

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
NORTHFIELD RIVERPATH PROJECT
WORKING GROUP MEETING
Minutes of June 17, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 at the Northfield Senior Center. Present were Merry Shernock, Pat Meehan, Tim Swartz and Janan Hamm. Delane McIlvene participated virtually.

The groups reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting with McIlvene providing corrections referring to the Cheney Field Task Force (not the C F Access & Accessibility group).

The minutes were approved with adjustments after a motion and second. The group identified a need for standardized templates to facilitate minutes and social media posts in the future. McIlvene volunteered to draft structural templates for meeting minutes and social media reporting.

Shernock reported that the contract for the Cross Brothers Dam removal was awarded to Tatro Construction, a local firm experienced in navigating state restrictions and tight utility constraints. The project is scheduled between June 1 and October 1. Shernock advised that trail construction cannot proceed until the Main Street Bridge Project is completed and that is not slated until 2027. The group expressed a strong desire to proceed if construction weather were still available after the dam was removed, and noted that smaller, less intrusive equipment like a Kubota would be used to complete Section D of the proposed River Path. Hamm and Meehan shared information about accessible trail building techniques they have learned and specialists they know, including that the project under consideration is more of a PATH than a trail. Participants agreed that all inquiries regarding the contractor, Tatro Construction, and town logistics must be funneled through the town manager to ensure official and organized communication. This includes clarifying the contractor's specific work timeline to determine if the trail/path construction can be accommodated in Fall'26 (See note below)

NOTES FROM THE FIELD:

1. Shernock shared outcomes from a recent Select Board meeting, including the expectation that committees and work groups appear before the board twice a year to report on initiatives to support Town infrastructure and recreational development. The group agreed that it is always good to keep the public informed and discussed briefly the "community information window" in the former TDS office on The Common. McIlvene confirmed that the renderings of both Section D of the River Path and the Community Garden done by Meehan have been placed in the window. McIlvene offered to send photographs of the display.

2. McIlvene reported that the pilot accessibility projects at Cheney Field are now proposed for August 15th and October 3rd. The groups discussed getting Select Board approval for these dates and conducting a logistical test to ensure accessibility for equipment, such as vans and trailers, as well as mowing/brush hogging or otherwise creating alternative spaces for presentations, socializing or contemplation. Swartz and McIlvene recounted a productive meeting with the Town Forest Stewardship Committee, where the Accessibility, Walkability & Pedestrian Safety Task Force collaborated with the TFSC on plans for Cheney Field.
3. Meehan brought up the operational difficulties of the community garden, including water access and costs. He raised about the current condition of raised beds created a month ago, the potential use of combination locks for hose bibs for water and the lack of a clear job description for a garden coordinator. Questions were also raised regarding permitted plantings and the management of pests like groundhogs. Swartz volunteered to research job descriptions for community garden coordinators to provide clarity for any future volunteer.
4. Swartz informed the group about the presentation to the Select Board on 6/23 by Royal DeLegge, Planning Commission chair, regarding use of a zoning overlay as a preferable way to preserve the Town Forest. Swartz noted that the heads of both the Conversation Commission and the Town Forest Stewardship Committee had on June 9 presented an easement as the best way. Swartz invited members of the group to attend the meeting on 6/23.
5. Shernock encouraged participants to attend the upcoming meeting of the Friends of the Winooski Cohort to be held from noon-1pm on Thursday, June 25, 2026

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for 6pm on July 15, 2026 at the Northfield Senior Center.

NOTE: After the meeting Shernock learned from the Town Manager that the River Path Working Group should not plan to complete Section D of the River Path until 2028 because the replacement of the Main Street Bridge will probably require use of the space and thus ruin any construction completed.