

Minute of TFSC, 4/19

## I. ROLL CALL

Russ, Nelson, Mat, Caroline, Colin

Called to order at 6:03

## II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): None.

## III. DISCUSSION

Russ will run the meeting. Brad has no electricity and is dealing with a number of resulting issues at home, so will not be attending

### a. Welcome (Brad Johnson)

### b. News from Committee Members (All)

Russ has been asked to serve on the Berlin Pond Commission.

### c. Update on Decision Making Process between TFSC/NCC/SB (Brad Johnson)

### d. Dog Working Group (Colin Bright)

The Dogs Working Group met last week (Brad and Colin from TFSC, Jeremy and Nigel from NCC) to discuss policies or education around dogs in the TF. Topics included both near-term actions (public education measures/signage, developing a clear definition for what “under control” means within the TF) and longer term options (formal signage to be included in anything created through the VOREC grant, potential requests for changes to town ordinance). The working group discussed some options for what “under control” meant, as well as the potentials of either creating an “unleashed” zone, or defining “under control” to mean leashed throughout the entire TF. The working group is requesting the TFSC and NCC to endorse the working group in creating potential definitions of “under control” for recommendation to the NCC, with any resulting requests for policy changes to be sent to the selectboard.

Discussion ensued among the TFSC. Some members are supportive of a leash policy for the entire town forest, while others would like to take a more nuanced approach. Examples to look to of more nuanced approaches include Hubbard Park and the East Montpelier trails, as compared to areas prohibiting off-leash dogs like the Mad Path.

Across the group there is consensus around the need for clearly stated policies and signage communicating it, and that any policy will require buy-in from the dog owning community.

### e. VOREC Grant Timeline and How the TFSC will be Involved (Brad Johnson)

Brad was unable to attend, but Lydia Petty (selectboard) was able to provide an update on timing. At the last selectboard meeting it was recommended to form a VOREC grant steering committee to last for the duration of the grant. 7 members, NCC, TFSC, PC, NU, generally interested parties. Jeff will advertise at least one “at-large” seat. It hasn’t been decided who will make what decisions (Jeff versus committee members).

It’s hoped that the trail restoration work will happen this summer. Since the grant was announced late it could be difficult to contract someone for the trail restoration activities. Jeff is preparing RFPs.

Russ and Brad are looking for contractors that would be available for removing invasive, which won’t need to go through the formal competitive bid process. It will take a while to collect bids because any contractor would need to visit the site in order to prepare a solid bid.

The TF access study is being finalized; D&K will be presenting to the selectboard at one of the May meetings, and the web site will be updated to reflect the final results.

f. Norwich University use of Town Forest (Colin Bright)

A request was made on 4/8 to use the TF for a field training exercise on 4/15-17 involving 60 cadets. The request included use of the areas around the beaver pond and near the summit of Paine Mountain, with travel occurring on the PMT and through the Cheney Meadow. Trail conditions were not appropriate for that use, so the request was denied, also providing an opportunity to communicate the timeline along which such requests should be made.

It was observed on Sunday 4/17 that there had been heavy foot traffic on close sections of the PMT where access had been requested, and a map with marked waypoints and mapping tool were found on the closed portion of the PMT. Additionally, four wheeler tracks were found running across the top of Cheney Field, originating at the trail entering the south side of the Cheney Field from the quarry at the Shaw Center.

The indications of trail use and four wheeler tracks were reported to Collin O'Neill at the Shaw Center.

g. Trail Maintenance (Nelson Hoffman, Matt Katz)

Nelson hiked the weekend before last and cleared some blowdowns. There are some leaning/hanging trees remaining. After Monday night's storm there's likely to be more work needed. Mat will try to take care of that this weekend and let Nelson know if there are any areas that still need to be taken care of.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Nelson at 6:35, Second by Colin 5-0-0