



CRJC Mount Ascutney Local River Subcommittee

Tuesday, September 11th, 2018

Windsor Welcome Center

7:00PM

Minutes

Present:

Bill Gallagher (Cornish)

Colleen O'Neil (Cornish)

Judy Howland (Hartland)

Cordelia Merritt (Hartland)

Nancy Heatley (Chair, Weathersfield)

Howard Beach (Weathersfield)

Olivia Uyizeye (staff, UVLSRPC)

1. Nancy Heatley opened the meeting at 7:05 and introductions were made.
2. Minutes: the minutes of the May 8th meeting were approved as written by motion of Merritt/Howland.

Gallagher asked for clarification on why GRH and other dam owners turn over their ownership quickly. Heatley relates information she has heard from CRC. Many dam companies are private equity/investment firms that have less incentive to invest in the long-term maintenance of a dam. It is likely that GRH will receive their license from the state. This is a historical trend by dam owners where companies put them in place, close or transfer, and often communities and conservation groups have to pay to have them removed. Beach expresses that one issue with dam removal is that they can accumulate pollutants in the sediment settled behind the dam, which must be assessed to avoid contamination in a larger area during dam removal (as occurred on the Hudson River).

The main drive behind current lobbying efforts are to encourage the dam owner to be more highly involved with the communities nearby, however, this has proven difficult as it is more than is currently required by the state. If the state required more community interaction, it would likely have a greater impact on outcomes. One main issue has been that communities and landowners have not been able to prove that the erosion on banks was caused by the management practices of the dam. If this could be proven, it is likely that compensation and a change in management would take place.

Members express interest in an update on the current state of the relicensing process for the dam. Olivia will reach out to Jim McClammer.

3. No permits required to review at this time.
4. Septic Smart Workshop.

Flyers for the event for final distribution. Heatley report that Kelly Stettner has been promoting the event in local newspapers. Howland included the workshop in a recent column for the Vermont Standard. Multiple members share that they will post on their respective town listserves. Heatley is still working on identifying a sponsor for coffee and donuts. O'Neil suggests offering local cider and apples instead. Heatley asks members about how the library is set up and located where the event will take place. It is decided to place a sign on the door to the meeting space, as well as request permission from the library to place two signs along Route 5 to direct people the

library/event. Merritt will confirm this with library staff. Heatley plans to mention the CRJC at the event and asks Howland to discuss work being done on the Ottauquechee.

Members discuss the difficulty in getting realtors to attend on weekends during their prime time for showing properties. It might be worthwhile to have a separate event for them, especially if able to offer educational credits. It is likely that the speakers would be interested in presenting again if the LRS is able to confirm a baseline of attendance.

5. Water Resources Chapter.

Heatley opens the meeting to a discussion about how the LRS might maintain, change or expand their work in their communities. Members discussed the following items.

- Positive experiences partnering with youth groups.
- Interest in expanding the scope of the septic smart workshop. O'Neil suggests alternating years between a residential and realtor audience.
- Howland reports the use and availability of a stream table for educational events. Sullivan County has a stream table available, including trained staff. This is a very engaging activity.
- Herrick's Cove, Heritage Festival. If Sylvio Conte decides not to help run the event, there is a possibility to run this program with educational activities.
- Merritt says that the LRS does not do much with farmers but that it is likely unnecessary for the group to do so because many organizations are working from this perspective.
- Interested in greater monitoring of E-Coli.
- O'Neil asks what the LRS might do beyond permitting that would have a direct impact on towns, such as more education. Members discuss the potential to promote more networking and information sharing between town reps, also supporting the many programs being done locally. Potential especially to be aware of what conservation commissions for different towns are concerned about and involved in.
- Heatley discuss that Kelly Stettner does a lot through BRAT for grant writing. It is possible for the LRS to also apply for grants. There are limitations due to the CRJC being a public body. Generally projects that are multi-town are more desirable to grantors because many believe it has a greater impact.
- General concern about culverts, design standards being outdated, and FEMA's one for one rule.
- Multiple members express interested in demonstrations of best management practices in the regions. For example, Beach discussed a level spreader that he installed on his road to slow and spread water that was creating a gully in the road causing consistent damage during every storm. These types of simple solutions for towns to solve challenging and expensive problems.
- Guest speakers at LRS meetings would be beneficial to promote the sharing of ideas and perhaps encourage attendance both from members and other individuals.

6. Other Updates (from Kelly Stettner)

1) BioBlitz was a lovely success, we had about 35 participants come spend the day with us, logging over 100 observations into the project page at iNaturalist.org. Plans for next year are already in the works.

2) RiverSweep was this past weekend; we had about 40 people working in Springfield along the river (and IN the water), 6 at the North Springfield Lake helping the US Army Corps of Engineers collect junk from the water and the banks, and also looking for invasive water chestnut plants -- one was discovered and removed. Additionally, about 50 students and adults worked on Monday to collect trash along the Black River in Ludlow and Cavendish.

3) Our water quality monitoring program got some attention this summer, "thanks" to some surprising spikes in bacteria counts at two swimming holes that normally trend in the double-digits. We're looking at revamping the

charts that we post, so they are more user-friendly and also reflect more prominently that these are "snapshots" and a comprehensive understanding can only be had if numbers are looked at over time.

4) I worked with a number of schools in Springfield this year on citizen science, having students do bioassessments (looking at the aquatic macroinvertebrates) on streams that we already do water sampling in; their data will be included in the annual report to the State of Vermont.

5) We'll be participating in the Sample-Palooza project again this year, which looks at the tribs to the CT River as they relate to the much-larger watershed of the Long Island Sound.

7. Other Business

Pamphlets are given to members to distribute to their towns. Olivia will share the like to the Draft Hydroelectric permit for EPA Region I.

8. The next meeting will be held on November 13th at 7:00 PM at the Windsor Welcome Center. Meeting adjourned by motion of Merritt/Beach at 8:38 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye.