

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT  
TOWN FOREST STEWARDSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE  
Minutes of August 18, 2020**

- I. ROLL CALL - meeting called to order by Russ Barrett. Others in intendance included Debbie Zuaro (not on TFSS but sitting in as NCC chair), John Sears, Lydia Petty, Colin Bright, Nelson Hoffman, Brad Johnson**
- II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED) - None.**
- III. SHORT INTRODUCTIONS BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS - each subcommittee member relayed who they are and what their interest in and connection to TF are**
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – this is first meeting of group, so none to approve**
- V. WELCOME – Russ Barrett**
- VI. DETERMINE CHAIRPERSON AND SECRETARY – Russ volunteered to serve as Chair until he leaves for his winter season in Georgia. Brad will serve as Secretary for the TFSS.**
- VII. DISCUSSION of access to Town Forest during Shaw closure -**

There were lots of thoughts and discussion on this matter. Nelson raised question that framed much of the discussion – what are the impacts of more access and does the TFSS want to encourage increased traffic in the forest? There was no consensus here and clearly the TFCC needs to consider this further. Lydia and others noted that the new TF signage is great. Brad still needs to put barrier in Cheney Field to separate student use area from town forest available to town residents and others. Slate Avenue is seeing increased use for parking, and needs more signage. The college has worked with the medical clinic to designate 4 weekday parking spaces behind the clinic building for TF users. On weekends, the whole lot is available but some in the public do not know this. Lydia will post something to this effect to get the word out.
- VIII. DISCUSSION of parking for recreational users – There were varying ideas about whether or not more parking is desirable and what the outcomes would be. Russ pointed out that parking and access have been long term issues in Northfield. The Ridge and River Route efforts have also highlighted the matter. The idea was raised that there is plenty of parking and access already, and more unauthorized trails are being built now. More measurements/data are needed to determine usage. Lydia will send around user count information we do have. John offered to get folks from FRP involved in looking at the question of what amount of use is appropriate. It is clear that the parking at the Shaw Center has greatly increased TF usage for recreation, and further parking could more use further into the town forest. Nelson and others pointed out there is lots of available research on what types and amounts of use are appropriate for different types of public land holdings. The TFSS needs to get residents involved in thinking on how the TF is used. A further discussion of what values we want the TF to offer residents of Northfield is needed – Recreation? Ecology? Conservation? Preservation? Russ and Debbie will work on addressing the issue of rogue trail building by talking with a couple of individuals involved.**

- IX. DISCUSSION of Hawk Watch Shelter roof - Russ reported that there was an offer of a donation to rebuild the wooden roof of the shelter, which is in bad shape. Again, more thought is needed to figure out a big picture plan for the shelter. There was discussion of the history of the trail, shelter, and guidebook. Nelson asked if the TFSS or NCC has overall philosophy on usage of town's natural resources. He also pointed out that before we fix the roof we might consider whether or not we want the shelter used regularly. There was no consensus on how to proceed with the roof donation offer.**
- X. OTHER BUSINESS – next meeting on Tuesday 9/15/20, and meetings will generally be on third Tuesday on month**
- XI. ADJOURNMENT**