

CRJC Headwaters Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 9, 2021
7:00PM
Conference Call

Attendees

Pittsburg			Northumberland	Edwin Mellett	✓
Pittsburg			Northumberland	Dale Covey	✓
Colebrook	Kevin McKinnon	✓	Bloomfield		
Colebrook			Bloomfield		
Stratford			Lemington		
Stratford	Clayton Macdonald		Lemington		
Clarksville	Ron Howell		Maidstone		
Clarksville			Maidstone		
Stewartstown			Canaan	Tom Caron	✓
Stewartstown			Canaan		
Columbia	Kenneth Hastings	✓	Brunswick		
Columbia	Lucas Deblois		Brunswick		

Olivia Uyizeye (Staff, UVLSRPC)

Bill Bernhardt (Pittsburg)

All attendees present in person.

Minutes

1. Welcome, Introductions & Review of Conference Call Tools and Public Meeting Guidelines

Chair Mellett called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM. Mellett welcomes attendees who then introduce themselves.

4. Meeting Minutes from April & July

Caron moves to accept the minutes from April and July. Covey seconds. The motion passes unanimously by roll call vote. Hastings abstains.

5. Permit Reviews

a. New home, Pittsburg, NH

Mellett indicates that he received a notice on this plan from NHDES, but never received any further information. The plan was done by a company in Meredith.

6. Other Permit Communications

a. Lyman Falls Dam, CRC

Hastings notes that nothing has been done on the planned removal, seemingly postponed to next year. Mellett will look into in for the next meeting. Members discuss that when folks are on the river, the dam cannot be seen until you are 10-15 ft away. Some indication that a sign may be put out on a mound of rocks in the middle of the river. The rocks are to be placed to help establish fisheries habitat. Once the dam is gone, it is expected that the pool below the dam will disappear, filled in with sediment.

b. Stewartstown Campground

McKinnon gives an update on a new campground in Stewartstown. This was discussed a year ago that Caron looked into. Caron had thought someone from NHDES followed up, but seemingly not. McKinnon indicates that the property owner still has no permits. The owner seems to think that they are not required, despite McKinnon's assurance that a campground does from NHDES.

McKinnon describes the site. The property is on town sewer. The owner had not signed up to connect the campground from the town selectboard, however, it was eventually done. The campground sites are right on the river. Trees are being cut to make a clearing and view along the riverbank. Planning to build a pavilion with electricity. Mellett notes this is in the shoreland protection area. McKinnon notes that if unapproved activities are reported, there could be a fine.

McKinnon makes a motion to write a letter to NHDES about this campground. Hastings seconds. The motion passes unanimously.

6. Updates & Other Business

a. Town/Member Updates

Member Updates. Mellett indicates that Lucas Deblois resigned, moved to Colebrook.

On Murphy Dam, Caron shares that it was shut down for a day or two for maintenances. The work on the lake side has been finished. The work on the valves has not yet been done. The main concern with the valves is that they occasionally get stuck open. In July/August, managers shut the water off for a day or two so divers could survey the dam's condition. Shutting off the water can have impacts downstream that it is important to be aware of. Very little communication on this survey was done from NHDES with a notice on a Friday and the work done the following Tuesday. A letter was sent to NHDES, and the response was that this poor communication would not happen again. Hastings notes that he has not heard any new reports on what was discovered in that survey.

Lake levels. Caron spoke with Tim Purrington about the lake levels. The second lake is down 3 feet. The first lake is ok. Lake Francis is 6-7 ft low. Hastings notes that utility companies have been talking about rolling black outs if there were an extended cold period.

Utility pole maintenance. Mellett shares that Eversource is replacing all the utility poles along the Coos loop in Groveton with steel polls, a bit more durable and taller than the typical wood poles. Mellett was notified through the Conservation Commission. No issues were identified with upgrading the lines. Members note the difference in communication between this permit and Northern Pass – regular video conference with selectboards and conservation commissions, more detail in permit on wetlands treatment including moving some poles upland. The poles are being brought in as needed. Other maintenance efforts to replace poles are using the wood type, which are stored in front of the substation, which is near a wetland. Special mats are placed on the location to reduce impact from the weight of the poles or equipment.

b. Speaker topics of interest

Uyizeye updates members that the next Riverwide speaker event on the topic of Water Quality and Green Infrastructure will be on January 18th 6PM. Uyizeye is now welcoming input from members on topics of interest for the next events to take place in 2022.

c. Meeting schedule and hybrid setup

Uyizeye informs members that staff will be participating in some meetings virtually. For these meetings, Uyizeye asks if a member can help to setup the conference call connection at the Colebrook Town office. Caron offers to do this.

d. Commissioners Update

Hastings shares recent conversation on the movement of people to the region during the pandemic. From a NH report, it appears that more people moved within NH than from out of state. The number of building permits were higher in 2020 than 2021, even though more home sales in 2021. Caron indicates more year round residents in Pittsburg. Hastings notes that people are moving to the southern part of state before they move to the Headwaters area. Mellett –shares amazement by how fast properties moved. The for sale sign goes up and the next week the sale is pending. Couldn't believe some of the prices on the market. McKinnon notes that many have moved out of cities due to the ability to work remotely. Uyizeye mentions that NH regional planning commissions have received funding to perform their regional housing needs assessments to be completed at the end of 2022.

Hastings notes that a lot of people are out on the CT River, even on the weekdays. Once he was passed by 32 kayaks. Members continue to discuss the Connecticut River as a resource of high value to the local economy – “the hidden resource” as Caron described.

e. Other Business

8. Adjourn

Hastings makes a motion to adjourn. Caron seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye.