

Annual Report of the Rustic Ridge Association

Town of Northfield Representative

August 2016

I know that Steve would have a very different report for you than I have, and it would be more complete. As I told Carol, when I finally said yes, from June until about March, I couldn't tell you much of what was happening anywhere. I think, though, that I have enough highlights to keep you up to date.

Pipeline

As we saw this year, Northfield's ability to band together with like-minded citizens from across the pipeline route, paid off! We once again learned how important it is to work together. There were many celebrations across the region when FERC ceased, then about a month of some breath holding before the formal withdrawal of the plan was official. Kinder Morgan cited, what we already knew, that there wasn't enough need for the pipeline. However, Kinder Morgan is still pursuing an extension of a Connecticut line that cuts through Otis State Park in the Berkshires, which is a Chapter 97 parcel. The courts have not denied them access, and it looks like they will begin cutting soon as there is a window before the birds and animals will be affected that they are trying to honor per the wildlife organizations. This is very important, because Chapter 97 is a state program and the feds are saying they can take it by eminent domain. This was part of our argument for denying Kinder Morgan access for the pipeline through our towns. The groups who banded together earlier, are supporting this invasion. The only possible stop to this is that the federal Clean Water Act that states the water quality must be maintained before a certificate will be given. So far, there is no certificate, and it doesn't look like they will. But will the courts uphold this when the DEP states that this isn't necessary? The Dept. of Conservation and Recreation is refusing to issue a construction permit until the Legislature votes to remove the Chapter 97 on the land, which takes, I believe, a 2/3rds vote. Not unheard of, yet will it happen this time?

Northfield's Business Climate

We still need to find a way to bring more business to Northfield.

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- I think I heard that Blink Bonnie, on the Northfield Golf course has hit a snag in being re-opened as a B&B: it's not handicapped accessible.
- Corrine closed her catering business before it even opened and gave her lease to a short order restaurant and bakery which folded before it got underway.
- Cameron's Winery opened successfully! They host events and make wonderful wine from local grapes. I encourage you to stop in and meet Leslie. She'll gladly help you find your wine.
- The Northfield Mart is under new management! Jody is creating a refreshed market and will be opening a pizza eatery soon in the old Rooster's Bistro. His other ventures are restaurant oriented, so this fits it! Stop in and say hello.
- The Northfield Trails Association continues to have year round hikes on Sunday mornings.
- The Thursday road races continue to draw many folks. Winners are announced each week on Nextdoor River Town, our new web based communication network which replaced the former Neighborhood when it closed down. It is the best way to know what's happening, who's selling and bartering and general town information.
- The Farmer's Market is going strong this summer, with several new vendors and live music. Cameron's Winery has been very welcoming.
- The Great River Challenge will be back; I think this is a permanent home.
- There is talk of expanding rail service to more than once a day through Greenfield which will make travel so much easier and connections that much better.
- C.S. Lewis has been quiet this year, and I am not aware of any conferences or activity at Green Pastures.
- The Senior Center is going strong. We are still trying to appeal to the next cohort; we have many regulars in the 85-94 age bracket.

Brian Noble continues to keep things running smoothly and getting lots done. Personally, he made this past year worry free, for which I am grateful. His steady hand and business knowledge has helped keep costs down while ticking off the list of needs.

Still no gas station...

Northfield's Master Plan

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The Master Plan Committee has completed some major work. They have identified three areas of town: a Village Center (business district), farming area and residential. Just up on the town website (<http://www.northfieldma.gov/>) is a preliminary report as they make us more desirable to small business and keep the town rural, along with lots of other information.

Schell Bridge

The Schell Bridge is still waiting.... Daily calls have not given us a time table for the new bridge. There are indications that it may not be what we had hoped, yet there will be a biking connection between both parts of town. There will be a meeting sometime this fall to tell us that.

I look forward to hearing more about what's happening on the campus and still have hopes of bringing jobs back to the community

Thank you for asking me to step in. Next year, I'll be more attuned.

Heather Tower