

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
VOREC Grant Implementation Committee
Minutes of August 12, 2024

- I. Roll Call.** Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) Grant Implementation Committee Chair Deborah Zuaro, members Russ Barrett, Colin Bright, Kim Caldwell, Melody Currier (absent), Jason Endres, Lucas Herring (absent), Andrew Padilla, and Lydia Petty.

Committee Chair Zuaro called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

- II. Public Participation (Scheduled):** None.

- III. Approval of Minutes: July 22, 2024.** Motion by Committee member Petty, seconded by Committee member Bright, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 7-0-0.**

IV. Updates

- a. Map Adjustments.** Committee Chair Zuaro said Committee members Bright and Endres have been coordinating on making some adjustments to the wayfinding and trail maps. Committee member Bright said the boundaries of Cheney Farm were corrected and in the process some trail depictions were found to be in error. These can be easily changed by DuBois & King. Committee member Bright then asked if any of the other committee members had any changes to suggest. This can either be done tonight or at the next meeting. After some discussion, it was decided that the Lybrand Trail will remain on the map even though it requires some significant repairs before it can be put back into full operation. Committee member Petty suggested adding a marker to the map to indicate the trail's impassable sections. Committee member Bright thought it might be useful to create a "temporarily closed" symbol for the map key that could be used for the Lybrand Trail. Committee member Padilla thought the needed repairs might be as much as five (5) years away. Committee member Caldwell noted that some of the colors used to indicate certain trails don't match the colors used by the trail blazes. Most of the blaze colors are correct and Committee member Bright will make the map modifications. Committee Chair Zuaro thought that would be a good idea in order to avoid confusing first-time trail users. She then asked the other committee members to review the maps for any additional concerns before the maps are finalized.
- b. SE Group Survey Results.** Committee Chair Zuaro said about 120 trail intercept survey responses were collected, which she thought was an impressive amount. The information contained on these surveys was forwarded to Jeremy Whalen on the Northfield Conservation Commission (NNC), which has submitted a American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds request to the Select Board to cover the expense of trail rehabilitation. These surveys also will be used by the SE Group when preparing the Economic Impact Report that is required before closing out the grant. Committee member Petty thought that some of the information collected was not too surprising, i.e. most trail users are Northfield residents and they hike the trails on a regular basis. The comments included with the survey answers also were quite interesting and had a number of helpful suggestions. Committee Chair Zuaro said the results of the local business surveys were less enlightening even though Carrier Roasting Company seemed to spend much time on their response. Other businesses didn't seem to provide too much information by comparison. These surveys also will be sent to SE Group and they should have a draft report completed by next month.

Committee Chair Zuaro noted that there had been some problems with the trail counters as some provided apparent overcounts while others didn't record much at all. New and (hopefully) more accurate counter data will be collected later this week.

V. Discussion

- a. Wood & Wood Signage and Estimates.** Committee Chair Zuaro provided some updated cost estimates and artistic depictions of the new signage that will be constructed by Wood & Wood. There also were several options provided for thicker, more durable sign material available at a higher cost. Committee member Bright said several options were provided for the trail kiosk both for its design and the materials used. Committee Chair Zuaro also showed a sketch of the large informational sign that is going to be installed on the Common. Committee member Bright noted that some trail signs will need to be professionally installed due to the hard ground on which they would be located. However, most of the new signs could be driven into softer ground by volunteers. Committee Chair Zuaro believes the budget for sign installation has sufficient funds to cover all options. There also was a preference to keep the lettering on trail signs as brief as possible in order to keep costs low. Committee member Bright will be the contact person for letting Stone & Stone aware of which options the committee members prefer. Committee member Padilla will let Stone & Stone know about how the additional signs Norwich University (NU) will be purchasing should appear.

VI. Other Business

- a. Directional Street Signs.** As part of the wayfinding master plan, metal signs will be attached to existing traffic signposts that will direct people to outdoor recreational facilities, the Town Forest, etc. Committee Chair Zuaro said it needs to be determined where these signs would be located and towards which local points of interest.
- b. Kingston Road Upgrade.** Committee Chair Zuaro said there is a need to contact Town Manager Jeff Schulz to request that Kingston Road, which is an access point for the Town Forest, be regraded. Committee member Padilla said he spoke to Manager Schulz earlier today and was told that work would be done soon. Committee Chair Zuaro thought that was good news. Committee member Barrett added that an automobile repair shop located on Barrows Road is willing to allow Town Forest hikers park at their business.
- c. Programming.** Committee Chair Zuaro said the scheduled events are coming along well and the costs are coming in within budget. The committee members noted that the feedback from these events has been very positive.

VII. Public Participation (Unscheduled). There was none.

VIII. Adjournment. Motion by Committee member Barrett, seconded by Committee member Petty, to adjourn. **Motion passed 7-0-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

These minutes are subject to approval at the next regular meeting.