

Northfield Conservation Commission
Minutes of July 28, 2021

1. Roll Call: John, Nigel, Debbie, Ruth, Russ attending. Meeting called to order at 6:04.
2. Minutes of the June 23, 2021 meeting were approved on a motion by Russ, 2nd by Brad. Unanimous.
3. Discussion:
 - a. Natane Deruytter presented a proposal for a path through freight-yard way connecting Northfield downtown to NU on the East side of the Dog River. A grant from the Vermont Community Foundation's Spark program may help to fund this effort if awarded. On a motion by Ruth, 2nd by Nigel, it was moved to send a letter of support as drafted by Debbie, to Natane for inclusion in the grant. Russ mentioned that it might be appropriate to have an Audubon habitat assessment performed so management of mowing etc. in this area does not negatively impact bird habitat. This path could provide an opportunity for bird watching.
 - b. There is a one-time funding opportunity in the form of 2 grants recently released by Forest, Parks and Rec department. A total of 6.1 million dollars will be awarded to recipients of the VOREC and ERSA grants. See attached link:

<https://vermontbiz.com/news/2021/july/08/state-launches-6-million-grant-program-outdoor-recreation?ct=t>

Potential projects for these grants were discussed and the group was unanimous in agreeing to support efforts to attain funding.

1. Parking for Town Forest; What elements should be included near a parking lot?
2. Signage for trails
3. Kiosks
4. Trailhead improvement
5. Mapping of forest and trails

6. Forest Management Access – (Butternut Junction, where the old timber harvest site was, or Cheney field - easement, or purchase of land). EAB will necessitate ash removal in Town Forest.
 7. Removal of invasive species
 8. Trail connection to Berlin, Ridge line trail development. May face problems with landowner's maple lines.
 9. Discussion of whether a bridge on the postal trail would be valuable. Probably too complicated for this project and not feasible.
 10. Discussion of educational ideas - kiosk for history of slate quarry or the beaver habitat.
 11. "Demonstration" Forest - holistic ecosystem management plan, with non-traditional harvest of timber, not centered on financial uses of the timber. Maybe a study toward the feasibility of this as a plan - depending on
 12. A couple events a year scheduled to bring in economic development, Lydia's foot race as example. "Events."
 13. ERSA grant discussion - might be a good option for funding Natane's Norwich to Wall Street path because that grant is designated for implementation of a trail project.
 14. Hawk watch restoration for bird watching.
4. Updates:
- a. Russ is stepping down as chair of the TFSC in August. Brad will replace him.
 - b. The Dog River Park committee has ordered benches that will have brass plaques denoting donors.
5. Adjournment: At 7:35, Russ moved, 2nd by Nigel to adjourn the meeting. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Deborah Zuaro, Chair NCC