

Northfield Conservation Commission

Minutes of the Meeting July 18, 2018 5:30 PM at Northfield Municipal Building

I. Roll Call

Present: Nathaniel Miller, Laura Hill-Eubanks, Debbie Zuaro, Russ Barrett, Jane Pekol, Ruth Ruttenberg, Pam Knox

Guests: Gerard LaVarnway from the Coalition for the Preservation and Protection of Northfield's Cheney Field

II. Approval of Minutes: June 20, 2018 7-0-0

III. Set/Adjust Agenda

IV. Public Participation (Scheduled):

Coalition for the Preservation of Northfield's Cheney Field

A group of citizens voted to organize and form a coalition to put forth a non-binding petition. Select Board says that they need to gauge public opinion. The Coalition has gone door-to-door and canvassed at Norwich, farmer's market. Have worked on media presence. Will be meeting on the 19th to collect hard copies. Emphasizes the need for public outreach and education. Is hoping for NCC's support on answering frequently-asked questions and what alternatives exist. Field is zoned residential. Development is not in line with the Town Plan. Is hoping to get many people to attend the next public hearing, Monday July 23. Norwich radio station may be a good way to get the message out there. WDEV and community hotspots were recommended. Fact sheets are a good tool. Deb will speak on behalf of the NCC. Selectboard members continue to debate whether the field is owned by the water department (the rate-payers). Chemicals to clean the solar panels can be toxic and this was a reason given for the solar panels not to be placed on the town well-field. Planning Commission survey shows high priority for the natural environment. An online survey could be a good way to gauge public opinion.

V. Discussion:

- a. Discussion about the potential for a ballot measure for this November, and NCC to ask for a ballot measure, as the Utility Commission Chair suggested prior to the first Public Hearing. Business owners should be approached to see whether they would attend the next public meeting to voice their opinion and help quantify the recreation destination dollars that the Town sees from the Town Forest. Planning Commission's Energy Forum (for public input on renewables siting and other energy issues) may be the first Town Plan forum. NCC will put out a notice to encourage residents to attend the next Public Hearing on Cheney. Debbie will clearly present the documents at the forum which show that Cheney Field is part of the Town Forest.
- b. TDS Fundraising: \$11,280.00 and counting! Debbie has sent an article with photos to be published to the Northfield News' next issue. Kati Osgood and her husband are interested in doing a Town Forest Float for the Northfield Labor Day Parade! Genie

Bright has made a beautiful quilt which she is willing to raffle off at the Labor Day festivities.

- c. Land Purchase: Contract is on track. Deposit money is in hand with TDS. Closing date is set.
 - d. Emerald Ash Borer: Russ got the go-ahead to form a Committee to make an EAB Plan for the town. Ruth and Russ have met and Ruth has been in contact with the Forestry Extension. Posters are in hand from the Extension. Ruth posted about the materials to PPF. Forum is scheduled on August 26 with Laura Ranker's Boy Scout group, from 5-6:30 at United Church. They will be trained on how to identify Ash Trees. Girl Scouts have also been invited. Landowners need to be informed on how to manage Ash trees at the current moment. Suggested policy for town land will be included in the EAB Plan. Made plans for tabling at the farmers' market and the Night on the Common. Pam has coordinated efforts with the school children and can do this again this year. Floated ideas to make Ash trees visible to people, such as purple ribbon and a sign (purple is the color of the insect traps for the EABs). A public forum with UVM Extension, the State, and Russ will be held August 21.
- VI. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 PM.

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