

Convene Meeting

Meeting started at 9:01 AM in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices on January 9, 2014. Members present were Rod Bourdon, Frank Patterson, Lionel Ingram (Chair), Dr. Mimi Larsen Becker, Virginia Raub, Peter Richardson, Kristin Murphy (Natural Resource Planner), Sallie Soule (Department of Environmental Services (DES)), Deb Loisell (DES), Peter Walker (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc. (VHB)), Mr. Paul Vlasich (Town Engineer) and Richard Huber.

Minutes of the December 2013 meeting

The minutes from the December meeting were passed with corrections made.

Discussion of the outcome of the selectman's meeting of January 6 2014

Mr. Paul Vlasich gave his update in regards to the current federal grant in process and the outcome of the January 6 Board of Selectman meeting. The board had not approved the dam removal therefore not moving ahead with the grant process. This would mean not putting more time into preparing the grant. After reviewing the design of a potential dam removal Mr. Vlasich gave his approval that if passed the dam construction could be completed in the time frame that the grant requests. As for concerns about the water supply and use of the reservoir during construction, the reservoir could be used at other times outside of the construction period. Some work would have to be done outside of the two year timeline but those costs would not be part of the grant. The project has letters of support from the Nature Conservancy and the New Hampshire Fish and Game Dept.

Mr. Don Clement noted on the recent BOS meeting and the vote to not move forward with the dam removal. If the BOS does not approve then the grant cannot move forward.

Mr. Frank Ferraro gave notice of a citizen's petition for the dam removal to be on the March 11 ballot as a warrant article. The town must vote on the warrant because it is a money bonded article. The BOS should know that if the town passes the article, there would be grant money available. Because of the grant deadline, it would be stated in the grant application that the town could pass the article without BOS approval.

Mr. Clement said the board can reconsider their decision, the opposition has to move to reconsider, and majority needs to second. The next board meeting is January 21 2014. It was asked if there could be a special meeting convened the following week and the two present selectman (Mr. Clement and Mr. Ferraro) said it was possible to convene an unscheduled meeting . They would ask the BOS to move forward with the grant application and take out the removal part of their decision. If the grant process moves forward it would be an insurance if the article passes.

Ms. Deb Loisell from the Department of Environmental Services thought the grant would have a better chance of approval if the BOS were supportive. It would be difficult to spend more time on the grant if there is a high chance the grant would not be approved. If an official backed up the grant then chances of receiving funds were higher. There was an EPA 319 grant that already paid for some of the feasibility study but would also pay partially for phase 2 of the possible dam removal.

Mr. Lionel Ingram asked to see if they could not get executive support, then apply for the grant with the petition and an official signing off. Mr. Clement explained that if the petition turned into a warrant article the board could still recommend to not passing article.

Ms. Loisell said it was up to the town whether to invest the time in the grant.

Mr. Ingram noted that Mr. Vlasich cannot move forward because of BOS decision.

As of January 9, 2014 there are 10 signatures of the 25 needed to make the warrant.

Mr. Mike Lambert wanted to get the community excited about the decision to remove the dam. The petition shows the BOS what the community wants to do.

Ms. Loisell is working on two grant applications for dam removals in other towns. She can put some time into the application but the town needs to give more assistance to cut down her time. January 31 is the deadline and it is important not to wait to last minute.

Arguments need to be remade to the BOS with the removal of the dam and allow the application to continue.

Discussion of the Continuing information program regarding the Great Dam.

Ms. Sallie Soule from DES is working on presentations on what the dam would look like after removal using examples from other towns. The information process is important regardless of the grant decision because the town will vote in March. Two information sessions could be offered, one in February and one before the March meeting. Mr. Lambert said to educate citizens now is not a good time because it will lead to more questions. It was agreed by the committee that options need to be understood by citizens and that people vote based on factual information and are aware of the reasons behind each option. Mr. Pete Richardson said that the petition has until January 14 to file and everyone should bring back give signatures.

Mr. Clement talked about the dam deficiency letter and that the stabilize in place option may not be approved by DES. The amount of work already put into project cost taxpayers money for the report. Mr. Ferraro asked for supporters and non-supporters to be present at the rescheduled BOS meeting (TBA) and February 1 deliberative session.

Important dates:

January 14- Citizen's Petition due

TBA-Unscheduled BOS meeting

January 21-Budget Meeting

January 31-Grant Application Due

February 1-Deliberative Session

TBA-Great Dam educational sessions

March 11-Town Votes

Mr. Ingram asked for a meeting to discuss information process date to be determined after meeting. The next River Study Committee meeting will be January 23 at 9 AM in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices.

Ms Raub inquired about the intent of the petition. Mr. Griset said the intent is to support dam removal and authorize to expend the maximum amount on the construction and apply for all grants but not promising grants will be received.

Ms Loisell discussed the letter of deficiency and the committee should send in their letter outlining how to address dam deficiencies.

Mr. Don Robie incorporator of Save the Dam LLC, put together a fact sheet explaining reasons not to remove the dam (fact sheet attached to minutes). Mr. Robie had attended most of the River Study meetings and has been a part of the town for 30 years. There are also copies of his fact sheets if anyone wanted their own.

Dr. Becker noted that to sign the petition did not signify support of dam removal. It indicated the right of the public to make a decision when the government fails to do so. Ms Becker can be reached by email at mimi.becker@unh.edu.

Attached to minutes is the Petitioned Warrant Article with Background Information and a fact sheet for reasons to keep the Great Dam submitted by Donald Robie.

The next meeting will take place January 23 at 9AM.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:49AM.

Respectfully Submitted

Sarah McGraw