

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
DOG RIVER PARK COMMITTEE
Minutes of July 10, 2024

I. Roll Call

- a. Kim Adams, Russ Barrett, Simon Pearish, Bonnie Kirn Donahue

II. Set/Adjust Agenda

- a. No changes

III. Approval of Minutes (May)

- a. Russ motions, Kim seconds, Approved 4-0-0

IV. Discussion

a. Paths

- i. Gillespie resurfaced a large portion of the hard packed paths in the mowed lawn area. The purpose of the resurfacing was to reclaim these accessible paths, which had become overgrown with grass and weeds. The contractor removed a thin layer (~2") and then resurfaced the paths with "stone dust". This created paths that remain level with the surrounding lawn.
- ii. The section in front of the pollinator garden wasn't done. Kim suggests we should see if the Class of 57 fund could be used to finish off that section.
- iii. The paths near the river were being left unmowed due to debris from the December flood. Simon reached out to the Town Manager to offer help getting the paths in shape to be mowed. The debris has been moved and the paths are being mowed.
- iv. In the same correspondence, Simon suggested that the mowing crew should blow grass clippings off of the hard packed paths after mowing in an effort to prevent grass seed from growing on the paths in the future.

b. Living willow structure

- i. A small portion of the willows came to life and are growing. Although the number of cuttings that survived is small, they are producing multiple branches that can be woven around cuttings that did not survive to replace them. It still isn't clear whether the new growth will survive through to the next season. Simon might try to add some cuttings to the section that has no growth to see if it will root at this time of year.

c. Mulch for trees

- i. The Town Manager has agreed to provide mulch so that this committee can put mulch around the trees in the lawn area of the park. The main purpose of mulching is to provide a barrier around the trees so that the mower does not need to get so close to the trees, which damages the trees' roots.

d. Knotweed

- i. On May 16th, committee members were joined by Anne Donahue for a workday with the goal of removing knotweed that had washed in during the December 2023 flood.
- ii. This knotweed cleanup day was more complicated than our cleanup effort in Fall 2023 because the rhizomes that washed in during the December flood were buried under several inches of sediment. We needed to leave established knotweed because US Fish and Wildlife has agreed to spray knotweed in the park and they need established stands left intact in order to increase the effectiveness of the foliar-applied herbicide they use. It was difficult to explain when to dig up rhizomes from the flood and when to leave established stands.

e. Swing

- i. A commercial-grade swing was purchased by the Town on behalf of this committee. The Town will be reimbursed using the Class of 57 funds.
- ii. The Town has offered to install the swing when town employees become available. This committee might consider doing the installation at a future workday.

f. Member updates

- i. Russ has offered a connection to Dept of Forest, Parks, and Recreation's Urban and Community Forestry Program, who might be able to provide trees to plant in the park at no cost. Trees could replace those damaged by the flood or be planted in the lawn.
- ii. Simon talked about his intention to move off of this committee to work on broader issues related to parks and recreation.
- iii. Simon heard from Rebecca Pearish that she would like to be added to the agenda for the next meeting to discuss the play equipment in the park.

V. Public Participation (unscheduled)

VI. Adjournment