

NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes of the Meeting Sunday, April 8, 2018 at 4 PM
Northfield Municipal Building (51 South Main Street)

The meeting was called to order at 4:07.

I. ROLL CALL:

Present: Ruth Ruttenberg, Laura Hill-Eubanks, Russ Barrett (by phone), Debbie Zuaro, Jane Pekol, Nathaniel Miller.

Guests: Kirk Shifferle, Lydia Petty, Colin Bright.

II. SET/ADJUST AGENDA:

Added Conservation Camp Scholarship

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Scheduled): Lydia and Collin are here to talk about a “Race up Paine Mountain” fundraiser.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes of February and March approved 4-0-1

V. DISCUSSION:

- a. Conservation Camp Scholarships:** 3 Scholarships (1 week camp) available and need to give them out. It is April, and we need to get responses immediately or the spots will fill up that quickly. We are not tied to away camps. Day camps may be more amenable. We have \$750. Could also use this to run some programs. A program could even be run as part of the Paine Mountain activities. We could potentially remove the income limitations to open the opportunity up to more people. Misse Axelrod runs conservation-focused camps and this could be an option. The Commission voted to appoint Ruth and Pam to start more actively approaching the middle-high school to promote the scholarship. Approved 5-0-0.
- b. Paine Mountain Summit Land Purchase:** Next steps and fundraising
The current end date of our fundraising is August 1 so that we can do a closing September 30th. Debbie has generated many an idea. A good fundraising campaign needs a good name. We also need a succinct statement or story to share why this is important. Typically there is a mix of soliciting major donors, then second tier of smaller businesses and organizations. Doing a mailing, even along with a regular utility bill, could be an option. “Go Fund Me” and/or Facebook are option. A race can be a good public event to raise awareness and money. Kati Osgood may be willing to re-publish an edition of the “Paine Mountain Guidebook” and this could generate awareness and/or funding. Having a display at Farmers’ Market would be a good idea.

Collin O’Neill of the Norwich Shaw Outdoor Center said that it would be great to have the students involved with a Race. Norwich could potentially help with volunteers, bathrooms, facilities, perhaps insurance, etc.

The majority of money raised from the race would come from sponsors, rather than entry fees. Businesses would likely be motivated to sponsor.

Lydia's contact, Will Robbins, organizes races professionally and could be someone to contract with to get the race off the ground and organized well. To attract serious trail runners, race should be at least 10 miles. Poster and t-shirt design can be sold in the lead-up. Collin has worked up some sketches. Lydia believes that we should accept help from Norwich and the Shaw Center if that help is offered. This may depend upon the date of the race (July might not be a time frame that Norwich is interested in).

Cabot Mills "Darn Tough" would be a really great local sponsor. Town already signs an agreement for the VAST Trail Organization that releases the Town from liability. Need to figure out any liability concerns with people on the TDS parcel, but the race event insurance would likely be the coverage we need.

We discussed the possibility for a shorter distance race for kids, others, potential fair at the bottom of the hill, sponsors could have booths, beer vendor (Good Measure), food truck.

We need a solid date for the race. Potential dates: 8/25, 9/9, 9/16, 9/23. Lydia can get some more information from Will Robbins including cost estimates.

Donations would be tax exempt. Checks made out to "Town of Northfield" with memo "Conservation Fund." "Friends of Paine Mountain" idea for sustained support. Debbie will speak to Jeff about the logistics of connecting a bank account to a website. A separate account would be helpful. Separate accounting is a benefit of a "Friends" organization. Ruth will check with the library to see how this typically works there and see if it's something we can emulate.

Soliciting many small donations is important as well. How to make this easy and efficient for people? Ways to do a mailing without having to pay for a mailing?

Get in touch with the Governor's Council on Outdoor Recreation to highlight these efforts. If we can encourage racers and their families to stay in town, stay overnight, buy food, we get a lot of economic benefit from this.

A 3-Commissioner sub-committee has formed (Debbie, Jane, Russ) along with community members and will meet to solidify these efforts.

Branding should be witty and simple. Start with t-shirts! Lydia and Collin are willing to put forth the initial money to cover t-shirt costs if they can be assured of some pre-orders.

Rain barrel fundraiser idea was floated along with a plein air painting idea at Paine Mountain.

c. Town Forest Plan

Wait to roll out the Plan until we know for sure about the purchase of the TDS Parcel.

d. Town Plan

Planning Commission has hired a planner and the natural resources portion will be written with the assistance of the NCC. This was largely already written in the last plan. Forest fragmentation is a big piece of this. Laura will put together a draft to send to the Commissioners. Land Use section and Land Use Districts is the piece that maybe needs

more attention.

- e. NCC future meeting schedule
Next meeting will be Wednesday May 16 at 5:30 pm.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Unscheduled): None

VII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 pm

Respectfully submitted by Jane Pekol. These minutes are subject to review and revision at the next scheduled meeting but are substantially correct.