

**Wantastiquet Subcommittee
of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions**
Wednesday, July 22, 2020
Video Conference Call
Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Walpole	Samantha Loch	✓	Westminster	Paul Harlow	
Walpole			Westminster	Jim Calchera	✓
Westmoreland	Perry Sawyer	✓	Putney	Joe Grutta	
Westmoreland			Putney		
Chesterfield	Roland Volbehrr		Dummerston	Daniel Marx	
Chesterfield			Dummerston	Jack Lilly	
Hinsdale	Mike Darcy	✓	Brattleboro	Kathy Urffer	✓
Hinsdale			Brattleboro	Michael Fairchild	✓
Vernon	Andy White	✓			
Vernon					

Margo Ghia (WRC); Lionel Chute (CRJC President); Olivia Uyizeye (Staff)

Minutes

1. Welcome, Review Meeting Guidelines & Introductions

Chair Andy White called the meeting, conducted via conference call, to order at 6:010 PM under the emergency provisions of RSA 91-A, New Hampshire’s Right-to-Know law, as allowed by Emergency Order 11 under Executive Order 2020-04 in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. Chair White conducted a roll call of LAC members, invited any guests to introduce themselves, and welcomed all present.

2. CRJC Strategic Plan – Lionel Chute, CRJC President

Chute orients the LRS to the CRJC adopted 5-year strategic plan. He expresses that CRJC is not well known. Our value in looking at permit applications and providing a local voice is not understood. This, in part, has resulted in some lost of funding from the state of VT. Typically, CRJC is funded by both states of NH and VT. There is an effort under way to restore funding in the next quarter, but it is not yet clear what will happen. Chute describes this year as both a challenge and an opportunity. Chute describes the 4 main goals of the strategic plan (see attached) – advocate, convene (sweet spot that we can and should do), connect and sustain.

Chute shared the intention to host an event that would discuss a potential surge in population/development as a result of the pandemic all along the CT river valley. This is the time to be thinking of this development and its potential impacts, not once everyone’s here. Commissioners are hoping to convene a conference on growth.

Chute highlights the goals to Connect (reach out more and have more to offer our partners) and Sustain (going back to the funding challenges and our network). Chute describes an intentional effort to focus on the LRS role – how to sustain and strengthen the LRS through promotion and media. Chute encourages member to give a look at the plan and welcomes feedback to Chute, other commissioners or

Olivia. Chute emphasizes that there needs to be communication and coordination between commissioners and LRS. Conversation follows:

- White – River has been used more recreationally during this pandemic. Also, an annual event to get the LRS together once a year to meet, mingle and recognize would be of value.
- Chute – positive idea. Uyizeye will track and share this feedback in the minutes to bring to commissioners so they can move to assess and enact those seen feasible and a priority.
- Fairchild – agreed with White on the number of people who have been out. Sometimes disturbing to be in a lightweight boat and see the increased motor traffic. Memorial to Labor Day, 10 weeks of intense activity. Drivers are not always aware of the smaller, tipsier boats. It's a phenomenon that is common in this country, but good to see more people enjoying the river. Generally not very concerned.
- Sawyer – questions whether slowing down creates more waves than when planing at a higher speed.
- Loch – In Walpole, they are trying to work with emergency services to improve access to the river. Loch poses the concern about improving emergency access during this time of increased usage.
- White – Brattleboro might be the only one up through the valley with a water response team.
- Uyizeye references a talk given to the Upper Valley LRS on water safety. Urffer responds that sharing presentations across subcommittees could be an advantage.
- Urffer expresses that CRJC commissioners are elected by state governors. There is an opportunity there to raise the profile of the river in both states through funding and understanding. Urffer views the commissioners as those who can help leverage those opportunities. The LRS permitting authority in NH establishes a different status than VT. Setting up LRS to automatically receive and invite comment for the VT permit could be a long term goal. Seeing this review in an equal way would be beneficial. VT has an environmental notice bulletin that can come to your email. Uyizeye notes that at present there is limited staff capacity to filter through permits, but will assess options for LRS to see VT permits that members can assess whether or not to comment.
- Chute – Coming on Vermont permits without directive might be a way to bring attention to the state of what the LRS are doing.
- Urffer – sees the VT permit review more from a perspective of equity. Then it could naturally evolve how is best the LRS might contribute for VT.
- Fairchild – gives an example of a major project in Putney that the LRS are not commenting on. The state is improving boat access ramps.
- Chute – it could change VT perspective if they were seeing meaningful feedback on these projects.

3. Permit Reviews

No permits to review at this time.

4. Approve Meeting Minutes from May

Sawyer makes a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Fairchild seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimous by roll call vote.

5. Rotating Chair – Nomination for Next Meeting

Sawyer volunteers to chair the next meeting.

6. Other Updates & Business

a. Volunteer River Assessment Program

Urffer describes that a group went out at end of May, learning to use the meters and assess how long it took. Another testing was done in mid-August where those participating felt confident in their understanding of the procedures. It takes all day to do the 5 sites. One meter is a bit finicky, taking a really long time, possibly due to heat. Urffer is reaching out to NHDES about troubleshooting the problem. Loch suggests talking to the older chair of the Cold River LAC (Ted). He has performed the assessment before and has an extra set of equipment for testing.

The next date will be set for mid-August. Urffer encourages other members to join if they are able so they can learn and share in the responsibility. Ghia thanks Urffer for organizing this. The results over time will be quite interesting.

b. AIS update from Laurie Callahan (document attached)

Andy suggests putting up flyers at the boat launches.

Ghia shares that she had a positive experience attending one of Laurie's events looking for water chestnut.

c. Other Updates

Fairchild –visited the Gas station in Chesterfield where they are redoing the drainage, a permit previously comments on. The LRS suggested in comments that a device be put in the drainage to filter runoff from that may include harmful chemical. Fairchild observed that these were in fact installed at two locations on the site. This was something that likely was not going to happen if the LRS was not involved

7. Adjourn

Sawyer makes a motion to adjourn. White seconds the motion. The vote passes unanimous by roll call vote.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye