
Minutes of September 22, 2021**

1. Roll call: Debbie, Ruth, Russ, Nigel
2. Public participation: none scheduled
3. Changes to agenda: Russ to give TFSC update
4. Discussion:
  - New grant opportunity: Ruth reported that the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources | Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Urban & Community Forestry Program has announced a new round of funding from \$3,000-\$15,000 to support tree planting to grow urban forests. NCC has a LANS report identifying locations that need trees. Comments included: use a wide range of species, timeframe would allow for Spring or Fall planting in 2022, trees needed near fire station and where removals have taken place, landowners may need to be contacted for some sites. We would like to use Trombley's greenhouse to source trees and have them do the planting. Jeff has stated that the town could water new trees.  
  
Nigel moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Russ to authorize Ruth to apply for this grant. Unanimous.
  - TFSC Update: Russ reported on the following:
    - i. Russ, Brad, FPR Commissioner Snyder, and the new Washington County forester, Robert Nelson met and walked through the Town Forest. Robert offered to assist the town in updating the Forest Management Plan for the Paine Mountain Town Forest. Nigel moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Russ to have the NCC formally request that the Select Board authorize the update of the Forest Management plan. Unanimous. Russ and Brad plan to attend a Select Board Meeting in the near future to discuss this.
    - ii. Mat Katz, a Northfield resident, has expressed interest in joining the TFSC, filling the vacant position. Mat is an avid mountain biker and could contribute trail maintenance knowledge and effort. Debbie moved, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Nigel, to recommend Mat Katz for appointment by the Select Board, to the TFSC. Unanimous.
    - iii. Russ led a hike up Scragg mountain from Waitsfield to Northfield; 2 attendees. A hike in the Middlesex town forest is coming up next. One additional hike may take place in October.
    - iv. The TFSC working group on Norwich relations has reached out to NU to discuss ROTC training that is likely upcoming. Collin O'Neil has been difficult to reach. Debbie offered to see if there is another contact at NU.

- NCC bylaw working group formation: Nigel would like to complete writing the bylaws for the NCC/TFSC. John was suggested as a good choice to work on this with Nigel. On a motion by Ruth, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Debbie, the bylaws working group was formed. Unanimous.
- Review of Open Meeting Law: Nigel provided a hand out from the VT secretary of state on open meeting law and reviewed the pertinent aspects of this law. Members of the public, Jeremy Whalen and Gerard LaVarnway participated in this discussion, asking questions about specific situations:
  - i. NRRR meetings: although several NCC/TFSC members participate in this group, it was not formed by the town, members were not appointed, rather they are volunteers working with the town manager/former economic director on behalf of the town to obtain grants. This group has no decision-making authority as that resides with the Select board. The group does provide updates to the SB and ask for guidance and permission for certain actions. Debbie stated that it has been difficult to use the town's webpage to add all the NRRR information but this is the goal. NRRR does have a Facebook page and information can be found there. In the future NRRR meetings will be open to the public to attend and publicized.
  - ii. Site walks may have a quorum of NCC or TFSC but as the purpose of the walk is to gather information and no action is taken, these do not violate open meeting law.
- Review of the VLCT Social Media Guidelines for towns was deferred to the next meeting on a motion by Nigel, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Russ. Unanimous.

5. Members of the public---unscheduled

- Gerard LaVarnway and Jeremy Whalen attended the meeting and asked questions about the Forest Access Feasibility study, NRRR plan, and operations of the NCC and TFSC.
- Debbie offered to provide a membership list for NRRR and stated that Jeff Schulz could release the recent letter of intent for the upcoming VOREC grant.

6. Adjournment: At 7:20 Nigel moved to adjourn the meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Russ. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Zuaro, Chair NCC