



## CRJC Mount Ascutney Local River Subcommittee

Tuesday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Windsor Welcome Center

7:00PM

Minutes

### Attendees

Plainfield	Elise Angelillo		Windsor		
Plainfield	David Taylor		Windsor		
Cornish	Bill Gallagher	X	Weathersfield	Howard Beach	X
Cornish	Colleen O'Neill	X	Weathersfield	Nancy Heatley	X
Claremont			Springfield	Bill Manner	X
Claremont			Springfield	Kelly Stettner	
Hartland	Cordelia Merritt	X	Rockingham	Thomas Hernon	
Hartland	Judy Howland	X	Rockingham	Margaret Perry	
Charlestown					
Charlestown					

Olivia Uyizeye (staff, UVLSRPC)

### Minutes

- Heatley opened the meeting at 7:03pm. Introductions were made and tent cards distributed.
- Minutes: the minutes of the November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting were opened for review by Manner/Merritt.

Discussion was had on the presentation by Dr. Erin Rodgers (Trout Unlimited) and on the dam relicensing.

- Merritt reminds the group that Dr. Rodgers requested that reps be on the lookout for projects.
- Heatley informs the group of a time when Dr. Rodgers participated in a field trip review of stream sites of concern with the Town of Weathersfield. Dr. Rodgers provided valuable expertise on the feasibility of restoration at various locations that often countered assumptions made by town leadership. Heatley recommends this process for other Towns. Also, Trout Unlimited is a positive partner as they tend to be cheaper and aware of various funding sources.
- Heatley also suggests that the Mt Ascutney Local River Subcommittee (MARS) consider hosting TU for education sessions with town managers or conservation commissions.
- Merritt responds to Heatley's question about conversation had about dam relicensing. Merritt describes how the dams are used as a trade/commodity, and long term investment is not made. The dams are also required to respond to the demands of the grid. There was an option many years ago for the state of NH and/or VT to purchase the dams, but it was decided against.

The minutes were approved with no edits by unanimous vote. Heatley abstained.

- Permit Review. 467 Burma Rd, Charlestown, Shoreland Permit.

Heatley reads the notification about a home rebuilding project. Heatley apologizes for not bringing the detailed documentation. Reps seek to identify the location via google maps.

Heatley will circulate information about the Permit tonight and encourages anyone with comment to send them in immediately. MARS will not submit an official comment.

- Water Resources Chapter.

Reps review notes from prior discussions and attend to each highlighted item.

## Recreation and AIS

- Merritt supports working on this topic because it is a “hook” for members of the public who are not involved in other aspects of watershed management.
- Heatley suggests partnering with BRAT, which is supported by other reps in attendance.
- Howland recommends canoe trips. Heatley suggests collaborating with other established programs like “Source to Sea”.
- Beach notes that fishing is a good hook to promote stream buffers that allow for thermal regulation.

## Presence at Local Committees (e.g. select board, planning commission, conservation commission)

- Manner notes that there is no CC in Springfield; however, there is a river that runs right through it.
- Reps agree that this activity is already happening to some degree
- O’Neill says that if there is a pressing issue, reps can attend and work on a case by case basis. This has worked in the past.
- Heatley suggests that we might do an initial push to remind/notify the groups as to MARS activity.

## Monitoring Program

- Some reps are already involved. Cornish performs monitoring from time to time but not on a regular basis.
- Samples are sent to both Endine and Burlington labs.
- Reps agree that it is good to be involved, but this can be done as a requests are made and therefore not separately organized.

## Education Programs

- Continue septic smart workshop. Septic Smart Week is Sept 16-20, 2019. This will be put on the next meeting’s agenda to determine a date.
- Howland discusses a driveway maintenance program being put on by the Ottauquechee Natural Resources Conservation District. Howland suggests partnering and/or building on this program.
- Stormwater. Rain garden events have proved difficult. This may in part be due to many soils in the region being unsuitable for the infiltration/plantings needed to foster one. Reps agree that focusing on driveway culverts might receive more involvement.
- Promote soil testing to promote less chemical runoff from lawn, gardens, etc. UVM ([https://pss.uvm.edu/ag\\_testing/?Page=soils.html](https://pss.uvm.edu/ag_testing/?Page=soils.html)) and UNH (<https://extension.unh.edu/programs/soil-testing-services>) both have affordable soil testing programs. UVM provides “kits” including sample bag and form, while UNH does not (instructions are included on the mail in form). Reps agree to order soil test envelopes and to distribute at town meetings that will take place before the next meeting.
- Discussion of wells and water quality could be incorporated into the septic smart workshop. Some speakers do work on both topics.
- Reps discuss how to notify residents about these programs and topics. O’Neill suggests using a “Message from MARS” outreach program for community list serves or even as small slips to place in popular locations. The “Message” could be signed from the local rep. Topics could include soil testing, proper medication disposal, event reminders, riparian buffers and erosion, etc.
- Herrick’s Cove Event. MARS could partner with BRAT that normally tables at the event, unless reps have a larger presentation that requires an independent table.

Heatley will create a summary of these notes to share at the March meeting. At this time, reps can zoom in and identify next steps. This may include assessing any need to seek grant funds. Any reps aware of grant opportunities are asked to bring that information to the March meeting.

## 5. March Meeting Speaker – Kristen Underwood, Hydrogeologist.

Reps agree that the speaker will be first on the agenda and will be limited to 45min to an hour to allow for other business items to be discussed.

The title "Flood Resilience for Homeowners" is suggested. Uyizeye will make a quarter sheet, including a resource link to those who can't attend. The quarter sheet will be distributed by reps, including on listserves, facebook or printed for popular locations.

6. NH Wetlands Rules Review.

Reps agree that the proposed rules are a hit to the environment – reducing overall review time, opportunities for local LAC review (particularly in expedited situations where it can be most needed), removing abutter notification, etc. Reps ask if the CRJC commissioners are sending in a comment letter. Uyizeye will look into this.

Reps debate what would be MARS's most effective form of action? A lengthy letter would be time consuming. Reps in attendance are largely from VT. Howland suggests keeping any letter short to ensure that it is read thoroughly.

Reps agree to identify 3 items to highlight in a letter.

- Removal of the notification on abutters. Property owners have a right to be made aware of these changes. Some property owners would not realize until the work is already completed. This could create a lengthy legal process through court action by trying to short-step the permit process.
- Permits by Notification review bodies and time. The removal of time for local review is of significant concern and is unrealistic. Review time has been shortened from 30-55 days to 5 days. This is inadequate for state staff that has a large workload and there is concern that permits will be rammed through.
- Elimination of LACs from the expedited review process. LACs provide critical advice, input and support to property owners and should not be removed from these permit reviews.

Concern from O'Neill and Gallagher about whether comment will make an impact. Heatley argues that having a large voice now (along with other bodies) is important to the process and ensures that changes are made.

Uyizeye will draft and send the letter to NHDES, after being reviewed by Heatley.

7. Other Business

Recruitment of reps from unattended towns would be great. Uyizeye will follow up with discussions in Claremont.

8. The next meeting will be held on March 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at the Windsor Welcome Center.
9. Meeting adjourned by motion of Beach/Gallagher at 8:51 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye.