

**JOINT MEETING OF THE
NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION (NCC) AND THE
TOWN FOREST STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE (TFSC)
Wednesday, May 24, 2023
Community Room - 6:00 p.m.**

This ZOOM meeting can be attended either in person
or from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89464090849?pwd=QWRjU2Q3N2pRV2h0TkI4UU1BNIF3UT09>

You can also dial in using your phone: 1-929-436-2866

Meeting ID: 894 6409 0849

Passcode: 315771

Minutes of the 5-24-23 Joint meeting

I. ROLL CALL Nigel called the meeting to order at 6:08.

a. NCC: Russ, Debbie, Nigel, Mariela, David, Ruth

b. TFSC: Blake, Russ, Caroline, Nelson, Collin

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. NCC: March 22, 2023 Ruth, 2nd by Russ. Unanimously approved.

b. TFSC: April 19, 2023 Tabled until the June meeting

IV. DISCUSSION

a. Report of TFSC on Issues Facing the Town Forest

1. Status of Town Zoning: status of zoning for TF has not changed. Uncertain whether the TF zoning change requested can be accommodated in this round of changes. Blake, who is also a member of PC said bringing regs into compliance with state regs is first priority but he will raise this issue with the group. No response to the letter sent. Changes are anticipated pending legislation in process to protect 30% of VT lands by 2030 (H126).

2. Protections for the Town Forest: Laura Hill Eubanks and Nathaniel Miller may have draft language from previous work. Nelson is very supportive of a conservation easement for the TF, as are Caroline and Blake. Russ would be willing to ask the SB for tentative approval to move forward and research this. Conservation easements are necessary for many grants.

Motion: Shall the NCC propose to the SB to begin research on a conservation easement for town forest. Motion by Nigel, 2nd by Russ. Unanimous. Russ will attend SB meeting to request this.

3. Forest Uses and Access: It may be time to look at the TF Stewardship plan to see if any uses should be amended. There have been conversations surrounding protection of natural resources vs recreational use. TFSC would like to know how conservation, recreation and forestry are weighted in management of the town forest. Discussion of trying to establish a vision , potentially with expert advice might be in order. There is a lack of guidance within the TF stewardship plan and it deals primarily with conservation. TFSC deals primarily with recreation. Possibly the stewardship plan needs to be updated.

Motion: Russ moved that we create a working group consisting of TFSC and NCC members for the purpose of identifying areas of the stewardship plan that

require further specificity to alleviate conflict in priorities. 2nd by Debbie. 4 ayes. The working group was created to consist of one NCC member and 2 TFSC members. Collin and Nelson for TFSC. Debbie for NCC. Proposal for a June 28th joint meeting.

4. Dogs in Forest Areas-tabled to next meeting

5. Other Forest Topics-tabled to next meeting

b. Knotweed Removal Simon Pearish from the Dog River Conservancy reported on follow up activities after the talk that was presented by the Waitsfield Conservation Commission. Funding from VT Emergency management flood prevention is available for knotweed removal and stream bank stabilization. Northfield will be represented on a grant being put in by the Waitsfield Conservation Commission for some intern hours.

c. Slate Brook Site Visit-tabled to next meeting

d. Dead or Dying Trees near Dog River Park-tabled to next meeting

V. UPDATES

a. VOREC Grant--tabled to next meeting

b. New Tree Planting Grant--tabled to next meeting

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

VII. OTHER BUSINESS Reported by Collin:

- A Path through Cheney field needs mowing. Jeremy offered to do this.
- Beaver pond let loose damaging trail.
- Trail maintenance is needed, with possible bridge replacement. Formulate a budget request for maintenance from town ARPA funds. Nigel requested a proposal from TFSC for maintenance projects.

VIII. TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETINGS: From Russ, determine Summer hike schedule

IX. ADJOURNMENT 8:35 Motion by David, 2nd by Russ, unanimous.

Deborah Zuaro
NCC Secretary