

## Agenda Northfield Conservation Commission

October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 6:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call: Debbie, Russ, Ruth, John
2. Public participation: Dave Packie
3. Minutes of 9-23-20 Meeting approved, unanimously on motion by Ruth, 2<sup>nd</sup> by John.
4. Budget discussion: A motion by Ruth to include \$400 annually for EAB related expenses; tree inoculation every 3 years & planting of alternate species was 2<sup>nd</sup>ed by John; unanimous. Map development and trail maintenance are also necessary & will be supported by \$500 in maintenance line item.
5. EAB Grant updates: A forum for homeowners will take place with the help of VT Coverts on Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> with Joanne Gorton and Russ presenting. John will do FPF and FB postings and Debbie will do press releases for local news. A 2<sup>nd</sup> forum on January 13<sup>th</sup> will focus on forest landowners; 7:00 p.m.
6. Progress with Ash tree removal: Debbie, Russ, Ruth, Jeff and Pat Demasi met remotely to discuss tree removal. A target date of Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> was set for the progress report and invoicing of the State. We have an extension to the EAB grant until June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
7. Dave Packie joined the meeting to explain his interest in joining the NCC. See attached letter of interest. On a motion by Russ, 2<sup>nd</sup> by John, Dave

was unanimously recommended for appointment by the Select Board.

8. Update on TFSC meeting: Russ reported that the group has discussed unsanctioned trails, responded to the NU ROTC activities, has created a form to use for special event requests in the Town Forest. A timber harvest is also under discussion.
9. 1000 feet of Town Forest boundary remain to be marked. Over 30,000 feet are completed. New welcome signs are out to replace the ones that went missing.
8. Adjournment at 6:52. Motion by Russ, 2<sup>nd</sup> by John.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deborah Zuaro, Chair  
Revised 11-25-20

Hi Deb. I am interested in serving on the NCC. I understand there are 2 vacant seats. My personal interests in serving on the commission are town forest management and dam removal on the Dog River. I am a former professional trail builder and designer. I have worked in the National Forest, State Forest blocks, Town Forests and many trail networks located on private land. I think my trail building and maintenance experience will be invaluable to the TFSC if I am able to serve on the NCC. The activities I enjoy in the TF are hiking, hunting, foraging, biking, skiing, and trail work, and education. With the new structure for official work in place, and a process for new trails application and approval being created, I look forward to continuing to protect and enhance the experience for all users of the TF by improving the existing infrastructure, and developing a complete and inclusive recreation plan. I have been involved in this effort over the years, including helping draft the stewardship plan, and would like to continue to contribute as things progress. There are many challenges the TF will face as we go forward, and I think my experience and insight in trail development and recreational management will be of value to the committee and the town.

The Dog River has been, for half a century, one of the best trout streams in New England. We have recently seen 2 projects reconnect important spawning habitat for the native fish population in the river system. As 1 of 2 rivers in the state of Vermont with completely wild, not stocked, populations of trout, the removal of the Cox Brook and Bull Run dams are highly significant. My goal is to let the Dog run free from source to confluence with the Winooski. The three dams still standing are "Dead Beat Dams". They are post-industrial waste that fragment the ecosystem. Furthermore, 2 of these dams represent a significant hazard to the public. Both locations, (1) just

downstream of the Rt 12 bridge at the Commons, and (2) the dam in Northfield Falls, still have open diversions for pen stocks that once fed industrial equipment. These diversions intermittently open and close with siltation from high water events. They are what are known as sieves, and could easily result in serious injury or death if a swimmer unknowingly got too close to the powerful suction these openings in the dams produce below water line. With these dams removed, the river would be restored to its natural state for the first time in a century. As can be viewed at the two dam removal sites mentioned above, what will be revealed by the removal of these concrete hulks will be beautiful falls and cascades that will become a jewel for both downtown, and the Falls. Fish from the Winooski will regain access to cold water refuge from fatal summer temperatures in the lower river system, and miles of spawning habitat above the previously removed dams for the first time in 100 years.

It would be an honor and pleasure for me to represent these interests and help drive these projects for the town as a member of the NCC. I look forward to hearing back about the procedure to become appointed to this body that has worked hard for years to enhance life in Northfield for residents, and protect habitat and recreational resources for the town and neighboring communities.

Regards,  
Dave Packie  
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