

CRJC Wantastiquet Subcommittee
 Minutes
 Thursday, August 22nd, 2024, at 7:00PM
 Hybrid Meeting: Zoom and Windham Regional Commission Office

Attendees

Walpole	Samantha Loch	X	Westminster		
Walpole			Westminster	Jim Calchera	P
Westmoreland	Perry Sawyer	P	Putney	Heidi Henkel	P
Westmoreland			Putney		
Chesterfield	Roland Volbehr	X	Dummerston		
Chesterfield			Dummerston		
Hinsdale	Mike Darcy	X	Brattleboro	Kathy Urffer	X
Hinsdale			Brattleboro	Michael Fairchild	P
Vernon	Andy White	P			
Vernon					

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

Others Present: Ian Garland (UVLSRPC Staff)

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Sawyer convened at 7:07 PM. Members said greetings.

2. Meeting Minutes from November Approval

No comments on minutes, all members agreed that they looked good. Sawyer motioned to approve minutes, White seconded. Motion passed unanimously

3. Chesterfield Shoreland Application

Henkel asked what SQWP means. Garland told the group that it stands for Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act. White asked to see a map. Henkel said she would pull up a map on her phone to see where the project area was.

Fairchild asked what happens if the bank along the river drops along where the houses are. The group discussed what they mean by upgrading the septic. Henkel said that it's good that they're

upgrading the septic system. Fairchild mentioned that because of the new barn they probably had to upgrade the septic systems.

White said it sounds straightforward. Fairchild talked about how the area of disturbed land is very large. The group discussed how large of an area that would be. Henkel didn't think the disturbed area was very big, but Fairchild countered that it is a larger area. Fairchild said that houses now would not be permitted to be built due to proximity to the river.

Ghia asked if anyone had any issues with the permit. Ghia had no issues. Depended on what they will do with the barn or manure runoff. White wasn't concerned. Sawyer talked about rules and laws on what can be stored. White proposed no comment. Fairchild seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

4. a. Hinsdale Restoration Plan:

No members had any comments about the Hinsdale Restoration Plan.

b. Response to comments on Great River Hydro Herbicide Special Permit (Received 4/18/24; Comments due 5/17/24); Impacted Municipalities Include Hinsdale and Walpole

Sawyer talked about how he sent comments to the U.S. and Roundup is still being classified in the same way. A new type of Herbicide has come up in Europe and they banned it. The rivers haven't cleaned at all after years of not using it. One study found out that it was due to laundry detergents going through waste treatment plants. The reaction produces glyphosate. Sawyer said there was a new pesticide with an emergency stop because something harmful was found.

Fairchild talked about how the term pesticide covers all the different cides. Henkel confirmed that the response is saying that they took the comments and decided to continue anyways. Sawyer talked about knotweed and putting plastic over it. And people are learning when to spray. Fairchild said that you need to pull it

Sawyer said that they need to continually spray rather than just doing it for one year. Also talked about how you had to get 8 permits to spray. Can't be done individually. Which is why they don't do it every year. Henkel said that spray doesn't do anything to stop knotweed. Talked about how invasive species are good at surviving in general. Talked about how disturbed soil is perfect for knotweed. If you add poison to a rugged species, some will survive and become more resistant to invasives. The only thing that is harmed are non-target species of animals and plants. Sawyer said

this is because the application is incorrect. Said you must kill the root. Henkel said that this is only temporary. Said you can't do it on a large enough scale to kill it all.

Ghia read the application response back to the group specifying what the permit application was intended to do. White said that they were replying to how they're applying the herbicide rather than the application itself. Ghia said the comments should've been about where they were spraying it in relation to the water rather than the application of the spray itself. Henkel was frustrated because she did research and found studies and evidence against the use of roundup and how it gets in the water.

c. NH Department of Agriculture Division of Pesticide Control Special Permit Application Connecticut River

Ghia said that none of the affected areas are in the Wantastiquet jurisdiction. The group found that they can't make comments because it's out of their jurisdiction. The group decided to move on. Sawyer passed the motion to not submit comments White seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

d. NHDES Culvert Replacement Westmoreland

Sawyer talked about the location of River Road.

Ghia said that the upgrading of culverts is a good thing. Said that they won't upgrade them for wildlife. Sawyer said the only one he can think of in that area was replaced 5 years ago. Everyone thought it looked like a routine culvert replacement. Henkel makes motion to have no comment. Fairchild seconds, motion is approved unanimously.

5. Town and Member Updates

White asked if it will ever stop raining. Ghia talked about the CRJC RFP for the next five years for admin management. Was passed for another 5 years. Trying to get more reps to come to meetings. Talked about lack of interaction between board and sub committees.

Fairchild talked about the open comment period for FERC. Plank over abandoned bridge over Brattleboro. Would give better access to rail trail with 100 miles of access. Talked to people in the

area. They said you can't make the dam owners do anything. Discussion about Hinsdale and Brattleboro about closing off old bridges. The idea was to take the bridges down and Hinsdale would have to police them. Thought they would be out of control. 6 million to upgrade them for pedestrian travel. White talked about how many bridges there are and abandoned bridges. Henkel said it's cheaper to leave them in rather than take them out. Fairchild wanted to know they can weigh in on this. Henkel mentioned the difference between bridges in Walpole. NH wants to own the river but doesn't want to pay for bridges. Henkel asked if they could send something to both Brattleboro and Hinsdale.

The group talked about animals moving through the water. Ghia said the letter should talk about the recreational, environmental, safety. Would like to know why just leave them?

The group then discussed who should write the letter. Ghia mentioned the public meetings about the FERC relicensing. Talked about how it was a chance for the states to look at the water quality due to the relicensing. Vermont had 3 meetings and NH had 3 through CRC. 2 or 3 in mass. Vernon Dam had comments about concerns on erosion below the dam. Due to the dam going up and down. Northfield Dam and impoundments that caused it

Sturgeon came up, confirmed sightings near Bellows Falls. Bypass was also a big point. Needs to be a confirmed breeding population. Comments about recreation and 30 cubic ft bypass. Going to be comments around Bellows Falls

Sawyer talked about canoe access. By the county farm

Fairchild has been working with a boat launch talked to Michael. Carroll Concrete owns the land.

6. Adjourn

8:36 PM Henkel made a motion to adjourn; Calchera seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting
November 21, 2024 @ 6 PM

Notes.submitted.respectfully.by.Ian.Garland