

NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Wednesday, May 10, 2017 6:30 P.M. Brown Public Library

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Nathaniel Miller, Ruth Ruttenberg, Jane Pekol, Laura Hill-Eubanks, Russ Barrett

Not Present: Pam Knox, Leslie Mathews, Don Wallace

II. SET/ADJUST AGENDA

1. Added Recreational Trails Grant, Tree Warden info under Backroads, Invasive Weed Specialist

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 12, 2017

1. Approved 5-0-0

V. DISCUSSION

- Election of Officers

Chair—Pam Knox

Vice Chair—Russ Barrett

Secretary—Jane Pekol

Treasurer—Laura Hill-Eubanks (replacing Leslie Mathews, thank you Leslie for your service as Treasurer).

- Stewardship Plan

Leslie has finished the edits except for the cover page credits. We need to confirm that Arrowwood is comfortable with the new credits page. Leslie will send the link to the finished document after this change.

Christine or Pam may be able to be the one in charge of organization of the public forum.

Arrowwood can do an educational presentation on the Plan and we can be there to answer questions. Selectboard will be given invitations. Jane can handle doing the invitations to folks. Trail map should be posted online. We will ask Jeff to make 50-100 copies to put in the library, and then we can announce and post the link on Front Porch Forum.

Forest, Parks, and Rec has \$500 grants which could potentially be used to set up an NCC website.

Posting the maps in the Town Forest with “You are Here” in various places along the trails is a good idea but will take some funds to do weather-proof signs.

- Zoning Regulations

Laura and Ruth are now on the Planning Commission! Laura is the Chair. Planning Commission is going to be reviewing the Town Plan for an update. The land use section needs to be reviewed (low density residential currently covers forestry, agriculture, and residential) Need new forestry section and energy plan.

- Back Roads Grant

The grant will not be possible to get this year. If we can get Selectboard approval, we can get in the running for next year's part of the pilot.

Christine and Ruth attended the Arbor Day Conference. It was recommended that we follow the Tree Warden Law, which states that if there is a tree to be cut that is not a hazard tree, the Town needs to hold a hearing with the Tree Warden. (A single hearing could be done for multiple trees).

Ruth and Christine identified intact, notable canopies on some of our backroads. There are also many, many hazard trees on the backroads that should be cut. Potentially, there might be enough hazard trees to cut to make it worthwhile for Limlaw to cut only the hazard trees. Selective cutting would allow the best trees to regenerate within 25' of the road (e.g., take out two poplars to release a good looking maple).

We should also identify the landowners of the notable canopies. There is fear that landowners and the public will not have warning before cutting begins on their land.

The Town is needing to go back through on Bull Run and clean what Limlaw left, essentially the trees and stumps where their machines could not reach.

Within 5 days of the cutting, the landowner is supposed to remove it from the right-of-way currently if the landowner wants the firewood. This does not give a big enough window, especially for folks who have a lot of trees or who go on vacation for a week, etc.

- Conservation Fund

We are trying to figure out how we can raise money and whether or not we can acquire the TDS property. Laura has been in contact.

Jane will check with the FWR about a rain barrel fundraiser, potentially for the fall.

Other towns with a Conservation Fund have a criteria for which projects they are likely to approve. Setting criteria would be a good idea for the sake of transparency. Laura has some examples of criteria to look at.

- Spring Hikes

Set up a monthly hikes, including Scrag Mountain, other Town Forests, old growth forests. Publish the info well ahead of time to ensure participants, and publish multiple days at once. Some of these could be coordinated with the Green Mountain Club.

- Arbor Day and Tree Stewards

Ruth won The Forests Parks and Recreation Tree Stewardship Award for 2017—
Congratulations Ruth! Laura will post on facebook!

- Trails Grant

VYCC will start up around the third week of May. We have some un-allocated funds that we could use for a private contractor to do maintenance work in coordination with the YYCC work.

- Invasive Weed Specialists

Mike Bald (out of South Royalton) has a business called "Got Weeds." He is willing to do seminars, work days, etc.

NCC should start to do more education and outreach. Paragraphs in FPF was one idea. Further brainstorming will be on the agenda for next month.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED): None.

VI. ADJOURNMENT 8:35