

Brownington Planning Commission
Wednesday, August 20, 2025
Town Clerk's Office
7:00 P.M.

Agenda

Attended by: Kate Wolff, Amey Dettmer, Jane Greenwood, Bill Davis(chair), Mark Hastings, Larry Thompson, Byron Burdick, Pat Cooper,

Guests: Maria Young- Executive Director at Northwoods Stewardship Center,
Jared Nunery- County Forester

Absent: Larry Faust

1. Call the meeting to order 7:00 PM by Bill Davis, Chair
2. Additions to the agenda- none
3. Approval minutes of last meeting- motion to approve by Byron, seconded by Jane, all in favor.
4. Town land - Trail system - Maria, NWSC, Jared Nunery
 - a. Northwoods Stewardship Center presented on what the Stewardship Center is. Maria Young gave an overview. They have a conservation corp that does a lot of trail building. They want to help us build a trail, but also to consider all of the considerations involved in building a trail. Northwoods can, give ideas for resources:
 - i. 1) reach out to the county forester,
 - ii. 2) there is a VT-based town forest recreation planning toolkit available for our use.
<https://vtcommunityforestry.org/projects/town-forests/recreation-planning-toolkit/step-step-planning-process>
 - b. They can also have people from their team come out and help us. Their forester can do a forestry assessment (maybe the

county forester can provide this). There is a wide scope of trail planning, bridge building, some structures, no structures, an accessible trail that may come with a trail development plan (especially if we want to go after any grants to do this) We can also do a phased approach for when we would do things, like when we would want the trails to be accessible. They could come out and help us to flag a trail. It would be free for a site visit from Northwoods, which would start by needing some more clarifying questions pertaining to what type of trail we offer.

- c. Natural Resources Assessment information from Jared Nunery, the County forester: Jared mainly sees the current use program. He also assists the town in the management of the town owned land. This would be a forest management plan (inventory of what is out there trees/species, etc) Through this process he likes to include town meetings to include community input. He has already walked this walk with the school a few years ago. It is HUGE that this land is next to the school, and we need to think about student access to the land and the trail. This is a critical asset for the school. We would also want to build partnerships, like with northwoods and we can all work together on that. Jared could also talk to the teachers and get them involved early on. The concept could include an area as an "outdoor classroom." We would then facilitate a public meeting to get townsfolk involved and excited about it. He could also do an inventory for us early on. Jared is here to help us, not to tell us what to do. We might also want to think about who is in charge of this land. We might want to form a municipal forest committee/sub-committee. We want to think about the organizational structure and management of the town forest. There is only so much that Jared can do each year, and he would not be available to work with us until next year to start building a plan. With the river being there, we are now at a critical point for stewarding the land and protecting the river. There is no cost for the town to utilize the county foresters. The next steps for obtaining the county forester would be to share a service contract, we would sign that and could get into his queue for free forestry services.
- d. A planning commission member wanted to know about the liability concerns of the trail. Jared assured us that VT does have

really good land owner protection unless there was intentional harm.

- e. With wetlands: There is a threshold, and we can use best management practices, there are certain ways you can build and there are restrictions. We could potentially need a wetland permit (which would up the costs and the structures to go along with it such as a boardwalk) Sometimes there is funding that ebbs and flows for this type of project.
- f. Jane makes a motion to have a site visit for Northwoods to come check out our land, including a potential preliminary flag line for the trail- this could come with a mapped flagline. Pat seconds this. All in favor. No objections. Maria will send the clarification questions to Amey. Up to 4 of us should be available to join Northwoods in the site visit. It was suggested to complete this in the fall, when the leaves are off the trees to determine accurate site lines for trail construction.
- g. Amey, Byron (to take a map line virtually during the walk), Jane.

5. NVDA -Regional Planning Maps Update

- a. Laim has brought another map to the table about the plans for expanding the village center designation in Brownington Village. A motion was made and seconded to accept the new expanded map. All in favor.

6. MERP project bids submitted including solar

- a. The select board has accepted Nadeau's bid. Bill is going to be the clerk of the works and oversee the projects.
- b. Green mountain solar has been approved by the select board for a rooftop solar panel array for the backside of the garage. The contract has been signed and executed to get the project scheduled for a fall start.

7. Wildfire evacuation - Larry T

- a. Does the town want a plan for this? This might be part of the hazard mitigation plan. The town building is the command center and the school is the shelter: the select board is in charge of this. Bill will look into this.

8. Next meeting date

- a. September 17th at 6:30 PM. Larry motioned to change the time, Mark seconded, all in favor.

9. Adjourn motioned by Larry, seconded by Mark at 8:05 PM

10. Next Steps

- a. Amey will receive the contract from the County Forester.
- b. BPC will respond to clarification questions from Northwoods to conduct the site visit. We will get a site visit meeting set up for the town land.
- c. Bill will look into hazard mitigation as it relates to "wildfire" evacuation.