

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
NORTHFIELD RIVERPATH PROJECT
WORKING GROUP MEETING
Minutes of May 20, 2026
Full meeting recording is available at
<https://youtu.be/qtQIBX41fhI>

Tim Swartz called the meeting to order at 6:10pm.

Roll Call: Tim Swartz, Delane McIvene, Pat Meehan, Mary Nadon Scott

The group approved the minutes, as adjusted, of the previous meeting; there was no scheduled public participation, unscheduled public participation.

Tim Swartz then reviewed the official Request for Bids for removal of the Cross Brothers Dan and handed around a copy. A decision on awarding the contract will be made at the end of May 2026. Swartz also summarized the site visit that was mandatory for prospective bidders. Per Swartz, about 30 attended including the new Town Manager, Mary Diego Smith, several different groups of contractors, Karina Dailey from VT Natural Resources, and Michele Braun, Executive Director of Friends of the Winooski. Swartz noted that Karina Dailey mentioned the proposed Section D of the River Path in her opening remarks to the group. WCAX covered the meeting.

Swartz reminded the group that an area near the terminus of Section D is to be undisturbed as it contains evidence of Precontact Use. The River Path initiative is the latest in a long succession of groups and individuals using this space. "We are not the first people to gather at the river." Meehan quoted from the Request for Bids that the window of construction is June 1 - October 2 and reminded the group that construction of the path is NOT in the flood plain, so fewer restrictions will apply. There was optimism that the River Path would be completed in 2026, however Meehan cautioned against optimism. Nadon Scott voiced a wish that the opening of Section D could be coordinated with the proposed Fall pilot date (10/10/2026) for ADA Access of Cheney Field.

Nadon Scott then reminded the group of its intent, after Section D is opened, to complete the rest of the trail (Sections A, B & C), starting with Section A that runs behind the Green Mountain Apartments. Nadon Scott noted that there is now a SASH coordinator for GM Apartments and we should propose to her making a formal presentation of Section A to the residents. Swartz noted that the photos of actual users of Section D might be good to show the residents of the GM Apartments. McIvene said that this presentation might be better attended if it were held in The Common Room of the apartments, instead of the Senior Center. She said that her suggestion is supported by the experience gained by the Accessibility, Walkability & Pedestrian Safety Task Force (AWPS) in the construction of lanterns for the Block Party in March 2026.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD:

Nadon Scott is a member of the group figuring out Access & Accessibility to Cheney Field and the rest of the Town Forest. She reported that the group includes representatives from the AWPS Task Force, the Town Forest Stewardship Committee, the Conservation Commission and "Concerned Citizens" a group representing neighbors of the area + other Northfield residents which has been invited to participate but has not yet. The Cheney Fields Access & Accessibility working group has struggled with the myriad issues involved; e.g. busing, gate-keeping, paving, seating, and will launch 'test runs' this summer (8/8/2026) and fall (10/10/2026).

Meehan reported that progress continues to be made toward completion of the installation of a new water tank up at Cheney Farm.

Meehan, who is also a member of the Town Energy Committee, reported that the Committee is ultimately interested in establishing a Thermal Energy Network, but this is an iterative process that is starting with a tour of several buildings in the downtown area to promote energy efficiency. The Committee is connecting these business owners with Efficiency Vermont. Meehan reported learning about several potential spaces; e.g. the boardroom at NSB. The siting of the Kiosk at the start of Section D is also a project the Energy Committee is keeping in its sights.

Swartz relayed information he learned at a meeting of the Select Board Highway Subcommittee. The meeting included several people, including Karl Bailey the head of the Town Highway Department and Tim Davis, a member of the Select Board who is Highway Supervisor for the Town of Berlin. Of particular interest from this meeting was the proposal to add a stop sign at the troublesome intersection of Water St + Pearl St + Union Street. Traffic control at this intersection will become essential in 2027 when the traffic is detoured during construction of the new bridge on Main Street. Meehan noted that adding a stop sign at that intersection in the near future will give drivers a chance to learn to enter the intersection cautiously.

Swartz also announced the new hires in the Northfield Police Department.

McIlvene told the meeting about the COMMUNITY INFORMATION she is posting in the window of the former TDS office on The Common. She has already posted photos of the Town Manager and the Select Board and will probably post photos of the new hires in the NPD. She will also post a large rendering of Section D.

Meehan described his work with Charlie Morse and John Wall on the Community Garden taking shape across the street from Dog River Park. Together these men have created several raised beds with access to water. Swartz added that an ADA picnic table of his design was commissioned for the space and is under construction. Nadon Scott asked about ADA access and was advised by Meehan and Swartz that no ramp is needed but that mats would be installed to facilitate mobility into and through the garden. All agreed that getting a Coordinator is a high priority now and all were asked to network about it. Swartz asked Meehan to draw a schematic to help with the effort to recruit one, as well as publicize this emerging town amenity.

The meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.