

Wantastiquet Subcommittee
of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions
Thursday, January 2, 2020
Windham Regional Commission Offices, Brattleboro, VT
Special Meeting

Attendees

Walpole	Samantha Loch	✓	Westminster	Paul Harlow	
Walpole			Westminster	Jim Calchera	
Westmoreland	Perry Sawyer		Putney	Joe Grutta	
Westmoreland			Putney		
Chesterfield	Roland Volbehr	✓	Dummerston	Daniel Marx	
Chesterfield			Dummerston	Jack Lilly	
Hinsdale			Brattleboro	Kathy Urffer	✓
Hinsdale			Brattleboro	Michael Fairchild	✓
Vernon	Andy White	✓	Brattleboro (alt)	Michael Donovan	
Vernon					

Edwin Smith (CRJC Commissioner, Hinsdale); Margo Ghia (Windham Regional Commission, Planner); Olivia Uyizeye (Staff)

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

Uyizeye opens the meeting at 5:45pm and introductions are made.

2. Permit Review - 12210C Hinsdale NH 119 Bridge

Uyizeye opens up the permit for review and discussion. The

- Smith notes that construction is expected to start in Fall 2020 and finish in 2023
- Urffer shows in the permit map that the proposed bridge will cross the southern end of the island where there could be significant wetlands impacts. They have recently adjusted the design so the bridge abutments are largely moved out of this area. The wetland impacts around the island and Hinsdale boat launch are estimated to require \$152K contribution to the ARM fund. In previous discussions, Wantastiquet members have recommended using these funds to restore Broad Brook.
- White expresses concern for the abutments as he has seen them form 30 plus foot holes on the upstream end. These impacts have not been considered in the proposal.
- Fairchild explains the hydrology around the island. There is a stronger current on the Brattleboro side, as the other is building up sediment. The downstream end of the island has low water that extends about 100 feet out before it drops out into the main channel of the river. The proposed expansion of the Hinsdale boat launch, in response to the loss of the boat launch on the island, is inside the river setback. The launch sits next to the rail trail that is a hotspot for various recreational uses. Fairchild expresses that if more is done for the boat launch, the work would ideally enhance access to the full recreational capabilities of the site.

- White says that the boat launch is functional as is and these funds would be better spent maintaining some access to the island. Loch shares that she has heard the boat launch is acceptable, and only the backup of the boat can be tricky.
- Urffer and White share that there is disagreement on this point from other meetings they have attended. It is unlikely that the plans for the upgraded boat launch would be removed at this point of the planning process.
- Smith explains that the land under consideration is owned by the state. There will be some upgrades for parking done to a town lot that sits adjacent.
- Urffer adds that a kiosk and wayfinding station would be of benefit at the boat launch. Also, interpretive signage has been approved on the new 119 bridge and that it would be good to see some signage on the riverine/wetland systems that are being impacted by the work in this permit.
- Smith notes that there is event the upgrade does not allow for sufficient parking, but there is little alternative without taking further land from the Town of Hinsdale.
- A 12-inch culvert is proposed to direct flow from an inland wetland that overflows seasonally. Urffer expresses concern from experience that this size might not be sufficient. White agrees and suggests a 24 inch.
- Urffer expresses concern for the many invasives on this section of the river and the benefits of a boat washing station. Also, it is unclear who is responsible for maintaining the launch. This is referenced in the permit, but no final decision is made.

Urffer makes a motion for Uyizeye to draft and submit a letter with the following comments

1. The LRS asks that a maintenance plan for the boat launch be established prior to any work done on site. Who is and will be the responsible party for maintaining this boat launch? What activities would be included in this maintenance and how regularly would these occur? According to the application, this was discussed at the NHDOT Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting on November 21, 2018; however, the permit does not indicate a resolution on the matter.
2. As it is connected to both boat launch and rail trail, visitors would benefit from guidance on these activities and the habitats they occur in – wetland, river, floodplains, and forest. The LRS would like a kiosk and wayfinding station included at the site due to the many recreational activities located there.
3. The installation of a 12” culvert is planned to direct water flow from a nearby wetland that overflows seasonally. The LRS questions whether this size is large enough. We ask for consideration of a 2-foot culvert (or more) and the reasoning for the final decision to be shared with this body.
4. Aquatic invasive species have been documented in the launch location. This is a topic of concern and active management in many bodies of water in the region, including up and down the Connecticut River. To further these efforts and deter additional invasives management, we ask for the installation of a permanent invasive species boat washing station on site.
5. Further, the LRS suggests that wetlands interpretation information be included in some of the interpretive signage to be put on the new NH 119 bridge.

Vollbehr seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimous.

Meeting is adjourned.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Olivia C. Uyizeye