

## **EXETER RIVER STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**September 6, 2012**

### **1. Convene Meeting:**

Chairman Lionel Ingram, Town Engineer Paul Vlasich, Selectman Don Clement, Peter Richardson, Mimi Becker, Ginny Raub, PEA Representative Roger Wakeman, Rod Bourdon, Frank Patterson, Richard Huber and Kristen Murphy from Planning were in attendance. Absent:

Lionel convened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

### **2. Minutes of 04/26/2012:**

A motion to approve the minutes as written was made by Mimi Becker and seconded by Don Clement. Vote was unanimous.

### **3. The way ahead until the December 5<sup>th</sup> public meeting:**

This item was moved up on the agenda because Mimi Becker had to leave the meeting early. Mimi reported that, after working with the consultants throughout the summer, there are many tasks to be completed and the study committee has scheduled the following meeting dates: September 7, October 11 and November 8. One concern is publicity for the December 5<sup>th</sup> public meeting and logistics in general. The consultant will prepare draft notices to be posted and other bulletins will also be created for posting throughout the town. Mimi stated that the VHB report will be reviewed then goes to the consultant and should be on the town website by November 4<sup>th</sup>. The information presented to the public will include a list of pros and cons of the two options for the dam: making alterations to it or removing it. Any archaeological aspects will also be presented. The committee is waiting for the report from the consultant on archaeological issues.

There was discussion concerning the involvement of the Board of Selectmen with this project as it proceeds and also what data and information to submit to the BOS prior to the December 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Lionel stated it is important that the BOS be aware of all information the public will be considering at the December public meeting. It was concluded that this committee will provide the BOS with a draft report in late October/early November. When it first becomes available, Don Clement will make copies for each of the Selectmen for their review prior to the BOS meeting. Don requested the draft report to the BOS include all data to be presented to the public (both options, pros, cons, etc.) because the BOS will eventually need to state their recommendations.

### **4. Status of the Feasibility Study – Paul Vlasich:**

Paul provided an update on consultation costs. The contract with VHB is for \$169,000 of which \$137,547 has been paid (81% complete). A reimbursement in the amount of \$84,000 is expected from the EPA and Gulf of Maine. Additionally, there are funds in the amount of \$12,000 received earlier from the EPA that has not yet been used. A study needs to be done on river sediment so that grant from the EPA will be used for this study.

Concerning the flow of the river, past analysis recorded it at 4400 cfs. However, the NH DES provided a figure of 5858 cfs and the NH DES guidelines must be followed. A consultant will review this determination from the NH DES and make recommendations for future modifications to the dam. This will be discussed with the consultant and the State in mid-September. The information from these discussions will help determine the costs involved.

For CIP, there is \$377,000 available for modification with a 3-foot crest gate.

A study still needs to be done concerning the river flow with dam modification and its effect on sediments. A draft report will be available in mid-October for review which will then go to the consultant prior to presenting the information and data to the public. Community education is needed but there is a short timeframe in which to accomplish this. Mimi Becker explained that if the report recommends more bioassay data, this would affect the cost of both options, modification or removal. With a reported cfs increase from 4800 to 5858, Frank Patterson inquired about the effect on the amount of sediment brought in and the height of the dam. Paul said the consultant will review this data and provide an answer to this question.

#### **5. The way ahead after the December 5<sup>th</sup> public meeting:**

Lionel presented 2 primary goals: 1) educational process for the community which needs to be credible and fair, and to include information/data about other areas in NH, and 2) how to present Committee progress, future plans and options being explored.

There was discussion on what would appear on the March 2013 warrant concerning the dam project. Lionel stated that the public would be asked about the options for the dam (modification or removal) so March would be a time of decision by the town but not the time for the town to authorize the project or its costs. Lionel further said that, depending on which option was selected, a major amount of work would need to be done so the project would more likely appear in March 2014.

Don Clement said putting the options on the March 2013 warrant is too early because a decision cannot appropriately be made without all the information, i.e., costs, parties involved being vetted, etc. Without all the financial data, the cost to the taxpayers will not be clear at that time.

Richard Huber asked if using a non-binding question would be possible to get a sense of what the public wants. Don explained that a non-binding vote could later change due to receiving further information.

#### **6. Non-point sources of pollution information program:**

Kristen Murphy reported that the Girl Scout event at Swasey Parkway on April 29, 2012 was successful and a DOT storm water model was there. Through July, radio and TV spots ran on general storm water education and lawn care reducing herbicides. Through the Recreation Department, the Youth Program helped to stencil storm water drains and passed out informational flyers.

Kristen also reported that the Think Blue website is in transition and also that low-cost ways to promote the Think Blue programs are needed.

The water quality survey that was taken in March 2012 will be re-run so two sets of results will be available. The second survey date has not been scheduled yet.

Don reported that UNH Professor Kirshen received a grant for studying climate adaptation specifically in Exeter and that the town is fortunate to be involved in this upcoming 2-year study.

#### **7. River Reconnaissance**

Roger Wakeman stated that the goal of this project is to gather photo and GPS identification of any areas that have safety concerns (i.e., fallen trees). If such areas are identified, that data will be reported to the Fire Department which would work with the DPW to solve the problem. From an initial review, no hazardous areas have been detected and river ways are passable. Roger added that any new sources of point pollution would also be noted in this study.

Roger noted that PEA has a plan in place for the fall to work with Frank Richardson of the DES on property and erosion issues as part of the river reconnaissance work. Lionel thanked Roger and PEA for their efforts and working with the town on these issues.

**8. Other Business**

None

**9. Public Comment**

None

**10. Adjourn the Meeting:**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 18, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. in the Nowak Room of the Town Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris deZarn-O'Hare  
Recording Secretary