

Northfield Open Space Committee

Public Forum for Open Space Recreation Plan

Minutes

February 10, 2021 via zoom

Present: Julia Blyth, Joanne McGee, Sue Space, Jenny Tufts, Jerry Wagener

Absent: Robin Conley

Attendees: Helena Farrell and Kim McPhee, FRCOG

Sarah Wells, Kate Sutcliffe, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust

Bridget Likely, Appalachian Mountain Club

Andrea Llamas, Northfield Town Administrator

Bee Jacque, Northfield Selectboard, Historical Commission

Lara Dubin, Northfield Community Preservation Committee

Joan Stoia, Northfield Historical Commission

Steve Stoia, Northfield Area Business and Tourism Association

Zach DeLuca, Greenfield Recorder

Craig Hefner, Patter Field, Mary King, Dan Leahy, Amy Stratford, Melissa Gamache, local residents

The meeting, organized by FRCOG, opened at 6:30 pm.

1. Helena introduced the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), outlined the eleven sections, and listed the following key features that are additions since the last plan: 2014 Master Plan, Revised Zoning By Laws, Hazard Mitigation plans, First Light relicensing, the Woodlands and Wildlands discussion, and resources available from land trusts.
2. After outlining the procedure of revising the plan, she explained the demographic, employment, and growth statistics; water resources; ecological and scenic resources; and displayed the maps to be included.
3. The public survey yielded 240 responses and was the basis for developing the goals and objectives for both open space and recreation. Helena displayed the Action map with the top ten priorities for the next seven years.
4. Kim McPhee described the background, current issues, and problems with the First Light response to public requests for more recreation facilities as it proceeds with its relicensing application. When the public comment period opens, Kim urged Northfield to provide a “robust inclusion” of the town’s needs and to also talk with our legislators to press the Department of Environmental Protection about our concerns. First Light has a responsibility for use of the resources and to the communities along the river.

Comments: Attendees were generally impressed with the plan and contents.

- Tourism needs to be mentioned as an economic driver (Northfield Area Business and Tourism Association)
- Increase access for swimming. No place on the river for swimming. Should accommodate tourism needs and residents; family friendly, public access.
- First Light restricts businesses from river operation. “Residents deserve access to the river.” This affects recreation, cultural, & historic access.
- Need stronger language about effects of pumped storage (this comment came before Kim’s comments.)
- No access to river

- Schell Bridge construction may mean construction of secondary board ramp and need to coordinate plans around Pauchaug Boat ramp with the construction (Andrea)

Helena will receive comments about the plan for several more weeks. Her email is hfarrell@frcog.org. Comments can also be made through www.NorthfieldMassTrails.org/OSRP. More information about First Light project is available at the Connecticut River Conservancy website www.ctriver.org/our-work/hydropower.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne McGee, Secretary