



Minutes

Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Virtual Meeting – Zoom

Monday, September 21, 2020 ~ 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Virtual meeting requirement review:

Virtual meeting requirement review:

The President of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions has found that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID – 19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020–04, the CRJC and its Committees are authorized to meet electronically. Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting which was authorized pursuant to the Governor’s Emergency Order. The CRJC is utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Commissions have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting as follows:

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: CJRC Joint Commissions Zoom Meeting

Time: Sep 21, 2020 01:45 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86005077431?pwd=RWw1VDJkcTBRektQdjhxTXVUQVloZz09>

Meeting ID: 860 0507 7431 Passcode: 749292

Dial by your location

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 860 0507 7431

Passcode: 749292

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86005077431>



Minutes

Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Virtual Meeting – Zoom

Monday, September 21, 2020 ~ 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Steven Lembke, Tara Bamford, Pete Fellowes, Jason Rasmussen, Marie Caduto, Chris Company, Lionel Chute, Jennifer Griffin, Ed Cooley, Ed Smith, Jim Kennedy. **Staff:** Patricia Crocker

Comm. Jason Rasmussen, Secretary convened the meeting in the absence of the President and Vice President.

Approval of Minutes of the June 15, 2020 Meeting

Comm. Lembke moved adoption of the Minutes as presented. Comm. Caduto seconded. No discussion. A roll call vote proceeded: Vote: Unanimous

Financial Reports

June 30, 2020 FY 20 Year-end. Treasurer Griffin reviewed the financial report for June 30, 2020. Spending was under budget. There was a reconciliation from general expenses for travel to consultant time. The approximately \$2,000 into consultant time balanced out expenditures. Comm. Lembke noted the fund balance at the end of the fiscal year.

Comm. Lembke moved to approve; Comm. Smith seconded approval. Roll Call Vote was taken: Vote Unanimous.

Comm. Caduto moved and Comm. Griffin seconded a motion to accept the August financial statement. A roll call vote was taken. Vote: unanimous.

Comm. Company joined the meeting at this point and assumed the post of meeting Chair.

Staff introduced NH DES program manager Tracie Sales and Riverbend Local River Subcommittee member Rob Christie.

Funding Updates

Comm. Lembke reporting on his contacts with Vermont legislators. He reported that the prospect of restoring funding has not changed as of the date of this meeting. Comm. Company said the legislature is expected to pass a budget on September 25 and that will be it for the current fiscal.

Vermont Sunset Commission

This item was moved up as it related to the funding discussion. Comm. Company provided a report on his testimony that will be made before the Sunset Commission on September 30. The VT Sunset Commission is established to look at all boards and commissions to determine if they are still relevant and serving a purpose. This was just CRJC's turn.

Comm. Lionel Chute connected by telephone and joined the meeting at this point in the meeting.

Comm. Caduto will also testify at the Sunset Commission on behalf of the Agency of Natural Resources. She suggested that the completion of the Strategic Plan will help to support continuation of the CRJC and possibly the funding in a subsequent fiscal year. The Strategic Plan outlines the benefit to Vermont from its continued participation in the CRJC.

Comm. Company noted that all the River Basins are covered under the Vermont Clean Water Initiative, however, it is the actual main stem of the Connecticut that is not included but perhaps should be. Comm. Caduto noted that this has been a topic of discussion between her and her program director.

Comm. Chute inquired about the relationship of Vermont to the River as it is technically in NH. Vermont is technically responsible for about 1/3 of the Connecticut River according to Comm. Caduto.

It was noted that State Senator Jeannette White and State Representative John Gannon are co-chairs of the Sunset Commission. Both are from the Brattleboro region and are familiar with Connecticut River matters.

Local River Subcommittee Report

Riverbend Committee member Rob Christie presented the LRS report. The report was in writing. Just as the river contains more activity in the river as you get close to the ocean, subcommittees have more activity. Subcommittees are all very interested in the strategic plan and there has been some suggestions that the subcommittees play a larger role within the Joint Commissions.

Mr. Christie inquired about the expectations Commissioners had of the Local River Subcommittees. Bamford inquired about changing the reporting from staff (Olivia) to LRS committee members. Comm. Chute noted that Olivia saw this as an opportunity to get committee members more involved with the Commission. hoped to get committee members become more involved with the Commission. Comm. Chute recommended that concerns about the LRS reporting format be brought to the Executive Committee for discussion.

Comm. Rasmussen inquired about a VT permit that was reviewed by the Riverbend Committee. Mr. Christie noted that lacking a quorum they decided to comment by thanking VT for providing the permit and suggested best practices as the way to proceed with the driveway project in question.

Comm. Caduto suggested sign-up for the Environment Notice Bulletins (ENB) so that each local river subcommittee can review and consider Vermont permits. The origination of the permit in question will be researched by staff.

Comm. Kennedy had some questions for Tracie Sales about the name of the LRS and suggested that these be called Local River Advisory Committees. Sales noted that the CRJC is different from other river committees. She quoted the RSA and stated that it doesn't matter to the State of NH what the subcommittees are called. It must be the chair of the subcommittee who comments on permits to NH DES.

Comm. Kennedy suggested that change be made to the CRJC Bylaws. Comm. Chute suggested that this question be referred to the Executive Committee for discussion.

Comm. Kennedy inquired about the quorum and whether it might be advisable to determine whether a quorum of VT towns would meet the requirement. Sales explained that how the subcommittee defines a quorum is up to the CRJC for the subcommittees. Subcommittee sight visits were also questioned. She explained that there are differing opinions on how the site visit is treated under the statute. She stated that in her opinion if you are not in a position to make an official decision, it's not necessary to notice the site visit. Committees have frequently authorized chairs to sign off on certain applications.

Comm. Chute suggested that these matters be addressed at the Executive Committee in the future.

Thank you Letter to former Commissioner Jim McClammer noting his long service to the CRJC. Comm. Lembke outlined the work that Jim had done to keep CRJC active and involved in the river management. The consensus was to have the letter written by Comm. Lembke write a letter on behalf of the Commissioners.

The motion to write letter on behalf of CRJC was made by Comm. Rasmussen and seconded by Comm. Griffin. Comm. Chute felt a roll-call vote was not necessary for this motion. Vote: Unanimous.

Migration Project

Comm. Lembke briefed the Commissioners on the status of a proposed migration forum with Thursday, December 3 as a possible date.

Comm. Kennedy expressed concern about the title noting that migration might be controversial. Other terms for describing the subject were discussed. Growth and development were included among the terms. Comm. Company expressed his reservations about changing the title. Comm. Caduto explained that the concept of climate migration is well-established and might attract more interest than if the label were more generically about development stating that climate migration sensitizes people to the changing climate. Comm. Griffin suggested "Rural development in the age of climate migration."

Comm. Caduto inquired about the problem with the word "migration."

Comm. Campany explained that changes in the population due to climate as well as the pandemic. He said he was not afraid of the word migration. The US will have to deal with domestic as well as international migration.

Comm. Chute suggested that the time frame should be grounded in the immediate future. Comm. Caduto suggested that we are here to look ahead in a 5–10–20 year event. She stated that discussion and planning should be focused on the long–term impacts. Comm. Chute stated that it might be best rooted in the current knowledge basis. Comm. Caduto said if we wait until everything is known it will be too late.

Comm. Campany supported the view for planning out one or two decades although things may change in the course of that time period. He felt the project might have the effect of being an early wake–up call to establish relevant development plans.

Discussion followed on whether the topic of equity should be included. The scope created by Comm. Campany was reviewed. The news item titled “Will Americans Trade–in the Urban Life Style?” was reviewed and discussion continued.

A steering committee was formed to plan this event in December. Comms. Lembke, Campany, Caduto, Rasmussen, and Griffin volunteered to serve on this committee.

Financial needs were to be determined once logistics are completed.

Tracie Sales suggested that having someone from NH DES involved would be beneficial as her supervisor thought it was a timely topic. She also offered the assistance of NH DES with the Sunset Commission as this would impact the NH side of the Commission.

Antioch Grad Student Intern Discussion

The program is called the CSI project or Collaborative Service Initiative which is a group of grad students of from two to four people that form a team to provide consulting services on a project.

This team could look into the project outlined and determine what the trend is toward migration. Address the four questions outlined from water quality to town services to land use short and long term. Whether this is a climate change trend.

Expense of the project was reviewed and the financial obligation would be low. The Claremont Savings Bank grant of \$2,000 is available, but are intended for use on the migration forum. Limitations of staff time available were discussed.

Comm. Chute inquired whether folks were in favor of going forward with the CSI application. Comm. Lembke moved going forward with the application, seconded by Comm Rasmussen Vote: Unanimous

Comm. Caduto asked staff to send out the draft application for comment from all Commission seats

Commissioner Recruitment

Comm. Lembke had put this on the agenda. Every one should be thinking of panelists for the event, and perhaps they would also be candidates for open Commissioners.

Staff reported that CRJC could have as many as 15 members from each state and there are currently 8 from VT and 7 from NH so the size of the Commission memberships could double if open seats are filled. Staff was asked to share nomination forms/documents/process.

Other Business

Comms. Caduto and Company thanked Ms. Crocker for the work to compile and post all the documents to the website for testimony before the Sunset Commission.

Adjourn

Comm. Company moved to adjourn, Comm. Caduto seconded at 4:00 PM. Vote: Unanimous

Next Meeting: Monday, December 21, 2020.

Audio recording:

https://www.uvlsrc.org/files/9816/0166/9582/GMT20200921-180759_CJRC-Joint.m4a

DRAFT