



UPPER VALLEY RIVER SUBCOMMITTEE

Minutes -March 16, 2010

PRESENT: Marc White, Carl Schmidt, Orford; Lynn Bohi, Linda Wilson, Hartford; Jim Kennedy, Caryl Collier (by remote connection), Hanover; Linda Matteson, Cy Severance, Thetford; Mary Daly, Fairlee; David Kotz, Lyme; Genevieve Morinville, Norwich; David Jorgensen, Lebanon; Nancy Jones, Bradford; Adair Mulligan, CRJC

ABSENT: Piermont

PUBLIC: Dick Podolec, Jonathan Edwards, Blair Brooks, Nik Fiori, Carol Weingeist, Kern Wisner, Quentin Deming,

1. Housekeeping - Minutes of the meeting of February 2 were approved on a motion by Mary seconded by Lynn. Adair reported that CRJC's application to the VT Conservation License Plate Program was not successful due to high competition for funds.
2. Permit issue: Proposed rowing facility development at Fullington Farm, Hanover. Carol Weingeist presented photos of wildlife use and expressed concern about riparian habitat, loss of the area's quiet nature, number of people using the site, trampling of vegetation, silt collection, night use, nuisance use, and change in views. She said the nearby areas are all either wetland, conserved, or owned with intent to conserve. Blair Brooks of the Friends of Hanover Crew reported that Hanover's entire waterfront had been searched for alternative sites, and Fullington Farm is the only site that works. There would be 1-2 meets at the site each spring, with parking off-site (at Richmond School). The high school crew team would use the site for about 2 months, then Upper Valley Rowing would follow at about half the level of use. Nik Fiori, project engineer, said that the finish line for meets would be at Wilson's Landing and at the Chieftain for the larger annual regatta. He displayed an aerial photo showing an image of the proposed dock.
 - a. Dock: The inside edge of the dock would be 70' out into the water (23' beyond the current town dock), in order to bring it beyond the submerged "shelf" that was the shore of the river before inundation by Wilder Dam. River width in this area is about 600'. Dock and ramp would be removed in fall. 180' dock is needed to land three 60' boats at one time by the crew team, but during late spring and summer, one section would be removed leaving a 120' dock that would be handicap accessible (the only such public dock in the region) and easier for canoes and kayaks to use than the current town dock. The Friends would purchase and maintain the dock and donate it to the Town. The dock will be anchored to a flush concrete pad, and by poles that will twist into the riverbed. The dock will be similar to Dartmouth's and the Chieftain's; floating about 8" above the water, light gray plastic, skid-resistant. Can put reflectors on the ends for night visibility. Ramp will be aluminum with an open grate design to allow light and water to pass through. Quentin Deming expressed concern about night navigation, and Blair suggested a low level solar-powered light to help boaters locate the dock at night.
 - b. Application process: Nik said that the Town of Hanover agreed to be a co-applicant to NH DES, and detailed the steps forward, which include getting 5 special exceptions and a variance from the Hanover ZBA. Jonathan Edwards provided details on these. The Shoreland Protection application for the Fullington Farm property is in process. For mitigation for the dock and ramp, the Friends propose to pay a fee of \$9500 to the Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund, since another riverfront area could not be found that was suitable for mitigation. The Town would like to apply the funds to the purchase of a nearby parcel that is an in-holding among other conserved lands. Adair reported that the state will require payment to the fund, and that the Town could then apply to the fund to conserve this piece.
 - c. Subcommittee's previous comment: Adair noted that the Subcommittee's July 2009 letter was incorporated into the application, and reviewed the subcommittee's recommendations that had been included in the final proposal.
 - d. Other docks: Carl asked about use of Dartmouth's facilities, and Blair answered that it is not a long-term solution. Jonathan added that the high school and town had lost use of Dartmouth's many playing fields as well, and the town is acquiring land to make up for it. He said the selectmen feel the project could be a good community asset, since it is Hanover's only public river access. Of the town's 12 miles of shoreline, four miles are already conserved. Of all the sites examined, this is the only one suitable and not presenting either very steep high banks, intense private ownership, or a part of the river that holds ice much too long in the spring to allow access to open water. Lynn asked about the Chieftain, recalling it was to be open to the public, and Blair said it would be open for a fee, and not free to the public. Adair added that a letter to this effect, along with a statement that \$1.5 million would need to be invested in property the Friends could not own, would be necessary for the crew team to make the Chieftain its home.
 - e. Use: Nancy asked about spectators. Blair said they will be contained on the existing gravel surface, where

the view of the water is best, and that the Friends intend to keep people off the wetland area south of the parking lot. Caryl asked how many walkers would be present, and that it could interfere with bird and animal life. Blair said there would be 110-120 kids, 10 parents, and 10 coaches making 2 trips down to the water, then two back.

- f. **Member comments:** Cy asked that safety features be reinforced, such as solar-powered lights and reflectors. He agreed that investment at the Chieftain did not make sense. **Mary** said she appreciates seeing both birds and rowers using the riverfront; she thinks the project will impact the area but will be a responsible development that she supports. **Nancy** said she thinks the area will be well managed when it is being used, but is concerned about what might happen when it is not being supervised. She recommended a fence and signage to block access to the wetland south of the parking area. She noted that the area is already disturbed. **Lynn** said she had similar worries for children entering the wetland and commended the Friends for the emphasis on boat cleaning. **Caryl** said she would like to see more research on using the facilities belonging to the Chieftain and Dartmouth, and that there should be no dock in this area because of the many problems the wide mudflats caused....a longer than otherwise necessary ramp and petroleum pollution from the 7-9 motorboats to be permanently docked there. **Dick**, who lives next to the Chieftain, acknowledged that the project would affect abutters. Rowing programs affect when he uses his boat, but he doesn't think this project would increase traffic on the river, and he is in favor of the project. **Linda Matteson** said she likes the idea of young kids enjoying nature on the water, and while she thinks there will be an impact, there is also not enough public access. **David Jorgensen** observed that the project uses an existing recreational facility, and is not creating a new one. **David Kotz** said he is impressed by the thoughtful approach by the town and club, appreciates the incorporation of the Subcommittee's ideas, and is supportive. **Genevieve** said she generally supports the project and thinks it is well thought out, but wants more information on actual negative and positive impacts; she noted that dock cover can provide habitat for fish. **Linda Wilson** said she has a positive reaction and likes the effort by the town and club to reduce impact, including removal of a third of the dock in summer. She suggested doing a baseline inventory of the wetland. Nik indicated that a wetland/wildlife specialist would be on site the next day, and agreed to share findings. There could be an opportunity for habitat improvement as part of the mitigation. **Carl** was concerned about visual impact, and asked if light gray is the best color for the dock. He hoped the dock could be of a non-reflective material and that the launch setup would not create siltation. He commended the project for a good adaptive re-use of the barn. **Jim** said he was concerned about timetable and whether DES would request more information, making the subcommittee's comments premature. Adair said that if more information comes in, further comment could be provided. She will circulate a draft letter to all members.
3. Permit issue: Proposed redevelopment of 9 parcels at Lebanon Plaza near the Mascoma and Connecticut rivers, disturbing approx. 340,897 sf: Jim noted much erosion had occurred on lower Mascoma, and there is concern about further scour. Should encourage more use of low impact development design for stormwater control, riparian buffers, and aquifer protection; should commend elimination of septic systems and connection to sewer.
4. Permit issues: Have conveyed information about preservation of historic abutment and pier stones of Route 4 bridge to NH DOT, including photos of Stratford-Maidstone river access built with similar stones. No update on replacement septic system for Lyme cabin.
5. News from the tributaries - Mascoma River nomination to the NH Rivers Program is proceeding. Geomorphic assessment of Ompompanoosuc River will go ahead. Waits and Wells Rivers have been done.
6. Announcements - UVLSRPC program on backyard farming, March 31. Bald eagle nesting in Orford was hatched on river in Hinsdale. Nancy reported another eagle on the Waits River. Adair will testify to VT House committee on dock bill; there is currently no control over docks on VT side of CT River; proposed dimensions are twice what they are in NH. Members encouraged support of dock and shoreland protection legislation in Vt.