

# Northfield Open Space Committee

Minutes, April 19, 2016

Town Hall – Land Committee Room

Present: Mike Barry, Julia Blyth, Leslie Powers, Jerry Wagener.

Absent: Robin Conley, Bob Hall, Joanne McGee, Sue Ross, Kate Rossiter

The meeting opened at 7:40.

1. **Minutes:** As there was one short of a quorum, no votes were taken.
2. **Member comments:** (1) Mike reported that Matthias Nevins of Mount Grace had met with the ConsCom to discuss permits, etc., for installation of the accessible trail on the Ames CR property. (2) Jerry reported that the trail maps dispensers at the Mill Brook, Hobo Falls, and KPH trailhead kiosks were empty; he restocked them. More trail maps are needed, but there is adequate budget and Jerry will get a new supply of maps. (3) Jerry reported that a small team went to the Town Forest to certify vernal pools; two of four potential vernal pools were not certifiable; certification data was collected on the other two. In the course of traversing the property five of the property corners were found and GPS coordinates duly recorded.
3. **TPL/NMH project update:** JT Horn of TPL was present and discussed the town meeting warrant articles: one article to authorize \$100,000 for the town to purchase 297 acres in the vicinity of Grandin Reservoir and one article to acquire a Conservation Restriction on the 35 acres of water company land including Grandin Reservoir. Colonial Water Co., a division of Valley Water Co. is the proposed purchaser of the East Northfield Water Co., but JT reported that negotiations were complex because of needed capital improvements to the system and uncertainty over whether DEP will require a filtration installation; this water system is one of only two in the state that do not require filtration because of the purity of the water. Negotiations with the water company JT estimates will take another year, taking the project past the June 30 financing deadline. For this reason TPL has asked NMH to separate the sale of the land from sale of the water company; the NMH board will consider this request at its May 7 board meeting. If this request is denied then funding the \$2.3M land purchase will have to start all over and will likely delay the project at least two additional years; in this event JT mentioned approaching the Federal Forest Legacy program for primary funding. If NMH approves the request then \$2.2M will be used to purchase about 1300 of the 1600 acres, with the 297-acre town purchase (\$100K) delayed to the water company purchase time frame. A couple of other pieces of info: (a) 24 acres of the 297-acre town purchase are in NH (not problem with this), (b) DEP has required zone-A (highest protection) extend in a narrow band up two streams feeding Grandin Reservoir, and (c) there are several vernal pools ready for certification on the property.
4. **Community Park update:** Julia reported that members of the Community Park Committee will attend a May 5 training session oriented toward applying for state DCS PARC grants.
5. **TGP pipeline update:** Julia reported that she attended a court hearing in Pittsfield associated with the TGP suit against the state regarding article 97 of the state constitution.

6. **Alderbrook accessible trail update:** The DCR grant for this trail has (finally) been approved. Matthias Nevins will manage the project and has begun to hold meetings and begin work. (See also Mike's comment above.)
7. **Speck sensors:** The committee was investigating the possible purchase of a few of these sensors to monitor air quality along the pipeline route. Julia reported that these require 110-volt electricity, which rules them out for use in the remote places the committee had in mind. Therefore the committee interest has been suspended (to use the term that presidential campaigns employ in this political season).
8. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. The next meeting will be May 17, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Wagener

TPL	Trust for Public Land
NMH	Northfield Mount Hermon School
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
DCR	Department of Conservation and Recreation
FRCOG	Franklin Regional Council of Governments
DFW	Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
EEA	Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
GNWA	Greater Northfield Watershed Association

John Blythe

Foki K. Cady

Joanne McLee

Melinda

J. T. Wagener