



CRJC's mission is to preserve the visual and ecological integrity and sustainable working landscape of the Connecticut River Valley, and guide its growth and development through grassroots leadership.

Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Full Commissions Meeting

Monday, January 24, 2022 - 2 PM

Join In Person – 10 Water Street, Suite 225, Lebanon, NH

Join Virtually via Zoom

ATTENDANCE

NH CRVRC COMMISSIONERS			VT CRWAC COMMISSIONERS		
NCC	OPEN		Sec. Nat. Resources	Marie Caduto	V
UVLSRPC	Ted Cooley	V	NVDA	Beth Torpey	V
SWRPC	Lisa Murphy Harriet Davenport (alt)	X X	TRORC	Pete Fellows	V
CRC	Ken Hastings	P	MARC	Jason Rasmussen	V
CRFCC	OPEN		WRC	Chris Company	V
Hydro-Electric	Jen Griffin	P	RPC#5	OPEN	
Conservation	OPEN		At Large	Steve Lembke	P
Tourism	OPEN		At Large	Beth Kennett	V
Agricultural	OPEN		At Large	OPEN	
Forest Prod	OPEN		At Large	OPEN	
At Large	Jim McClammer	P	At Large	OPEN	
At Large	OPEN		At Large	OPEN	
At Large	OPEN		At Large	OPEN	
At Large	OPEN		At Large	OPEN	
At Large	OPEN		At Large	OPEN	

Note: P = present in person; V = present over remote virtual platform; X = not present

Additional attendance: Olivia Uyizeye, Staff Consultant

MINUTES

2:00 PM Convene

President Lembke convenes the meeting at 2:02PM. Welcomes Beth Torpey as a new board member.

1. Adopt/Review Minutes of June and October 2021

By motion of Griffin/McClammer, the June minutes are approved with abstentions Torpey and Hastings.

By motion of Hastings/Griffin, the October minutes with an edit on page 3, CRAC modified to CRJC, are approved with abstentions McClammer and Torpey.

Lembke notes the conversation in October about the CRJC budget and contracts without a quorum, and thanks Meghan Butts and UVLSRPC for going along with the mandate in place of a formal adoption by the Board.



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2. Financial Report

Rasmussen reports that the December financial report from UVLSRPC is in good shape. The contract continues to be underspending with expectations that efforts will ramp up in the Spring.

Lembke thanks UVLSRPC accountant, Anne MacEwam for the addition of a summary to the cover letter of each report. Lembke adds that a stronger and in place Officers and Directors policy to protect all Board members against lawsuits etc. resulting from any errors or admissions or frivolous lawsuits. Also, various insurance issues were discussed and negotiated over the past months, with some minor adjustments and cost savings.

By motion of Griffin/Hastings, the December financials are approved unanimously.

3. Budget Adoption; VT & NH Contracts with CRJC – Review deliverable and Approve; UVLSRPC Contract with CRJC

Lembke notes that all these items were discussed and approved by the executive board. For the first time, this budget includes a contingency of approximately \$10,000 for potential overages, to be monitored by Rasmussen and Uyizeye.

By motion of Hastings/McClammer the CRJC FY2022 Budget, Vermont and New Hampshire contracts, and UVLSRPC contract are adopted with abstentions Torpey.

Lembke notes the subcontract is required by statute to go out to bid and CRJC should plan for this in the next fiscal year.

Review of state contract deliverables. Caduto shares that she signed off just today on the most recent round of invoices for work on the VT contract. Overall work is progressing on deliverables with a few requiring more attention. Caduto is working with Uyizeye on deliverables related to the local river subcommittees. Griffin shares that the NH contract deliverables are consistent with previous years and that CRJC is on target to meet these. Lembke adds that we now have a thorough media list that was used to send out the Vermont press release, and that the town annual reports have been submitted.

4. Strategic Plan

Lembke reviews the four goals outlined in the CRJC strategic plan

Advocate – Lembke feels this goal is being met to a reasonable degree with the FERC relicensing process, water quality monitoring, and riverwide speaker series.



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Convene –

- Lembke notes this goal's actions have been slow due to the pandemic. If partners cannot be convened, CRJC may consider running a survey to ask partners about activities of interest.
- Caduto notes that the Vermont contract deliverables includes CRJC hosting a bi-state discussion and a meeting between state staff.
 - Caduto suggests pulling parties together to discuss water quality monitoring. Also discussed by Vermont basin planners.
 - Company suggests bringing together high level policy makers to discuss the Valley, the watershed and their priorities. Different areas could be of focus informed by state statute.
 - Kennett suggests working with new staff Sarah Waring of USDA Rural Development NH/VT and new Executive Director for the Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance.

Connect – Lembke notes the connection between local river subcommittees and state partners. Uyizeye highlights the riverwide speaker series that includes presentations from state partners, such as the event on invasive species. Uyizeye also notes the review of VT tactical basin plan priorities by local members that will be worked on Spring 2022. Lembke suggests doing more to formalize and bring attention to these activities.

Sustain –

- Lembke notes the need to plan for officer succession for the next fiscal year. A part of this will be recruitment of commissioner vacancies.
- Griffin shares that recruitment is a priority for the CRVRC. A list is being formed where commissioner input will be asked. With an outreach list ready, Griffin expects to formalize a punch list of talking points for commissioners and staff to use when contacting individuals and organizations.
- Hastings suggests sending letters to each body, quick and direct.
- Uyizeye reflects that the recent LRS recruitment efforts did not result in new membership, and suggests following up any letter with a phone call or in person visit.
- Lembke adds that individuals may be pulled aside during/after events to directly ask if they may be interested to participate. Even if this does not result in a new commissioner, it improves general awareness of the CRJC.

Lembke indicates to the board that we have 33 initiatives that we are supposed to be continuing or creating for 2022. Some of these are more involved than others, (like the Climate Migration Project) and some are less involved, such as creating internal systems for reporting etc. Over the next five months, Lembke will be looking to work with small groups of 2-3 people to review and prioritize these tasks. Lembke does not anticipate a lot of time needing to be spent by any one group, but rather bringing suggested solutions to each group to the FC for review and advocacy.



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5. Migration Project Update

Lembke explains, “In October, it was decided by the Climate Migration Project Committee that the CRJC should proceed with developing a webinar on one or more aspects of the issues surrounding Climate Migration. Climate Migration should not be confused with Pandemic Migration. It could be argued that migration is migration, but people who migrate to the CT River Valley due to climate change related issues, are generally making a long term, life changing decision to avoid a perceived long-term threat such as flooding, fire etc. This is in opposition to those people who are fleeing the pandemic by moving to less populated and more welcoming (in terms of health) locations. A recent survey shows that up to 2/3rds of these folks will likely return to their original location ‘Once things return to normal.’ When we first began these discussions, we were focused on making Town planners aware that climate migration was real and will happen. Now, most people are aware that climate migration is real, but the reactions by Towns to these projected population increases is fractured and confusing. Our new focus is trying to clearly identify the areas of concern caused by migration and finding ways to mitigate the issues. On one side we have people saying this could lead to a variety of problems and on the other side, we have people like VT’s Governor Phil Scott, say we need all the people we can get to move to VT as fast as we can get them. So, what do we do and how soon do we do it?”

Hastings does not see the COVID-19 pandemic and climate changes as separate. The pandemic migration trends may not be permanent, but they represent a peak of what the future holds from climate change.

Torpey asks if there is data available on these migration trends.

- Lembke responds with a summary from two recent reports / articles [Sheltering in Place: COVID-19 and Vermont’s Future](#) and [Fave Little State: Climate Migrants From Around America Are Seeking Refuge in Vermont](#)
- Uyizeye references the climate migration reports and data provided by the Antioch University students. [Climate Migration: How is it Reshaping our Communities?](#)

Fellows contributes that the migration data is limited and not be of particular use to sort through. The data on limited affordable housing data is clear. The CRJC could simply reference articles and focus discussion on how to protect the watershed as a resource.

Company notes that large lot custom builds will be the norm without significant land use planning and financing. Current conditions set up the region for rural sprawl in both states that would undermine watershed health. The time is now to make hard decisions. It is hard for any local board to do prescriptive land use planning versus suggestive. Regional plans could make more of a stand, but unclear if the will exists to do so.

Lembke asks if a good audience may be local and regional planning members and staff.

Company responds that the message to that audience can be “it is up to you”



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Caduto adds that this could be one good audience where the point is to encourage municipalities to make the connection between a variety of challenges facing the Valley. It is an educational opportunity. If you make your town ready, you will be in a better position.

McClammer adds that in NH decisions are made at the local level. Charlestown recently updated their master plan and in a 30-year period, ideas have become more progressive. There are too many constraints related to housing. One option would be to compare land use patterns in both states and highlight those that are most effective.

Griffin notes that climate change is central to the topic. It helps to provide a time frame and parameters for the discussion.

Uyizeye shares that UVLSRPC is working on a planning for change white paper that includes climate migration as a case study.

Campany says that those members of local boards are often not as economically tied to the towns. What CRJC plans should be reflective of what the majorities of people face, make more robust engagement for our plans. There is a need for a broader array of people to engage than those who typically get involved.

Torpey shares that in the Northeast Kingdom has a big issue with housing. Are there solutions to present?

- Campany says that the solutions are simple but hard. Hard decisions in plans and needed investments. This is not done enough in master plans to evaluate infrastructure needs. A New England issue to be reluctant with infrastructure. The full-blown housing crisis may be an opportunity to establish a universal plan on how to grow Valley communities. Don't have to look at migrants if can do it for the folks living here now.
- Lembke responds that the focus could be "how to grow your community"
- Torpey suggests smart growth as a possible topic and could invite a speaker or a consultant.
- Hastings adds that pictures of affordable housing going back in time could be enticing.

Lembke says that he will form a small group to bring this work into more focus.

6. LRS Report

Uyizeye reports on the following

- Hybrid meetings where a quorum is required in person have been a challenge. Confirming attendance in advance is an issue.
- The speaker series is soliciting input on the next round of events. These might have two intentions – to inform members on topics applicable to their work as members, and to engage the broader public on issues of the Connecticut River and work by CRJC. Uyizeye encourages commissioners to take the survey and share their perspectives on how topics might be prioritized.



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- Water quality monitoring is wrapped up for the season. Reports on data collected should be ready to be share in the Spring. Nominations have been submitted to the Vermont La Rosa program to maintain lab analyses of total nitrogen, total phosphorus and chlorides.
- Recruitment continues to be a topic of discussion but is generally on hold until the website is back online.

New members tentatively approved in December: Jamie Sawyer and Clayton Macdonald – Stratford; Chet Clem- Hanover; Ronald Howell- Clarksville; and Paul Reyns – Walpole.

By motion of Lembke/Griffin, the new members listed are to be nominated and approved as subcommittee members, passing unanimously.

7. CRJC Communications (Steve and Olivia)

a. CRJC & Byway Websites

Lembke explain that the expensive saga continues but the CRJC site can be brought back using a new host, but we first must decide how to deal with the two existing Byway sites that are also infected. It has been suggested that for \$300.00 we protect the byways.org site for future reference and use and release the other five domains that are associated.

By motion of Griffin/Cooley to remove the five domains (ctriverbyway.org; ctriverbyway.net; ctriverbyway.com; ctriverbyways.net; ctriverbyways.com) and purchase sitelock to remove malware on the ctriverbyways.org site, passed unanimously.

By motion of Caduto/Hastings, work to get the crjc.org website back up is approved up to \$2,500, passing unanimously.

b. Phone

Lembke suggests cancelling of the existing CRJC dedicated phone line. Nobody knows it exists, nobody uses it and it cost \$30.00 per month to maintain.

Griffin notes uncertainty if the NH contract requires CRJC to maintain an independent phone line and would like to clarify with Tracie Sales.

By motion of McClammer/Hastings, and contingent on approval from Tracie Sales, the CRJC phone line is to be cancelled, passing unanimously.

c. Bi-Monthly Newsletter

Lembke notes the newsletter outline is done and better than it was due to a fuller participation by board members. Uyizeye indicates the next one will go out in mid-February.



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d. Social Media

Uyizeye shares updates on social media accounts

- Facebook. Most active restart during the first half of the riverwide series with posts at least every 2 weeks. It has been slow to restart since my maternity leave with content shared on most important items such as the upcoming water quality and green infrastructure event. As next steps on this staff would like to:
 - Reinstate planned posts that are sent out at least every two weeks. These have covered items such as: topical information tidbits (such as climate migration), subcommittee activity highlights, member highlights, volunteer recruitment, event advertising, partner highlights (such as VT basin plan updates).
 - Take time to create Facebook connections with key partner organizations, such as participating regional planning commissions, VTDEC, NHDES, etc. This is useful to help connect networks, when able like content on those pages, and help build cross over interest of followers.
- YouTube. Very useful in sharing videos from meetings and from the speaker series. Sharing through Facebook, email and to be on the bi-monthly newsletter. No changes to current use proposed.

8. Miscellaneous

a. Annual Report

Lembke notes this is done and sent to riverside towns.

b. Press Release

Lembke notes that the press release announcing Vermont and NH funding was done and sent to papers and other news outlets. Fulfills a VT deliverable and increases awareness of the CRJC, our mission and our work. Great list of media outlets.

c. Invasive Control monitor sites

Uyizeye shares an email from Kathy Urffer: “there is interest in trying to start a Lake Host (bad name!) program on the Connecticut River. NH Lakes receives a large amount of funding from NH DES for aquatic invasives species prevention and Amy Smagula seems interested in trying to get some sort of greeter program started for access areas on the river. NH Lakes has an application process: <https://nhlakes.org/lake-host/> Andy Fisk, our ED, is not convinced that this is something that CRC should take on at the moment, but it occurred to me that CRJC subcommittees might be interested, or even the RPCs, so I am passing the idea on to you so you are aware of the opportunity. Reach out to Amy directly if you think this is something that CRJC or UVLSRC might be interested in acting on.”

Uyizeye indicates that this is not something subcommittee members have existing capacity for, however, might be of priority in the future.



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9. Other Business

Lembke invites additional updates.

Caduto is working with conservation districts on both sides of the river to put together a project for application to the Long Island Futures Fund. The project being considered is for agricultural best management practices for nitrogen reduction. Caduto will keep CRJC up to date.

4:00 PM Adjourn

By motion of Hastings/Lembke, the meeting is adjourned, passing unanimously.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye.