

Upper Valley Subcommittee
of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions
October 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes
Lyme Town Office, Lyme, NH

NH Members:	Present	Absent
Alice Creagh, Hanover, NH		X
Jim Kennedy, Chair, Hanover, NH	X	
Eric Agterberg, Lebanon, NH	X	
Ruth Bleyler, Lebanon, NH		X
Bruce Garland, Lebanon, NH (alt)	X	
Sue MacKenzie, Lyme, NH	X	
John Mudge, Vice-Chair, Lyme, NH	X	
Christine Bunten, Orford, NH	X	
Carl Schmidt, Orford, NH	X	
Karyn Brown, Piermont, NH		X
Helga Mueller, Piermont, NH		X

VT Members:	Present	Absent
Nancy Jones, Bradford, VT (alt)		X
Vacancy, Bradford, VT		X
Danielle Allen, Fairlee, VT (alt)		X
Ben Dana, Fairlee, VT		X
David Barrell, Hartford, VT		X
Lynn Bohi, Hartford, VT	X	
Jason Houle, Hartford, VT (alt)	X	
Melissa, Horwitz, Norwich, VT	X	
Bartlett Leber, Norwich, VT		X
Tara Bamford, Thetford, VT	X	
Bill Bridge, Thetford, VT	X	
Linda Matteson, Thetford, VT (alt)	X	

Others present were Victoria Davis of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission standing in for Olivia Uyizeye who is away.

1. Meeting Minutes Review: The August 20, 2018 meeting minutes were reviewed. Minor typos were corrected. The Subcommittee asked that future minutes include last names and that motions be more specific to what is stated. The motion for Item 3 was amended to add that the review of culvert size should include consideration of climate change. Item 4 was changed to read “Jim Kennedy reports that Great River Hydro is preparing....” In Item 4, it was noted that John Mudge and not Jim had made the motion and the “large bubble” was “inside” not “about” the dam. Christine Bunten made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Eric Agterberg seconded the motion, and unanimous agreement followed.

2. Permit Review:

Interstate 89 Bridge over Connecticut River, Hartford, VT/Lebanon, NH: NH Standard Dredge and Fill Application:

Jim Kennedy reported there had been a site visit to the site on Friday, October 12, 2018. He represented the Subcommittee and there were several other participants including Mark Goodwin, Lebanon City Planner and Sarah Riley, Lebanon Conservation Commission. Kennedy provided the sketch of the bridge work proposal and a written summary of the work from contractor McFarland Johnson. Generally, the existing bridge will receive new steel superstructure and the northbound and southbound bridge will be connected by a new structure placed between the two existing bridges. This will provide additional merging lanes and address the red-listed bridges’ structural deficiencies. Two of the new piers in the center of the river will be surrounded with permanent scour protection in the form of concrete “A-Jacks.” There was no cross-section plan of these structures so it was unclear of the impact upon river flow. However, the summary notes that the new piers and scour protection will

result in a slight increase of base flood elevation by about ½-inch. As a mitigation effort to prevent this increase in base flood elevation, a “shelf” in the Vermont river embankment is proposed to be created for 388’. Temporary trestles around the bridge structure will be placed during the construction. Lynn Bohi recalled from the lengthy application that the construction will start in 2022 and be up to a five year project.

The contractor will be given the option to construct a temporary access road on the Vermont bank to access the west pier. This would include a temporary railroad crossing. On the New Hampshire side, an access road would be installed along the bridge base within the highway right of way and along Lebanon’s Two Rivers Conservation Area. Kennedy expressed concern that an access way tends to widen during use allowing invasive species such as Japanese knotweed and glossy buckthorn to spread.

The proposal also includes installing an 8’ deep rip rap stone embankment for erosion protection on the Vermont side of the bridge. The members discussed alternatives for a more natural, living protection by native plants. Stormwater treatment was discussed including the plan for untreated stormwater on the bridge to drain through “scuppers” directly into the river.

Under New Hampshire DES permitting requirements for mitigation, the project will provide \$53,746.56 to the NH DES Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund (ARM). Kennedy discussed possible uses of this money with Mark Goodwin, Lebanon City Planner including a project on Etna Road to conserve land connecting two existing conservation areas. A second option, more directly related to the construction project, is to improve the Two Rivers Conservation Area to provide greater pedestrian access.

The members discussed their application comments letter including the following points for further discussion or information:

1. Possible uses for the mitigation money
2. A living buffer option instead of the proposed stone rip rap
3. Protection from spread of invasive species and elimination of existing invasive species
4. Alternatives to untreated stormwater directly into the river
5. Access road expansion and accompanying spread of invasive species
6. Possible pedestrian connections on the New Hampshire side of the bridge
7. Flow impact of bridge pier scouring protection (A-jacks)
8. Provision of plan cross-sections for New Hampshire side
9. Amendment to response to Question #19 in the Application Attachment A to note that there will be impact to the Two Rivers Conservation Area, and the Connecticut River is a US Fish and Wildlife Service designated National Blueway and part of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge.

Carl Schmidt made a motion to have Jim Kennedy draft the comments letter. Lynn Bohi seconded the motion and unanimous agreement followed.

Blaktop, Inc. Underground Storage Tank (UST) Application for the Construction of New or Substantially Modified UST Systems, 73 Elm Street, West Lebanon, NH:

Jim Kennedy reported that he has requested further information about this application including specific location of UST, who is available to meet the Subcommittee at the site if needed, and how to get to the site. He e-mailed the applicant and is awaiting a response.

3. FERC Update: John Mudge stated that the first meeting for this process was in 2013. The next meeting will be in July 2019. Jim Kennedy said they are talking about instream flow and New Hampshire 401 requirements. Mudge said he will check on the instream rules and the 401 status. There was discussion if the instream rules require review by the local advisory committee. Tara Bamford said her reading of the requirement indicates that it does and the Subcommittee should follow up on this.

4. Other Updates: Jim Kennedy reported that he is working on a Jacobs Brook livable shoreline project in Orford. He is working with Ron Rhodes of the Connecticut River Conservancy to obtain Mitigation and Enhancement funding. There had been a preliminary ARM Fund application for instream work and shoreline plantings, but the application was not considered strong enough to pursue compared to other applications. Carl Schmidt added that the Orford Conservation Committee has a subcommittee working to enhance the flood resiliency of Jacobs Brook. They have met with Shane Csiki of NH DES who made a recommendation to contact the Silver Jackets (incident response and recovery team) for help. The Subcommittee is awaiting a response for assistance. Schmidt suggested all work together to get the work done. He added that Orford needs to get a culvert inventory done by the regional planning commission.

5. Other Business: Victoria Davis distributed a one-page flyer, "Living with the River: The Importance of Riparian Buffers for Your Land and Your Environment" and booklets "A Homeowner's Guide to Water Quality Protection in the Connecticut River Valley." Members took 20-40 copies of distribute to various public places such as libraries and town clerks within each of the 10 towns of the region. Since there were no members present representing Bradford and Fairlee, Tara Bamford will drop off their flyers and booklets. Since there were no members present from Piermont, Victoria Davis will take some flyers and booklets to Piermont for pick up by Helga Mueller.

Jason Houle made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at about 8:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by
Victoria Davis, Planner
Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission