

NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, February 8, 2017
6:30 P.M. Northfield Municipal Building

ROLL CALL

Present: Pam Knox, Nathaniel Miller, Ruth Ruttenberg, Christine Barnes, Jane Pekol, Laura Hill-Eubanks

II. SET/ADJUST AGENDA

1. Added Back Roads and Scholarship

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 11, 2017

1. Approved 6-0-0

V. DISCUSSION

- Stewardship Plan:
 - Laura sent changes to map, streams additions, and Appendix 4 to the Commissioners. We need to brief the Selectboard on the Stewardship Plan and the Backroads. We've decided to wait until after the elections to bring this to the new Selectboard members. Briefing the Selectboard in writing and/or in person should come at about the same time as the announcement for the public meeting.
- Zoning Regulations:
 - Christine and Laura will present to the Select Board on Feb. 28th an educational petition to change the zoning regulations regarding riparian buffer zones. A 50-ft set back keeps us safe and helps to stabilize the river and streambanks. The town's wellfield already has these buffers to protect water quality, which was a project of NCC and Friends of the Winooski. Protecting the Dog River is good for business because it was a "Blue Ribbon" Trout Rookery (one of the few in Vermont!)
 - Explain the difference between set-back and buffer: A set-back is 50' where you cannot build (and where there are incentives not to build). A buffer includes native vegetation. Pam asked whether seasonal streams are included. What counts as a stream? Some clarification is needed there. The suggestion was made to add photos, Christine will try to get some photos of the flood and of good riparian buffers.
- RPC Energy Survey
 - The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission is developing a Regional Energy Plan and seeking input from municipalities. The Commission added "identified tree canopies" and "legacy trees" and "locally significant" natural features such as Scrag Mountain. Laura wrote that Scrag Mountain should be a "known constraint." Preferred locations for

development should not include Class III Wetlands. Question on transportation and distribution of electricity as the cost of this increases the cost of the electricity to consumers. Renewable energy generation facility should be sited within what distance of transmission lines? The decision about the location of the transmission lines in relation to the generation site is a more complicated issue than just proximity, too many variables.

- Waitsfield prevents development over 1800' elevation to prevent wind development on ridge lines (the state prevents development over 2500').
- Conservation Fund
 - Establishing the fund will be on the ballot without establishing an amount. Having a conservation fund allows us to have somewhere to fundraise into, put grants into, put our small (\$200) working budget in. This will be a voice vote. Laura will be putting information on this out on Front Porch Forum soon to inform town residents prior to the vote.
- Town Meeting Day—March 7th
 - We will need a table (ask Kim). Pam has the board. Laura will be there at 10:00—meeting will likely be 10-12:00. We will have a Memorandum of Understanding on Backroads and could have a petition to sign supporting the Pilot project to get Best Practices on Back Roads. Copies of Leslie's map of the Town Forest will be good to have on hand.
 - Joanne will have an MO drafted (or signed) on the Back roads pilot project before Town Meeting Day. If we want specific things out of this pilot study, we should talk to her. Ruth suggested adding intentional cutting and canopies. Setting up an advisory committee will be one of the first steps, and it should be a diverse group.
- Town Recreation Summit: 10 communities will be selected for the Forests for the People Project (of Vermont Urban and Community Forestry), likely those who don't yet have Town Forests or TF Plans, but if we want to receive a consultant to, for example, develop educational plans, data, etc., we can apply.
- Conservation Camp Scholarship: We can get on the roster for another Rotary Grant for this purpose. Pam will talk to Cara.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED): None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT 8:35