

NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, December 18, 2018, 7:00 PM

Minutes

- I. **ROLL CALL:** Present were Ruth Ruttenberg, Debbie Zuaro, Laura Hill-Eubanks, and Russ Barrett (by phone until 7:35 PM).
- II. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA:** Move up Dustin's Pasture item.
- III. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None
- IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** October 17, 2018; November 28, 2018. Tabled.
- V. **DISCUSSION**
 - a. **Dustin's Pasture maple lease:** Commercial sugar/maple sugar producer has a lease to tap about 10,000 trees on a town forest property known as Dustin's Pasture. NCC received complaints that the producer was making a mess of the land and had cleared trees and brush to install a building. He may have violated the lease with the town by clearing trees without permission and putting the building in a place that was not approved in the lease. The way in which he installed the taps may not be in conformance with Current Use guidelines and, if so, the town would be subject to penalties. NCC may send a member to assess the potential damages. The County Forester, Dan Singleton, should be sent up to see whether the taps violate Current Use guidelines. NCC and Select Board should develop an oversight process to ensure the town forest property is managed properly.
 - b. **Cheney Field solar farm:** Ballot wording has been proposed by a group that opposes using Cheney Field for a large-scale solar farm. Wording is as follows: "Shall the Town Voters support the use of the Cheney Field, located in the Town Forest and on the Cheney Farm Road on lower Paine Mountain, for the development of a large (1.2 MW, utility-scale) solar project?" The Secretary of State's Office advised on the wording. Goal is to give enough information to allow voters to understand what they are voting on. NCC supports this wording and will send a representative to the Select Board to convey its support.
 - c. **Budget:** NCC will be allowed access to the donations that were received in excess of the amount needed to purchase the TDS property on Paine Mountain. The property has been added to the Town Forest. The funds will be used for trail maintenance and management of the property.
 - d. **Grants:** The town is in the process of submitting a Better Connections grant application. The funds would support planning for trails that would connect recreation areas and the villages. Debbie Zuaro is working with a group that is focused on the project. The town is also going to apply for a grant to help prevent damages to ash trees caused by the Emerald Ash Borer. Ruth and Russ are working on that grant.
- VI. **ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.