

**Town of Northfield, Vermont**  
**Northfield Conservation Commission**  
**Minutes of December 11, 2024**

1. Roll call: Nigel, Jeremy, Russ, Ruth, Debbie, David and Simon Parish, member of the public
2. Updates to agenda: Annual report
3. No scheduled public participation.
4. Minutes of the September 25, 2024 meeting were approved.
5. Discussion:
  - A. ARPA grant update. The grant agreement and contract with Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) are now approved. The work will involve two weeks of VYCC crew time on the Garvey Hill trails, and two weeks on Town forest. Some tree clearing work on Garvey Hill trails has already begun.
  - B. Conservation Easement for Town Forest: David reported on conversations he has had. Continued informal outreach will consider.
  - C. Forest Protection Zone for Town Forest: The Planning Commission has invited NCC to one of its meetings. Nigel agreed to contact Planning Commission to see if he can attend their next meeting on January 7.
  - D. Winter Programming: Members discussed the potential for winter programming. Debbie mentioned that the Accessibility/Walkability group has a grant to support an event at Norwich University and there may be an opportunity for collaboration. Members agreed to continue to consider opportunities for other events.
  - E. Association of Vermont Conservation Commission's Tiny Grants Program: David raised the question whether the NCC has ever applied for one of these in the past. Members discussed past efforts to apply and agreed that it would be worth exploring for the future.

6. Updates

- A. Tree Grants: Ruth reported on the draft application and there was discussion of options for the types of trees best suited for various locations including Cheney Field. The Commission approved Ruth submitting the application.
- B. TFSC update: Jeremy reported on a mix of issues including knotweed removal on Cheney Field, possibility of signs to help cross-country skiers navigate the trails, and recent experiences with large numbers of Norwich students accessing lean-to and leaving a mess behind.
- C. VOREC update: Debbie reported that the VOREC Committee has requested an extension to complete the sign installation until springtime. Some signs have already been installed and members agreed that they look terrific.

7. Public participation Unscheduled: Simon Pearish shared concerns about proposals for a new trail cut involving the Lybrand Trail. Jeremy and Town Forest Stewardship Committee will explore options and seek advice from Vermont Youth Conservation Corps team. There may be a need to coordinate with Norwich University if any of the trail work will involve University land. Jeremy will seek to include Simon in those conversations given his knowledge of the area.

Simon Pearish also raised a question about whether it might be possible to locate a new parking area to improve access to Cheney Field, using the equipment that will be mobilized this summer to work on the Town's drinking water storage facilities. Discussion of a past report by Dubois and King that identified potential issues with constructing an access road. The Town Forest Stewardship Committee will discuss further at their next meeting.

- 8. Other business: The annual report is due in early January. David will put together a draft for review by the other members.
- 9. The meeting adjourned at 7:30.