

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT**  
**NORTHFIELD RIVERWALK PROJECT**  
**WORKING GROUP MEETING**  
**Minutes of January 15, 2025**  
**Full meeting recording is available at**  
<https://youtu.be/bSQ5eiHKN3o>

- I. ROLL CALL.** Participants: Kaitlyn Keating (6:22 p.m.), DeLane McIlvene, Patrick Meehan, Merry Shernock, Carolyn Stevens, and Tim Swartz.

The meeting started at 6:10 p.m.

- II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Scheduled):** None.

- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The November 20, 2024 meeting minutes were approved without objections.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Updates on Action Items from Previous Meeting**

- 1. Dollar General Requests.** Merry reported that Tom Davis was unable to attend tonight but has provided a written update of his interaction with Dollar General regarding an easement and a revision of their Act 250 permit in order to facilitate this project. The letter he received from Dollar General states that they are still considering these requests and blamed delays in the decision-making process to the just concluded holiday season, a change in legal representation, etc. Merry said this project basically will remain in limbo status until these matters can be resolved. It was suggested that the upcoming Cross Brothers Dam removal process might hasten their decision on these requests since they have already provided site access for the dam removal. Patrick believes the access path established through Dollar General property for the dam removal can and should be left in place for use by the Riverwalk project.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Brainstorm on Submission for Town Report.** Merry is planning to write a one-page submission on this project for the 2025 Town Report, which will be going to the printer in a few weeks. She would like some input tonight regarding what should be included in this document. There was a discussion of whether the report should include a reduced size version of Patrick's conceptual drawing for this project. After some discussion, the consensus was to make reference to the locations where large versions of the conceptual designs may be viewed in person (see below). Patrick suggested including background history of this project as well as the current focus on Section D of the overall plan. This will include the plans to install chairs, picnic tables, etc. along the riverside path. Merry will finalize and submit the project report before next week's deadline.

**b. Plan Campaign to Raise Awareness and Build Support for Project**

- 1. Large Conceptual Drawings Display Locations.** There are at least two large easels available that can be used to display the large conceptual drawings. One will be put on display at the Brown Public Library (upstairs) and the other in the Municipal Building near the front door.

2. **Smaller (12x17) Conceptual Drawings Display Locations.** The smaller displays can be provided to the local schools, shops, restaurants, gas stations, the Senior Center, the Norwich University (NU) library, etc. There now are eight (8) copies but more could be produced very easily.
  3. **Possible Submission to Northfield News.** Merry said providing a written report to the Northfield News is more difficult now that they are a monthly publication and have early submission deadlines. Tim said there is a February 8, 2025 deadline for their March 2025 edition, which should be released the last week in February. It would be nice to have an article on the Riverwalk project published before Town Meeting Day (03/04/25) but it is not necessary.
  4. **Scheduling of Community Meetings.** Merry would like to hold some public meetings on this project in order to better inform the community on what has happened to date and build support for not just Section D of the project but also Sections A, B, and C. Patrick felt it would be good to hold a meeting in conjunction with the groundbreaking for the Cross Brothers Dam removal project. Unfortunately, we don't know exactly when this will happen and whether Dollar General will provide their easement in the near future. The decision regarding community meetings was put on hold until more information is available.
- c. **Reports from the Field, i.e. other committees, projects, etc.** Merry would like to hear from working group members who may belong to other committees, ad hoc groups, etc. or have attended their public meetings and could report what projects are ongoing or planned that might relate to and further the Riverwalk project. Kaitlyn is a member of the Accessibility, Walkability, and Pedestrian Safety (AWPS) Task Force and reported that they will be working with the NU Senior Design Project Team in order to obtain public feedback on how to best improve pedestrian safety along Vermont Route 12 near the university. It was noted the AWPS Task Force members have been very supportive of the Riverwalk project from the beginning as the paths produced are intended to be universally accessible. It also was reported that the Fernandez Living Trust is considering removing its storage buildings behind the Northfield Fire Station in order to construct additional senior housing. The planned location would juxtapose Section B of the Riverwalk project. Patrick noted that this is only a concept at this time and the new housing units might not be built for several years (if at all). Merry noted Economic Development Director Tom Davis has proposed to the Select Board members that a local non-profit entity be established with a goal of producing additional affordable housing in Northfield. That proposal also is in its early stages.

**VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Unscheduled).** There was none.

**VII. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Wednesday, February 19, 2025.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT.** Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.