

EXETER RIVER STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 22, 2011

1. Convene Meeting:

Chairman Lionel Ingram, Rod Bourdon, Paul Vlasich-Town Engineer, Mimi Becker, Ginny Raub, and Deb Loiselle-NH DES were all in attendance. Absent: Kristen Murphy-Planning Department, Roger Wakeman-PEA, Don Clement-Selectmen's Rep and Pete Richardson. Lionel convened the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

2. Approve minutes of 8/18/11:

Due to the fact there was not a quorum the August 18, 2011 minutes were tabled until the next meeting.¹

3. Status of the Feasibility Study – Paul Vlasich:

Paul Vlasich handed out a memo from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB) giving an update on the study. Paul highlighted the following points:

- Data collection and review is largely complete
- Field survey and mapping is largely complete
- The sediment sampling part, the QAPP (Quality Assurance Project Plan) is complete and submitted to EPA
- The hydrology is started, mostly looking at flow data
- Cultural resources, one of the most important things that needs to happen is the RPR form needs to be submitted. Paul and Deb Loiselle will have one last review. By the end of the week that will be out of the Department.

4. Discussion of the Public Meeting (Mimi Becker):

Mimi Becker summed up the public meeting that was held on September 14, 2011 at the Exeter Town Hall by stating there was quite a variety of expertise at the meeting but not quite as many citizens as expected. There were about 70-80 people including the people who were staffing the stations. Mimi stated she received a lot of positive comments about the people being able to talk to the experts to get clarification or submit their questions. It was difficult for the reporters to keep track of the three (3) different conversations at once and really make sense of them. They have tabulated the raw data and Mimi will put it together in a more organized fashion so the Working Group will have that to work with. Mimi will also get the compiled information to VHB by Monday, September 26, 2011.

Mimi stated the process that was used at the public meeting was generally favored by the group. Mimi did have some specific push back from about four (4) different people because they felt that the people staffing the stations had already made up their minds and weren't listening carefully but Mimi assured them that the staff would be listening and if the experts had a perspective or not it didn't matter because it will be the citizens who will be voting on it. They wanted to make sure the study itself would not be biased.

Mimi stated that Pete Walkers's briefing was very clear. People did not indicate that it wasn't provided in a way they could clearly understand it. Mimi stated all the time and trouble and worrying about it paid off.

Mimi passed the microphone over to Deb Loiselle for her comments. Deb commented on the station she manned, The Dam Safety Station, about the positive comments she heard from the citizens. Deb passed on thanks to Mimi for coordinating the students to scribe,² it was extremely beneficial. Deb asked Mimi, on behalf of the Working Group to pass a "thank you" to the students. Mimi replied yes. Mimi stated the students will be providing a

¹ Mimi Becker gave Grace some changes. The minutes were updated and resent to the RSC members on 9-29-11.

² Mimi Becker enlisted some of her students from UNH.

formal evaluation and assessment report with some suggestions for when the next public meeting is held. It was their assignment to debrief and using an analytical form go through everything and from their perspective, since they have no biased walking in, to give the Working Group some additional feedback for the next round.

Rod Bourdon added he felt the whole process went very, very well. A comment from the audience stated there really wasn't enough room to maneuver to the different stations; it was too much of a confined space. Mimi agreed but stated it was the function of the room and the seats that were sectioned together making it difficult.

5. None Point Sources of Pollution (Lionel Ingram & Kristen Murphy):

Lionel Ingram opened by stating after going through the Town's Master Plan the committee could address the Non Point Source of Pollution. Lionel asked Kristen to think about that and although Kristen Murphy couldn't be at the meeting she emailed out some suggestions to the members of the RSC referring to the PREP study, it read:

I won't be able to make the River Study meeting Thursday but I have been encouraged to put this thought out for you all to consider. We have heard concern over nitrogen loading of Great Bay from wastewater treatment facilities and the resulting impact on the health of Great Bay, but there has been little discussion about non-point source contribution. I'm sure Derek Sowers mentioned in his presentation that WWTF have been stated to be responsible for about 30% of the nitrogen problem. The majority of the remaining amount is contributed from non-point sources. This means that even with the WWTF solution fully in place, we still have the lion's share of nitrogen loading left unaddressed.

*http://www.prep.unh.edu/resources/pdf/2009_state_of_the-prep-09.pdf
This whole document is worth a read but specifically p. 13 addresses this topic.*

Several of us have brought this up during a number of sideline discussions but it sounds like perhaps the River Study Committee would be a good place to air this discussion more publically. Though DPW does a great job for stormwater management and though we know that there will be significant changes to this through the new EPA's permit, there are still a number of ways to address buffer protection, lawn care practices, septic system maintenance etc. through public outreach. Do you think there would be value to the RSC playing a role here? Food for thought.

Lionel mentioned that Don Clement stated someone had gone to him and asked about doing a study in this area. Lionel added that there is a lot the RSC can do without having to pay someone else to do it. Lionel asked the committee members if they felt this is an area they want to go. Ginny Raub stated she believes what Don was referring to was the Southeast Watershed Alliance who submitted a pre proposal application form to NH DES on impaired waters. The proposal title is "Nonpoint Nutrient reduction in the lower Exeter/Squamscott Watershed". They are naming Exeter, Stratham and Newfields as the targeted towns. In the lengthy proposal one of the main points of the proposal is (Ginny read an excerpt from the report):

“One focus area will be identified early in the process and that area and municipality will be used as a pilot for nitrogen reduction education and implementation. The municipality will be strongly encouraged to assist in expanding outreach efforts and materials beyond the pilot area through their town website, community TV (if applicable) and newsletters.”

Ginny stated the proposal sounds exactly like what the committee wants to do. Ginny is looking for the committee to give approval for her to email Candace Dolan, Chair Education and Outreach, to say that Exeter will be a target area. Lionel asked if there was any cost to it. Ginny stated there is a section that states it will take “in-kind” services and didn’t know if the leg work of the committee would constitute in-kind services. Lionel asked how the committee would go about doing this. Ginny replied she had spoken with Kristen Murphy and they are looking at septic systems and how to identify them.

Mimi Becker stated because Exeter is the target for EPA it makes sense for Exeter to be the main focus also that Exeter is the biggest contributor. There are other studies that have been ongoing that have been provided to both PREP and Great Bay with the result of the study that was done this summer to do a preliminary assessment of Exeter’s non point source. It might be good if there are a couple of entities in Town working on it to share the responsibilities. Mimi’s thoughts are the RSC could do it. Mimi stated that Cooperative Extension has been working with a few towns for a couple of years on their animal waste problems which are non trivial contributors. Mimi feels that the committee could engage Julie Peterson who works with these things at the Cooperative Extension to come and help us with some of the public information and strategies that work for that issue.

Ginny stated that she feels the RSC could be a contributing working partner but the vast scope of the project is a little daunting. Ginny stated they are going before NH DES on October 8, 2011 with the pre-proposal application. Lionel asked Deb Loiselle if she was aware of the activity. Deb replied that she knows just a little, that Sally Soule is part of the 319 Grant money for the Feasibility Study. Deb recommended inviting Sally to the next RSC meeting to talk about it. Lionel said he will contact Sally. Lionel asked Phyllis Duffy to check and see if Jennifer Perry, PW Director, is the Towns representative to this and the status of DPW’s relationship and get back to him. Phyllis replied yes she will. Lionel stated he will also talk to Don Clement as the Selectmen’s Rep.

6. Other Business:

Lionel went over upcoming items for the next meeting:

- Phyllis Duffy to talk about the proposed stormwater permit.
- Roger Wakeman to talk about the river reconnaissance.
- Sally Soule to speak on Non Point Source of Pollution
- An update report from VHB
- A formal summary of the public meeting from September 14, 2011
- Get some information from Jennifer Perry on non point source information

Paul Vlasich stated at the last couple of meeting there was talk of the master plan and how river issues fit in. Paul asked Lionel what his anticipated schedule, if any, to talk about master plan in its relationship to the river. Paul wanted to know to make sure he is prepared to review anything. Lionel replied that he would like Paul to come forward with a recommendation where he might want the committee to go on the master plan. Paul replied that it is much too diverse for him to lead the charge on that. Lionel recommended that the committee wait on the master plan and put it off for future work and focus on the non point source.

Mimi Becker asked Paul if there is any indication on when the Town will get the revised FEMA maps. Paul stated that currently there is not a task by any consultant to change the flood maps. Deb Loiselle added typically that is done during the design, engineer and implementation phase. Adding it is a pretty large task. Lionel stated it isn’t anything that needs to be done now but if the dam were to be removed it would be during that process that the Town would need to provide the information to FEMA to have the flood maps revised. Mimi stated whether

it is dam removal or dam modification we would need to do that. Deb replied yes and this would be handled by Jennifer Gilbert at NH DES. Paul stated that USGS is currently looking at information for the flood maps and he told them about the reports that are out there with the information they needed. Mimi stated this is part of the FEMA remapping of the flood plains; they're gathering data for that process. FEMA is actually doing it and they will decide where the flood plain boundaries are going to be.

7. Public Comment:

None

8. Adjourn the Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m. The next meeting was set for Thursday, October 27, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. in the Nowak Room of the Town Office.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grace Rogers
Public Works Office Manager