

## CRJC Riverbend Subcommittee

### Minutes

Thursday, February 15, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.  
Hybrid Meeting at AHEAD Conference Room

#### Attendance

Lancaster	Rob Christie	P	Monroe	Steve Sherman	x	Guildhall		
Lancaster			Monroe	Justin Bradshaw	x	Guildhall		
Dalton			Bath	Rick Walling	P	Lunenburg		
Dalton	Gal Potashnick	x	Bath			Lunenburg		
Littleton	Sean Doll	P	Haverhill	Pauline Corzilius	x	Concord	Deborah Noble	P
Littleton			Haverhill	Howard Hatch	x	Concord		
			Haverhill	Gale Lewis	x			
Waterford	William (Bill) Piper	x	Barnet	Bill (William) Graves	P	Ryegate	Sally Wilson	x
Waterford			Barnet	John Fairchild	x	Ryegate		
Newbury								
Newbury								

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

Partners Present: Majestic Terhune (CRJC Staff; Virtually); Ben Copans (Basin Planner VTDEC; In Person)

#### Minutes

##### 1. Welcome & Introductions

Walling called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m.

##### 2. Passumpsic Basin Plan Presentation by Ben Copans

Copans provides an overview of Vermont tactical basin planning. So far, for the timeline, the public surveying and stakeholder finding is near complete with a draft planned for the Fall of 2024.

Copans discusses findings on bugs and fish health by location. Graves asks about the areas of concern, as demonstrated on the map. Copans explains that these are places where the dam impacted the biological community and other areas impacted by a lot of agriculture activity and erosion on the banks. Copans adds that combined sewer overflow is an area of concern. Copans is working with town of St Johnsbury to try to resolve some of their problem areas around wastewater and stormwater pipes. Also a fair number of dirt roads in the areas ranked as poor conditions. Overview of nitrogen loading in long island sound, impacting Vermont.

Copans also provided an overview of other methods evaluating erosion along the river (explained the 'pebble' assessments) (geomorphic studies). Copans introduced members to the lake scorecard (water quality trends, shoreland conditions, mercury, and invasive species).

Projects completed as part of the basin plan include: dam removals, stormwater projects, buffer placements, lakeshore restoration, river corridor easement, road projects. The basin will also be getting new FEMA flood maps; will include much smaller streams. Christie asks how long the timeline is for the impact of a dam removal? Copans indicates that sites are being monitored and spoke to what they've seen so far (will likely take decades to get to full stabilization).

Discussion is had on segments of roads that have not met standards and what is necessary to bring them back to standards:

- Encouraged involvement in engaging more community members in watershed efforts.
- Watershed planners are hoping to get more people involved, cross-organization collaboration.

Discussion is had on invasives. Copans responds that it is a hard issue to tackle; what do they do where it's always so widespread? There may be opportunities for land use. Walling mentions how cows or goats can eat invasives.

Discussion is had on the planting of trees in areas that may see large amounts of erosion. Copans describes that buffer planting can be done successfully and unsuccessfully. Watershed planners are trying to do a better job of monitoring the resilience of buffers and are now trying to plant more trees and a greater variety of trees and new ways of planting them. Walling spoke about his own experience with tree planting; initial undercutting of trees planted, new attempt at planting went better but had some impacts from extreme flooding.

Copans discuss the Nulhegan River - one of the remotest watershed, probably is the remotest watershed. The watershed doesn't seem to be experiencing a huge amount of development pressure; wild and scenic designation is current conversation which would require strong community support. The main requirement for wild and scenic that Copans is aware of – cannot have any dams; cannot designate something that is directly impounded. Group discussion of property ownership along rivers.

### **3. Approve Meeting Minutes from October 2023**

*Christie motioned to approve the minutes without changes. Noble seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **4. Permit Reviews and Communications**

- a. Lancaster Pit Expansion – Alteration of Terrain (File No. 20240131-018)

*Description: This project will impact approximately 600,163 s.f. of earth.*

Christie provided an overview of the site—near CT River. The gravel pit has operated before, and permits for the site have been reviewed by Riverbend in the past. Members discuss the site plans, including the need to keep runoff from going into the area, and do not believe the area intrudes near any wetlands. Overall on paper it looks fine, nothing is being moved closer to the River. There is a different drainage angle for the site than in the past. The question is raised about whether a stormwater system is needed, with not immediate concerns for the need of one being raised. Christie does note significant land area to the west of route 3 with substantial aquifer per natural resources inventory. Walling suggests the use of the latest stormwater data.

*Christie moves to comment that we've reviewed these plans and have no comment beyond that the activities adhere to best management practices and we wonder on the reliance on older data while during changing precipitation patterns and events, and we would encourage any permitting to consider the differences we've seen in the past 12-18 years.*

*Graves seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.*

### **5. Updates & Other Business**

- a. Dalton Landfill

Walling discussed the Dalton Landfill project, including a history of the Ammonoosuc local river advisory committees' (LAC) history on the long permitting history for the site. One of the findings of the last expansion is that it didn't serve a public good. Graves asks about concerns for leaking. Walling notes the Ammonoosuc meeting discussed impacts of landfill on nearby properties with findings of arsenic and PFAS.

Walling indicates that the Ammonoosuc LAC did submit AOT comments; wetlands permit was submitted but it was incomplete and it's been resubmitted and they do not know if it's complete. Further, Walling explains that the landfill/solid waste permit NHDES asked for another 60 days; upshot is for a solid waste facility, need to be 200ft uphill and 100ft downhill from a wetland. Wetland dredge and fill and AOT permits are to fill 10-17 acres of wetlands, so the solid waste permit will be compliant with it. So they are using other permits to destroy the wetland so the solid waste permit will be beyond the distance to the wetlands.

If all approved, money will be given to ARM Fund. Christie talked about his town not having shovel-ready projects for when funds are sent their way. So how does one develop a bunch of shovel ready projects? Walling—don't need to be shovel ready, just need to have a budget and somewhat of a plan. Doesn't have to be huge engineering; but you need to have an idea of what you want to do.

- b. Member and Local Updates

Rail Trail (St. Johnsbury to Wakefield). Noble expresses concern about the route that goes along the Moose River and through wetlands. St. Johnsbury west was washed out over the summer; lots of material washed away. Doll notes from a cyclist perspective, the material that used in VT is better than what is used in NH. There's a section of rail trail near Bath that is starting to disappear.

*CRJC Staff will follow up to identify a speaker on the development of this rail trail.*

c. Update on Virtual Speaker Events this Winter

Terhune provided a brief update on the Speaker Series.

**6. Adjourn**

*Graves motioned to adjourn. Christie seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting concluded at 6:50 p.m.

*Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Majestic Terhune and Olivia Uyizeye.*