

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
NORTHFIELD RIVERWALK PROJECT
WORKING GROUP MEETING
Minutes of April 16, 2025
Full meeting recording is available at
<https://youtu.be/fZ1jKp5yt2k>**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Participants: Kahwa Douoguih, Janan Hamm, Kaitlyn Keating, DeLane McIlvene, Patrick Meehan, Jeff Schulz (Town Manager), Mary Nadon Scott, Merry Shernock (Select Board member), and Tim Swartz.

The meeting started at 6:00 p.m.

- II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Scheduled):** None.

- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion by DeLane, seconded by Tim, to approve the minutes. Merry found a few typos that will be corrected. The minutes were approved without objection.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Status of Dollar General Land Transfer.** Jeff said that he has been interacting with Dollar General for some time to obtain an easement since there is insufficient municipal property by the riverside for the walking trail. He said that Dollar General's representatives were not that interested in providing easements but instead expressed willingness to donate some of their property for this project. Jeff hired a surveyor to delineate the new property lines and the survey has been forwarded to the Dollar General legal team for their review. A response has not yet been received to his latest communication.
- b. Cross Brothers Dam Removal update.** Jeff said the contractor for the dam removal project has made access requests for the back of the Dollar General building in order to have proper passage to the dam removal site. Merry asked when the actual dam removal process will begin. Jeff said the project will go out to bid before the end of May and the current plan is to start the dam removal this July when the river level should be at its lowest. The project funding is in place but there still are a few permit issues that still need to be resolved.
- c. Possible Coordination with Northfield Conservation Commission (NCC).** Merry has been in contact with NCC member Debbie Zuaro but there is nothing new to report at this time. Patrick is aware that NCC is looking to install new signage along some trailways that soon will be universally accessible.
- d. Friends of the Winooski River (FOW) update re: Lake Champlain Basin Grant Funds.** Merry said that FOW Executive Director Michele Braun was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Merry will invite Ms. Braun to attend the next meeting in case there is any new information about the state grant program known as "Connecting with Rivers" that might be able to provide some financial support for the Riverwalk Project as it progresses.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Organization of Community Walks (Possible Connection with the Northfield/Roxbury Outing Club?).** Merry said as the local weather improves, this working group should start to plan community walks to be used to demonstrate the feasibility of and need for this Riverwalk Project. DeLane thought some walks could be done in connection with the Northfield Farmers Market, which will start holding outdoor markets on the Common in the next few weeks. Janan suggested there should be guides accompanying these walks who could point out local points of interest including historic structures, etc. Merry thought Memorial Day week might be a good time to start holding these community walks. She will speak with Outing Group members about possibly holding some events in conjunction. Tim thought weekend walks might be good for residents who work during the week. Janan felt organizing shorter walks would benefit those wanting to bring younger children along. Janan will research these and other possible options and report back at the next meeting.
- b. Local Social Media Information.** Merry asked when it would be best to start publicizing this project's progress on local social media. Kaitlyn suggested having postings regarding the proposed community walks when a schedule for them has been finalized. Tim felt updates on the dam removal and how that project would benefit the Riverwalk Project should be posted as well. After a short discussion, it was felt best to hold off on announcing the Dollar General land donation until the agreement has been settled. Jeff thought Dollar General would greatly appreciate the good publicity it would receive once the land donation has been finalized.
- c. Reports from the Field, i.e. updates from other committees, projects, etc.** Merry said the Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety [AWPS] Task Force members have been working on promoting the local trail systems that were redesigned to make them universally accessible. Kaitlyn said this task force is also working to make the municipal pool fully accessible to wheelchair users. She added that this would be a first for Vermont. Tim added that he is now working on designing and building wheelchair accessible picnic tables that could be placed at various locations in Northfield.
- d. Possible Removal of Public Displays.** Merry thought that it might be time to relocate the large public displays that have been in place for some time at the Municipal Building and the Brown Public Library (BPL). Jeff suggested leaving the one in the Municipal Building in place for now as the number of building visitors should increase as the next deadline for property tax payments (05/16/25) approached. As for the BPL display, Patrick suggested that it could be moved to willing locations around town for a few days at a time. He added that the displays could be removed from their easels and placed directly on walls so they don't take up as much room. Mary thought the Senior Center might be a willing host for a few days. Outreaches to other possible temporary locations will be made before the next meeting.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Unscheduled). There was none.

VII. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: May 21, 2025

VIII. ADJOURNMENT. Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.