

Annual Report of the Rustic Ridge Association

Town of Northfield Representative

August 2020

Another year has passed here in Northfield. Thomas Aquinas College admitted 2 classes, about 50 students, this fall, our local school system is still struggling financially, though it's in better shape this year, and closed the Warwick and Leyden Elementary schools, the state is tweaking the design of the new Schell Bridge based on town input and the Schell Bridge Friends are working on plans for a park on both ends of the bridge. We are on track to begin construction in 2021, I think...

Northfield's Business Climate

- Cameron's Winery is still a great place to have a bite to eat, try some wine or cider and enjoy yourselves! They make their wonderful wine and cider from local grapes. They have opened up an outdoor seating area, with the blessing of the town, and continue their curbside pick-up. I encourage you to stop in and enjoy Leslie and Paul. They'll gladly help you find your wine. They may be on vacation now, so know that they are still around.
- Jody, who owns the Northfield Mart also bought Mims this year. The hours are not as long as before, and he is working on management. Not sure how that's going to work out.
- The Northfield Trails Association has been keeping up the trails. Many people have been taking advantage of time away from work to hike and enjoy the outdoors.
- The Thursday road races continue to draw many folks as they are run on the honor system this year. Each person is responsible for submitting their time to Bob Emberley who will post them on NextDoor each week.
- NextDoor is the way to keep up to date with all things Northfield: information, sales, giveaways, sightings, questions, events and everything in between. It's free, so sign up and keep up to date. It is the best way to know what's happening, beside the town website: www.northfieldma.gov.
- The Farmer's Market is located in front of Cameron's Winery every Thursday.

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- I have not heard specifically about The Great River Challenge this year, but my guess would be it will wait to return until next summer.
- C.S. Lewis has been having programs online, so go to their website to learn more.
- The Senior Center has only been doing programs through the Senior Learning Center, an online platform for many National Park, museum and other programming for all ages so check out the offerings in the newsletter.

Business Park

A committee has been looking at where a business park could be located, but as yet, nothing has been put forward, so it will be interesting to see what happens there. We do need to build our tax base, especially since the campus is now off the tax rolls. Having businesses in town will help us in many ways. There is concern that they be something that fits in with the town. You will remember the many businesses from your youth, and the many conference ones that came every summer. With the bridge coming, we do need to make Northfield a destination for bikers and others.

Town Government

We seem to be on an even keel in the town government this year. A new Selectboard member was elected on Tuesday, as Tracey's term was up and she chose not to continue. Alex Meisner, chair, who was elected two years ago, and Heath Cummings, elected last year, along with newly elected Barbara (Bee) Jacques are the current board. You will remember that at town meeting last year, we voted to expand the Selectboard to 5 people. The process is lengthy, and the final hurdle was overcome in the past election, as the town voted to make this so. Next year we will add 2 more people, with staggered terms: the current members will remain on their rotation and the 2 new ones will have, respectively, a 1-year and a 2-year term. I believe that's correct. After the 1st year, all will be 3-year terms. More people mean less work for each person and more voices in the discussion.

Skip gives periodic updates via Code Red. You can sign up for that on the town website. These lately have been for COVID-19, and in the past, they have been storm warnings and the like.

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The Fire Dept., EMS and Police Dept. are still looking at options for a new building or expansion of the current the Fire Dept. property, an emergency services complex. They are still working on the design, and nothing has come to town meeting yet.

Still no gas station...

Schell Bridge

The Schell Bridge is moving forward! The design was chosen and some modifications ensued, based on town comments. With the possibility of more bike traffic, folks are starting to think about more businesses in town. Currently, they are looking at designs for a park at the entrances of the bridge that would incorporate some of the original bridge material. Check out the website: <http://www.schellbridge.org/> to get an idea of what they're thinking. Members were asked to weigh in on a couple of options recently, so that will be posted when a design has been reached.

On a personal note, I retired December 31st 2019, and haven't looked back. My 1st grandchild was born 3 hours after I closed the door, so I have been thoroughly enjoying him, my daughter and her husband through these trying times. My son will be married next weekend and the family (on both coasts) will gather on Zoom for the event. Next year, in wedding 2.1 we will gather as we had planned in San Francisco to have the real wedding and party.

Thank you for asking me to continue as your town liaison. I look forward to seeing you every year.

Heather Tower