



CRJC Mount Ascutney Local River Subcommittee

Thursday, May 2, 2022

7 PM

Windsor Welcome Center and Conference Call

Attendees

Plainfield	<i>Open</i>		Windsor	Michael Metivier	
Plainfield	David Taylor	Virtual	Windsor	<i>Open</i>	
Cornish	Jeffrey Plant	Virtual	Weathersfield	Howard Beach	
Cornish	Colleen O'Neill	Virtual	Weathersfield	<i>Open</i>	
Claremont	<i>Open</i>		Springfield	Bill Manner	Virtual
Claremont	<i>Open</i>		Springfield	Kelly Stettner	
Hartland	Cordelia Merritt	Virtual	Rockingham	Thomas Hernon	
Hartland	Judy Howland		Rockingham	<i>Open</i>	
Charlestown	<i>Open</i>				
Charlestown	John Streeter				

Virtual: Olivia Uyizeye (staff, UVLSRPC), Clay Hawkins (Claremont), Jody Schubert (Cornish)

NO QUORUM PRESENT. *In person attendance from at least half of communities with representatives is required to meet a quorum.*

Minutes

1. Welcome & Introductions

Chair David Taylor calls the meeting to order at 7PM. Taylor welcomes all present. Attendees and visitors introduce themselves. Taylor recognizes Janice Lambert from Charlestown NH who recently passed away who was a strong defender of water and the environment.

2. Meeting Minutes from July (for approval)

Agenda item postponed.

3. Permit Review

No permits to review at this time.

4. Other Permit Communications

Manner – updates members on the previously discussed cleanup of buildings at the Edgar may recreation center. After receipt grant, cleanup of the site will proceed. An old industrial site along the Black River in Springfield where PCB oil leaked inside the building. The contamination can primarily be found in the concrete in the floor. After extensive testing, consultants did not detect any that was migrating towards the river. Renovating the old building, which will clean up and expand the existing facilities. Over a million for this grant.

Merritt – asks about any response on the herbicide treatment comments at the Cornish covered bridge. Uyizeye and Taylor have not received any response to submitted comments.

Taylor – updates members that the project in Plainfield along river Road is expected to get underway this summer. No additional damage since last year. People have gotten used to the change in traffic and diverted around the impacted area.

Taylor – shares information that Townsend VT is looking to eradicate local beaver. Taylor wrote to the town manager, encouraging them to contact the person who can install professional beaver deceivers. Invited municipal leaders to Plainfield where a beaver deceiver is installed and works. Beavers continue to present problems and hopes the town does not act in a rash manner.

5. Basin 10 Tactical Basin Plan Priorities Review with Marie Caduto

Uyizeye refreshes members on the Basin 10 projects review request from Marie Caduto. The tactical basin plans focus on improvements for watershed water quality and habitat. The plans result in a long list of projects. For Basin 10 – Black and Ottauquechee Rivers, there are approximately 600 projects. Caduto is looking for guidance on what the communities think are the most important projects to be done – both based on existing projects and new projects. What are your priorities for the Connecticut River – focusing on riverfront communities.

Uyizeye shares a few initial thoughts based on review of Basin 10 projects and maps of the region:

- Very few projects listed along the Connecticut River itself
- Noticed several areas with very small to no buffers, less than 100 ft, especially along what look like farms from satellite imagery and at electric transmission line corridors. This may be especially concerning considering the use of pesticides and fertilizers at these locations.
- Important recreation spots along the river including Hoyt’s Landing, Sumner Falls, Herrick’s Cove, and Wilgus State Park. Where there are boat launches, mitigation efforts are needed to protect from the spread of aquatic invasive species.
- From existing projects, those with the biggest water quality impact were in close proximity to the river with focused attention on significant riparian habitat restoration, wetlands restoration, and flood plain restoration.

Members make the following reflections and comments:

- Merritt asks about any study done on land loss due to the dams.
- Comments on FERC relicensing process for the Bellows Falls dam. At one point there will be opportunity for the state to provide comment. Is the Basin Plan an appropriate place to direct suggestions for resident priorities on the final agreement?
- Manner recommends that members looking for more opportunities to learn and discuss the plan may want to attend two upcoming meetings May 10 and May 12.
- Manner - NRCS provides payments for riparian buffer plantings.

- Hawkins – riparian buffer planning put in on his own property because of erosion on a steep bank. Erosion caused by underground water not above ground. Took out 2 acres even though planted hundreds of trees. The bank was where groundwater emerged and continued to erode the bank after the riparian buffer planting had been done. Need professional input on the appropriate strategies that need to be used on a site.
- Schubert (Cornish Conservation Commission) – recently in a Cornish town forest looking at a significant sand and gravel operation right across the river. Fish and Game wildlife cartop boat launch just north of the Cornish covered bridge not more than a mile. Heavily used, put in for kayaks and canoes. Who has responsibility for improvement? Saint-Gaudens Natural Historic Park might also have insight on this as they have a vested interest. Be nice to have more recreation access.
- Taylor reflects on NH’s shoreland protections that are not available in VT. Large gravel operations near the river in Hartland and Hartford. Agricultural ones are harder to monitor.
- Merritt – recommends boat washing and education at boat ramps to reduce spread of aquatic invasives.
- Schubert –Asks if the Basin plan covers water quality and erosion.
- Manner – Basin plans focus on water quality protection and stormwater controls.
- Merritt – Basin plans provide back roads support, expensive culvert replacements, Water quality monitoring is often local taxpayer funded and advance my local conservations commissions and watershed organizations.
- Taylor – asks for others input not present here. Metivier & Howland. Multiple projects in Windsor.
- O’Neill – Asks about funding and ranking.
- Manner – much of ranking has to do with funding. Most of the funding is state, not federal. Most VT state funding goes to Lake Champlain.
- Uyizeye – comments on the Total Maximum Daily Loads for LI Sound Nitrogen reduction may result in an increase of funding to the Connecticut River in the upper basin
- Manner – believes Basin 10 plan due end of the year.
- O’Neill – suggests that the LRS members consult conservation commission. Visit sites to determine clarity with priority projects.

Members agree to ask Marie Caduto to join the next meeting to help clarify some of these questions about appropriate types of projects. Uyizeye will ask Caduto to attend and will look to have print out maps available at the next meeting for project review.

6. Updates & Other Business

The next meeting scheduled for July 4th will be rescheduled due to the holiday.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourns at 8:14PM, by motion of Howland/Manner.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye.