

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
NORTHFIELD RIVERWALK PROJECT
WORKING GROUP MEETING
Minutes of November 20, 2024
Full meeting recording is available at
<https://youtu.be/fYWHwOdc3A>

- I. ROLL CALL.** Participants: Tom Davis, Kaitlyn Keating, Patrick Meehan, Charlie Morse, Mary Nadon Scott, Merry Shernock, Carolyn Stevens, and Tim Swartz.

The meeting started at 6:00 p.m.

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

- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The October 16, 2024 meeting minutes were approved without objections.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

a. Updates on Action Items from Previous Meeting

- 1. Dollar General Act 250 Permit Expansion update.** Charlie said the Select Board members were informed Dollar General does have an Act 250 permit in place that would have to be amended for this project. The current plan is for Manager Jeff Schulz to deliver the updated permit to Dollar General and for the municipality will pay for any related permit costs. It was suggested that that this particular jurisdictional opinion had been an open secret for several months as Carolyn Stevens also had been in contact with the State of Vermont about this. Charlie would like continuing updates on the Act 250 permit process. Tom will provide these updates for the working group members. He added that he has been in contact with Dollar General representatives about easements and is hopeful he will have a firm answer before this group meets again (12/18/24).
- 2. Senior Center Easement Meeting update.** Charlie has met with Senior Center representatives, including new director Tim McAdoo, and they seem very positive about this project. They have been informed that Section D of the project would be done first so they would be able to see how well that turns out. Charlie felt further outreach probably should wait until Section D is underway. He also believes getting the aforementioned Act 250 permit is the linchpin for the whole project.
- 3. Cross Brothers Dam Removal Project update.** Patrick said the Dollar General property probably will be used as a staging area for this project, which is scheduled for next year. As there already a planned disruption for this area, Dollar General therefore might be more willing to help with easements, etc. for this Riverwalk Project. This area probably will be similarly used again by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) for the Main Street Bridge Replacement project in 2026.

4. **Fernandez Living Trust Negotiations update.** Kaitlyn said the easements for this area will only be required for Section C of the Riverwalk Project so there probably is no rush in these negotiations. Tom said the Fernandez family were able to receive a number of concessions from VTrans for the nearby Main Street Bridge Replacement project so they might be more amenable to providing easements for this project when the time comes.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Available Grant Opportunity (Recreational Trail Program).** Tom said the grant application for the Recreational Trail Program has a December 6, 2024 deadline and he is now working on this. This grant has a \$50,000 maximum amount with a twenty percent (20%) local match amount. Tom noted that there might be other local applicants for this grant.
- b. **Outreach Opportunities including Town Meeting Day, etc.** Merry asked if there should be an informational display for the Riverwalk Project should be put out for Town Meeting Day. The open session will be held at the Northfield Middle & High School (NMHS) on the evening of Monday, March 3, 2024 and the Australian balloting will be held in the building the next day. The working group members expressed support for this suggestion and it was felt the materials provided could be similar to those provided at this summer's Night on the Common. It was felt that the artistic depiction of Section D provided by Patrick was very informative and could be provided again in a larger format.
- c. **Future Fund Sources.** As Economic Development Director, Tom is always keeping an eye out for grant opportunities. He doesn't expect any new ones to present themselves until after the holiday season. However, there should be a good number becoming available next January. Merry thought that seeking local funds through crowdsourcing probably would have to wait until the project is somewhat underway. She felt people would be more willing to pay for dedicated benches, etc. along the trail route once they have seen some ground broken.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Unscheduled).

- a. **Carolyn Stevens: Outreach Suggestions.** Carolyn said she was really appreciative of all that the working group members have been able to achieve for this project to date. She added that she has heard a lot of positive local feedback about this project and hopes that residents will be kept regularly informed of any future developments. Carolyn thought it might be a good idea to have project information, pictures, etc. put on display at the Brown Public Library as they get a lot of foot traffic there. The Common Rehabilitation Project had such a display there with survey forms this past summer and it seemed to be received enthusiastically by library patrons. The working group members thought that was a good idea and Charlie suggested mounting project information on large posterboards. Patrick will contact Library Director Sherri Brickey to confirm whether this would be acceptable.

VII. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, December 18, 2024.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT. Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.