

**Wantastiquet Subcommittee
of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions**

Tuesday, November 30, 2021

6:00PM

Brattleboro Brooks Public Library, 224 Main St, Brattleboro, VT
Virtual option via ZOOM

Attendees

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

Olivia Uyizeye (JVLSRPC Staff)

Margo Ghia (Windham Regional Commission) - remote

Minutes

1. Welcome & Introductions

Chair Sawyer called the meeting to order at 6:10PM.

2. Meeting minutes from July

Urffer requested that on page 4a of the draft minutes that edits be made that no measures exceed permit limits, but rather qualitative measures were observed.

Urffer moved to accept the minutes with the edits discussed. Volbehrr seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous. Minutes were approved.

3. Permit Reviews

4. Other Permit Communications

a. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, Soundview Holdings, Putney

Urffer informs members that improvements were made to the application after the public hearing. They have been given until the end of 2023 for an engineering study to determine the cause of qualitative measures that were observed from the pipe discharge causing concern. Another hearing will be scheduled due to the content modifications.

Fairchild comments that most pipes seem to have the qualitative measure noted, such as foaming. Urffer responds that the intention of the NPDES permits are to make improvements, therefore addressing this issue is in line with their permit process.

b. Dummerston, Maple Valley Ski Resort, Act 250 Permit

Urffer informs members of a project being followed through her work with the Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC). An Act 250 permit is underway for the Maple Valley ski resort in Dummerston. The specific aspect of concern relates to an overflow parking lot that includes a riparian area along the West

River with potential impacts to four endangered species. The West River flows into the Connecticut River where any ecological impacts to water quality or continuity of species habitat are of concern. Fairchild raises the question of why this specific location needs to be the overflow parking lot or if the proposed size could be reduced to allow for an adequate riparian buffer.

Urffer notes that VT ANR would like a 100 foot wide buffer as a way to deal with stormwater from the site. There will be an opportunity to walk the site during a pre-hearing site visit as part of the Act 250 permit process. CRC is seeking party status to the process.

White highlights a concern about contaminants in stormwater from a site that could flow into the river such as oil, radiator fluid and gasoline.

Volbehr notes that there is a good amount of parking on another part of the property. Fairchild responds that this is the main parking area.

Urffer adds that blasting has been approved on a part of the property more upland from the West River. This area could also accommodate overflow parking rather than the site next to the river where its best use would be as a full riparian buffer and habitat for wildlife.

c. Putney Rowing Club, Dummerston

Fairchild informs the group of a boat house being built in Dummerston by the Putney Rowing club. The house has access by way of a granite arch under the railroad. There is a cement foundation with a steep drop along the bank. This is one of very few Connecticut River access point on the Vermont side of the river. The property is just north of Moore Farm, and close to Walker Farm along an access road. Fairchild noticed that no barriers or anything was put up during work when the vegetation had been removed.

Members agree it would be helpful to be able to catch these permits that come in that impact the river ahead of time. Also, that it would be helpful to have an active representative from Dummerston. Urffer offers to share with Uyizeye the different permit tracking platforms she uses. Uyizeye will work on improving notifications on relevant permits.

Fairchild will speak with the Town to determine what permits were needed for this project and more plan details for any additional work.

5. Updates & Other Business

a. Town/Member Updates

Members welcome new representative Paul Reynolds from Walpole Vermont. Reynolds joined the last meeting virtually and has been involved in the water quality testing program. Reynolds is a lawyer and is interested to support the subcommittee with the knowledge base.

Urffer offers to speak with contacts on the Dummerston Conservation Commission about a local representative for Wantastiquet. White also has a contact on the Dummerston select board, and will also inquire about identifying a Dummerston representative.

White shares that he may have found an individual who may like to be the second representative from Vernon. White will follow up with them.

Urffer suggests visiting select boards or conservation commissions directly to discuss the work of the subcommittee and the need to have active representation from all riverfront communities. Urffer and White offer to visit meetings. Urffer raises the concern of performing outreach while the website is down as there is no place to direct interested individuals. Uyizeye informs members that the website will be debugged and then transitioning to a new platform in the coming months. Uyizeye will keep members up to date on the exact timeline once the specifics of that transition are ironed out.

Sawyer notes there was some impact from the materials shared last year to all river front towns; however, this did not result in new members. Uyizeye suggests reviewing these materials to see if modifications or talking points could be made for further outreach efforts.

In the short term, it is agreed for Urffer and White to inquire with their Dummerston contacts, and to include outreach material review in the next meeting agenda.

b. Speaker topics of interest

Uyizeye informs the group that the last event of the 2021 riverwide speaker series is being lined up and should be shared for December/January time. The CRJC has approved that this series continue into 2022. Uyizeye asks members to contribute topics of interest. The following were discussed:

- Permit procedures for NH and VT
- Native American history and current experience (Urffer offers a few contacts)
- Scuba Diver Annette Spalding has spoken extensively in the Southern region
- Connecticut River Paddlers Trail

Volbehr suggests that any event on history should be shared with town historical societies.

c. Water Quality & Outreach Updates

Urffer shares that two teams have completed VRAP testing at 5 sites and additional lab testing at 2 sites. Results are typically compiled into a report by NHDES and shared back out in the Spring/Summer. Uyizeye notes that lab results have been received and will be shared with NHDES for their inclusion into the report.

White comments about the importance of where the samples are taken – from the water's surface. It is important to note what this does and does not capture. Uyizeye suggests adding a narrative summary to the NHDES report.

d. Management Plan

Fairchild, Sawyer and Urffer note that multiple elements in the water resource management plan executive summary for the Wantastiquet region are out of date. Urffer notes the importance of these plans as a reference when providing comment on issues related to the river, such as the dam relicensing process through FERC.

Uyizeye notes that the group could try to update the document, which is a short version of a much longer chapter. Urffer is concerned about doing an update that is not comprehensive. Urffer suggest that the CRJC establish a process or mandate for when and how management plans can and should be updated by members. Urffer notes that it would be beneficial to include a variety of stakeholders when updating this type of document, rather than limiting to the subcommittee members.

Uyizeye will bring this discussion to the CRJC and report back at the next meeting.

e. Meeting schedule and hybrid setup

Members agree to meet on the fourth Thursday of the month at 6pm. These will typically occur quarterly, unless there is a need to meet more often. Urffer offers to set up the virtual connection when Uyizeye joins virtually. The next meeting will be help on February 22, 2022 at 6pm at the Brook Library in Brattleboro VT.

f. Commissioners Update

6. Adjourn

Sawyer made a motion to adjourn. Volbehr seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye.