

Northfield Open Space Committee

December 8, 2020 – Zoom- 7 p.m.

Minutes

Present: Julia Blyth, Robin Conley, Joanne McGee, Jenny Tufts, Jerry Wagener.

Absent: Sue Space

Guests: Kristen Sykes, AMC and Board of Directors, Massachusetts Land Trust Alliance
Bee Jacque, Northfield Selectboard

Items in italics require action before the next meeting.

1. **Minutes:** The minutes for Nov. 24, 2020, were approved. Jenny/Jerry 5-0
2. **Solar siting:** Kristen outlined concerns about siting large scale solar projects on prime agricultural farmland. The lack of guidelines in the state programs resulted in acres of forestland and farmlands destroyed. She forwarded to us copies of letters from various organizations that are concerned about the lack of guidelines to protect ecological resources. Solar panels should be sited on roofs, landfills, disturbed land, commercial land but not on land which is more than 50% BioMap2. The dual use with higher panels above farmland is a new concept with no data now. Before the state promotes dual use solar, it needs to analyze the results on some test plots for farming viability. Kristen feels that the state is pushing out the siting process too quickly.

Other questions included siting solar on conservation restricted land, grazing under the panels, possibility of a moratorium to create more effective by law. Zara Dowling at UMASS Clean Energy Center is a good resource for towns; she is doing presentations for Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

After Kristen finished and left the meeting, Jenny suggested communicating with the Planning Board about the unproven effectiveness of dual use solar and at the same time reaffirm our support for properly sited solar installations. *Julia will draft a letter to the Planning Board and to the Energy Committee.*

3. **OSRP revision:** On the revised action map, the boat ramp and path action item pointer does not point to the actual location. Two permanently preserved parcels, Brush Mt. Conservation Area and Northfield Town Forest, are omitted from the map. *Julia will forward those comments to FRCOG.* Julia thanked Bee for the Historical Commission's section of the OSRP.
4. **Mill Brook trail:** Still no word from Shelby Snow. We need permission from the Snow family before we proceed with the project. Julia will be talking with Andrea about the wording on the scope of work. Mill Brook, originally Cowas or Covas Brook, was an important boundary between Native American groups.
5. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:40. Julia will announce the date of the next meeting in January.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne McGee, Secretary