

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of July 20, 2020
Planning Commission Meeting

In keeping with Governor Phil Scott's COVID-19 "stay at home" directive, the meeting was held remotely.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Chair Hill-Eubanks.

Roll Call: Present for the meeting were Commissioners Laura Hill-Eubanks, Nancy Peck, and Aaron Rhodes, Chandra Blackmer and Ruth Ruttenberg; and was Clerk Mitch Osiecki. Also present was Northfield resident Lydia Petty, representing the Northfield Ridge + River Routes trails committee.

Public Participation: Lydia Petty of Northfield Ridge + River Routes

Set/Adjust Agenda: Lydia Petty will speak about the ongoing work of her group. Laura wants to add discussion of Planning Grant.

Northfield Ridge + River Routes: Lydia briefly described some of the work of the trails committee. They've begun to write a plan for future projects they might undertake. They've developed and posted a community survey that's up until the end of the month. Had planned a walking tour of several points of interest, but the COVID-19 pandemic has altered plans somewhat. It's now a self-guided virtual walking tour.

Lydia hopes PC members can make time to take the virtual tour (Laura has emailed a link) and take the survey at the end, which will provide some valuable feedback to the group. There are several elements of the trail plan that mesh well with goals articulated in the new Town Plan. Feedback from virtual tour and survey will help the trails committee prioritize projects that might be undertaken in the future.

The trails group is currently operating with the support of a couple of mini-grants. Hoping to generate interest within the community and possibly pursue some additional grant opportunities down the road.

Brief discussion of some potential traffic-calming measures along sections of Route 12, particularly between Northfield Falls and Topp's grocery store. Realistically a path connecting Northfield Falls and Northfield Village is a long way off.

Also discussed was the possibility of planting some fruit/shade trees. Particularly along Wall Street. It's a popular walking route, but with little shade currently.

Final reminder: survey is up until the end of the month. Committee would love to get some additional feedback. Lydia Petty left the meeting at this point.

Town Plan Update: Draft Plan has been updated. Town Plan is on the agenda for the Select Board meeting on Aug 11. No guarantees, but there's a chance the SB could act to approve the Town Plan at this meeting.

CVRPC still has to hold a public hearing on the plan. The CVRPC hearing will most likely be scheduled for September. They tend not to schedule much in the month of August, due largely to staff vacations.

If Town Plan is approved and adopted in a timely manner, the PC could conceivably apply for a Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) to help cover costs of associated with revising Zoning Regulations. (MPG has a submission deadline of Oct 1.)

No need to recommend any action tonight, but it's worth thinking about whether this is something the PC would like to pursue. Discussion ensued regarding pros and cons of pursuing a MPG this year versus next. MPG's are made available every year. Some question as to whether the pool of money might be cut this year due to COVID-related budget issues.

The practicality of pursuing a grant this year vs. next could be influenced by whether the SB acts to approve /adopt the Town Plan on Aug 11.

Election of Officers: Ruttenberg nominated Hill-Eubanks continue as Chair; Peck seconded. **Motion carried, 5-0-0.** Ruttenberg nominated Rhodes to continue as vice-chair; Blackmer seconded. **Motion carried, 5-0-0.** Rhodes nominated Osiecki to continue as Clerk; Blackmer seconded. **Motion carried, 5-0-0.**

Meeting Schedule: After discussion, preference was to change meeting day from Monday. Wednesdays seem to work for all. 7:00pm appears workable. A proposal was made and agreed to by consensus to change the monthly meeting to the first Wednesday of the month, beginning in September.

Approval of Minutes: Peck moved to approve minutes of June 11, 2020; Rhodes seconded. **Motion carried 5-0-0.**

Next Regular Meeting: August 17, 2020 at 7:00pm.

Chair Hill-Eubanks passed along a request from the Northfield Ridges + Rivers Routes that a PC member consider joining the group as an active member.

Adjournment: Peck moved to adjourn; Blackmer seconded. **Motion carried 5-0-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:51 pm.