

## Exeter River Study Committee Meeting Minutes

### **Convene Meeting**

The meeting began at 9:04 AM in the Nowak room of the Exeter Town Offices on October 31, 2013. Members present, Rod Bourdon, Frank Patterson, Richard Huber, Dr Mimi Larsen Becker, Chair Lionel Ingram, Ginny Raub ECC representative, Peter Richardson, and Don Clement BOS representative.

### **Minutes from September Meeting**

The draft minutes from the previous two meetings still need to be reviewed and commented on by the committee.

### **Discussion of the Status of the Report of the Exeter River Great Dam Removal Impact Analysis and Feasibility Study**

Dr Becker reported the report for the Exeter River Great Dam Removal is finished. Copies of the report will be available for the Select Board and the Public Works at the library and posted online. The executive summary will be posted separately. Paul Vlasich, the town engineer described documents included in the report as the final report, appendices, executive summary and questions and answers from the public. Dr Becker noted Brian Griset had sent an email making suggestions for clarification of the impacts of the alternatives in the final executive summary. Dr Becker will take his suggestions and add them to the presentation for the Board of Selectman meeting on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

Dr Becker asked if the GOMC (Gulf of Maine Council) report was ready for grant submission. Mr. Vlasich reported the GOMC report was not finished and the EPA report has been submitted. What was left for the GOMC report was to submit the final report. It is being reviewed by the state before it is submitted. Ms. Phyllis Duffy from the Department of Public works said the GOMC website experienced technical difficulties and was hard to access. Ms. Loiselle explained the grant money from the GOMC grant will be used to pay for a portion of the feasibility study and added that an electronic copy of the final report is needed. Dr Becker asked if this would be possible to submit by the end of the business day and those working on the grants agreed this could be done.

Sallie Soule from the Department of Environmental Services reported the 319 grant needs a hard copy of the feasibility study as well as appendices and the electronic version. Dr Becker assured her that she will receive her copies that day.

Deb Loiselle from DES (Department of Environmental Services) commented that if the grant submissions are submitted later than then the deadline by more than a week then the committee runs the risk of losing the grant. Because of the technical issues going on with the GOMC website, Ms Loiselle asked to get a CD with all the needed documents.

Frank Ferraro member of the select board thanked the committee for the work done on the study.

Dr Becker concluded her report with the committee agreeing to go forward to selectman with the briefing.

Mr. Ingram stated that the report is independent of personal opinion and after the submission to the Board of Selectmen, the committee is free to state their views on the report. He asked the board if they were comfortable with this decision and all were in agreement.

Mr. Ingram outlined the presentation for the November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting and asked if the board had any comments on what they want or don't want to add to the presentation.

Mr. Huber commented on coming to a point with a warrant article that proposed a decision for the town to make.

Mr. Ingram noted two problems with making a recommendation to the Select Board. There is still legal review for the Phillips Exeter Academy and Exeter Mills intake systems and the board of selectman has a number of things for the public to vote on in March.

Mr. Ferraro commented on the report with alternatives. He agrees that the committee needs to work out alternatives before board of selectman can come to decision.

Pete Walker project manager with VHP for the study noted that the cost estimate is present for retrofitting the mill and PEA intake. These numbers are based on broad concepts and not on engineering. The estimate became more specific after the June comment period. Numbers in the report are conservative but will become more specific.

Dr Becker clarified that the issue is more of a legal responsibility for the PEA and Mill. She suggested that the public votes on a referendum in the spring weather the town wants the dam in or out. Based on available options the liability does not affect decision making on the dam at this time.

Mr. Clement noted that the water rights are contractual and legal. Numbers for PEA and the Mill are rough but depends on the outcome of legal status. Mr. Patterson asked when the discovery period will be over for the legal status of the PEA and Mills. Mr. Clement answered that it is hard to give a time period with legal issues. He was hesitant on a referendum without hard facts and would like to hear the Committee's recommendation because they have the most expertise and have worked on the project for ten years.

Mr. Ferraro agreed to not to have a dam in or dam out without hard facts.

Dr Becker reminded the group that the town has had a letter of deficiency issued by the state and to communicate with the state on progress of project in order to get short term extension.

Mr. Ingram suggested that board of selectman provides a recommendation after hearing presentation, with out River Study committee suggesting an approach.

Deb Loiselle commented that Jim Weber the Dam Safety engineer for the NH State Dam Bureau will be at November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting to answer question on timelines for extension. The Dam Bureau will expect a letter as to how the Committee will move forward.

**Discussion of the report of the Committee to the Board of Selectmen on November 4**

Mr. Ingram reviewed how the presentation will go on November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. There will be the Slide show, provide the executive summary in advance, receive questions from public, and then ask how the Board of Selectman wants to carry out next steps. They can then ask Jim Weber from the Dam Bureau about letter of deficiency timeline. The River Study Committee can then write a letter to receive an extension. The Committee and present officials agreed on these steps.

Mr. Ferraro asked for an explanation of legal issues associated with PEA and mill at the Select board meeting on November 4.

Mr. Ingram welcomed all to the meeting on November 4<sup>th</sup> at 7PM. The River Study Committee will lead off meeting.

In answer to when the full report will be available Mr. Vlasich said it will get onto a CD and to the internet. It should be up in a day or two.

Ms Raub asked what site the information is under and if it should be on the front page. The information will be present on the River Study Page. It was suggested that the information be available on the front page of the town website.

**Update from and discussion with the Climate Adaptation Plan for Exeter (CAPE) team**

Mr. Kirshen could not attend this month's meeting. Mr. Ingram said that this group could be addressed at the January meeting.

**Other Business**

Next meeting December 5, 1st Thursday 9 AM in the Nowak room. The subject of the next meeting will be to discuss what the Board of Selectman recommended from the November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting and how to handle the data gathered and for future data.

**Further Public Comment**

None.

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 AM

Respectfully Submitted

Sarah McGraw