NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Meeting on July 13, 2016

The Meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm.

I. **ROLL CALL:** Present were Commissioners Russ Barrett, Nathaniel Miller, Ruth Ruttenberg, Jane Pekol, Laura Hill-Eubanks, Christine Barnes, Leslie Matthews

II. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA:** None.

III. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):** None

IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** June 8, 2016 Minutes approved as written 7-0-0

V. **DISCUSSION**

1. Whetstone Walk: This is the area surrounding Cabot Hosiery that is being considered for town acquisition. We will be meeting 7/20 at 3:00 pm at Bean Chevy Dealership for a site walk along with Liza Walker from the Vermont Land Trust.
   - The purpose of the visit would be to meet Mark Bean, look at maps and see the land which he and his partners wish to sell (he owns in partnership with his cousin and brother (WhetstonePartnership)). The land consists of about 170 acres, including 12 acres of industrially/commercially zoned property around Cabot Hosiery. The property adjoins the land where the town pool and ballfield are located, as that parcel was originally transferred to the town about 70 years ago by Mark Bean's grandfather.
   - This parcel would be useful for a trail along the river connecting Northfield Falls and Northfield Village
   - VCHB may give money for river conservation, River Conservancy, Vermont Land Trust, Trust for Public Land may all be good resources to consider
2. TDS Property and VLT
   - This is a 50-acre piece at the top of Paine Mountain but outside the Town Forest. It is worth about $75,000, outside Town Forest and has a recreation easement (by deed). Town of Northfield may have the rights to cut on this parcel to maintain a view. Discussed whether it is worthwhile for the town to acquire this parcel, since it has a recreation easement. But this would protect the land from any potential development. There is male fern on the parcel. VLT may be involved in some way. TDS says in mailings that they like to contribute to communities. A formal letter could be drafted from the NCC (approved by the Selectboard) to make a formal ask for this land to be given to the town.
3. Trail Grant Update
   - Some changes can be made to the original plans for the structures to save

money (since VYCC has said they cannot do all the work in one week).

4. Nathan's work on the Town Forest Signage
   - New Map of Town Forest and surrounding area made by Nathan will be posted to our facebook. This map can be used for brochures, available in the library, or even eventually posted at the Town Forest in the future.
   - Trail blazes and tree identification signs have been created. Russ will request permission for Nathan to use an ATV to lug materials.
   - Nathan is seeking volunteers for work on installing this signage over the next few week ends. He will come up with a schedule. Ruth will post to Front Porch Forum.
   - Nathan faces board of review from the Green Mountain Council for Eagle Scout induction and will appreciate our attendance and a letter of recommendation.
5. Tree Trimming Training
   - Russ attended with 4 town workers. The training was very good and the trainer is on contract and able to return. The blue spruce in Depot Square (the Christmas tree) was recommended for replacement. Silver Fir might be a good choice.
6. Town road tree trimming policy
   - Contract is now available on Front Porch Forum. Russ took a site walk with the contractor and most of the trees they would cut Russ approved as well. The up-slope sides are prioritized for storm-water management ditches.
   - Northfield may be used for a pilot project for storm-water management through a state program.
   - Winch Hill is all marked and residents have been informed. Russ and Trent (new road foreman) are trying to meet with every land-owner to talk about the trees slated for cutting and hear the opinions of the land-owners.
   - It would be prudent to appoint a Deputy Tree Warden for the winter when Russ is away. More transparency and community organization is needed around these issues. Landowners should get to keep the hardwood trees that they want. Making this wood available for firewood was recommended. This is trying to catch up for many years of work that was not done. Concerns about spreading the knotweed and other invasive weeds if this work is not done very carefully.
7. Town Forest Stewardship Plan
   - We have $500 from a grant to potentially allocate for payment to Arrowwood for answering our further questions and attending Selectboard meeting. Questions should be sent within the next 2 weeks. We need to request the Word document from Arrowwood to make corrections.
   - There is a Forest and Parks projects grant to look at usage conflicts in town forests. We can volunteer our town forest as participant.
   - Trail inventory needs to be done. Ruth, Christine, and Laura will work on this and recommended uses with other NCC members input. Cutting of under-story by backcountry skiiers needs to be specifically addressed. Dividing up the days of the week by usage was suggested (i.e. biking on Tues, Thurs, and Sunday). The potential for some separated use of certain trails was discussed, or separate

accesses depending on use. Potentially some regulations on the direction of traffic for biking should be set (i.e. only uphill traffic on the Cheney trail). Natural resource conservation is the main focus of the NCC around the usage of trails.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at 8:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Jane Pekol. These minutes are subject to changes and approval at the next regular meeting, but are substantially correct.