

Convene Meeting

The meeting convened at 9:03 AM in the Nowak room of the Exeter Town Offices on February 20, 2014. **Members Present:** Richard Huber, Virginia Raub, Lionel Ingram (Chair), Peter Richardson, Dr. Mimi Larsen Becker, Rod Bourdon, Roger Wakeman, and Don Clement (BOS Rep), **In Attendance:** Frank Ferraro (BOS Rep), Sally Soule (DES) and Peter Walker (VHB).

Minutes of the January 23 Meeting

There were corrections made to the January 23 minutes which will be approved at the next meeting.

Discussion of the continuing information program regarding the Great Dam (Lionel)

There is a river walk and town hall presentation about the Great Dam on March 8, 2014. The Historical society would like to participate and present the history of the dam. There was discussion on the subject of the talk and adding in history of the river. Dr. Becker was concerned about the tone and objectivity of the March 8 town hall presentation. Mr. Ingram said a history portion of the meeting may be useful in regards to the information process of the report on the Great Dam. Don Clement wondered if Ms. Julie Gilman from the historical society is invited to speak, than other experts should be invited as well. Mr. Ingram replied that history is lacking in the report and other questions about the dam could be answered by the River Study Committee. Mr. Huber asked if it was within the scope of the presentation to know the consequence of a yes or no vote on the removal of the dam. Mr. Ingram said it was the primary goal to get to the next steps in the decision making process. A letter does need to be sent to DES to say what the town of Exeter is going to do about coming into compliance with issues raised into the DES Letter of Deficiency with respect to dam safety. Mr. Ferraro noted there are two certainties after the vote. If the vote is "no" there is a waiting period of one year until another vote can be made. If the vote is "yes" to remove the dam, it still depends on the BOS to raise and appropriate money. It depends on how the state of New Hampshire reacts to the decision and it is tough to say what will happen if the dam is removed or not. Mr. Ingram suggested informing the public that the town owes the state a letter of action stating its next steps.

The river walk on March 8 will also include the chronology on events made by Peter Richardson. Mr. Richardson noted he did not contribute historical information to the report but used the report to put together the list of events. Mr. Wakeman noted there should be dam construction milestones added to the list. There is a structured outline of the walk including a brief history of the dam with time to ask questions before the walk, the letter of deficiency, definition of a 50 year storm, and history of activity to the dam. They will also include the depth of the dam, wetlands and buffers. Mr. Huber suggested including dates when the letter of deficiency was issued, when the dam was acquired by the town and dates of studies created for the dam to address the letter of deficiency. It was also suggested to include when changes were made to the dam. For the walk, attendees should receive the color flyer with information about the dam

and chronology handout. The river walk starts at 11 AM at the bridge and should last about an hour.

Mr. Ferraro reported that the editor of the Exeter High School newspaper had questions about what “impairment” and “toxic levels” meant. There was also a question about water levels if the dam is removed.

The town hall presentation by the River Study Committee will present a shorter version of the presentation and will include basic terms about the dam, questions from the past and data from previous sessions. The Dam Bureau will not be present at the meeting. Sally Soule from the Department of Environmental Services (DES) will be able to answer water quality questions. The layout of the presentation will be a “V” shaped style seating with the River Study panel on the floor. Microphones will be available for the public. The River Study Committee decided to ask Barbara Rimkunas from the historical society to present on behalf of Julie Gilman and Mr. Ingram will inform Ms. Gilman of the change.

Mr. Richardson asked about the “106 process” and what that means. Mr. Walker can also explain during the presentation. Mr. Walker explained the “106 process” is part of a federal law that states any federal action (using federal funds) is required to start a 106 review process on historical projects. An Army Corps of Engineers permit is required in the process whether the dam is removed or not. The lead federal organization needs to consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) with four actions; 1. Determine the resource inventory, 2. Determine eligibility, 3. Determine effects to resources and 4. Offset any adverse affects. Mr. Walker noted it is not a permit, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation cannot disapprove projects. For the dam study, funding was included in the budget estimate for mitigation of cultural resources. The timeline for the process depends on the project. There is a 30 day timeline that occurs when SHPO takes a position. If the dam is decided to be removed there is a year-long design and permitting process. Mitigation activities can go beyond construction period.

Mr. Wakeman said to include a matrix of high impact issues, and flooding. A balance of issues is important for people that have not followed the dam study. People may want to know the implications of a yes or no vote for dam removal. Dr. Becker said the state has a right to go to the town with legal recourse if the town cannot answer letter of deficiency. It needed to be clear at the presentation what the courses of action will be if the dam is removed or not.

Mr. Ferraro said if the dam is not removed then the town is back to the beginning sitting with four options for modifying the dam. It is not a requirement to move forward but the implications are not exactly clear on what the state will do.

Mr. Walker said that a Fish and Wildlife Federation grant is in process and it is unlikely the funding will be available for alternate modifications to the dam. This current grant is a good opportunity to have the funding now and may not be available in the future.

Mr. Ingram asked if the BOS wants to present at the March 8 meeting. Mr. Clement said the outcome of the vote will determine the actions of the board. Mr. Ingram said a yes vote will go back to selectman and a letter written to state. If it doesn't pass it still goes back to selectman. Mr. Ingram and Dr. Becker will write up procedures for the BOS and run them by Mr. Ferraro and Mr. Clement.

Mr. Ferraro suggested when talking about water supply that it is not an issue to the town and it has been studied already.

Tasks

Dr. Becker: Presentation at March 8 including 106 processes and what happens after vote.

Mr. Ingram: Ability to pay for people at the meeting. Talk to Ms. Gilman about historical presentation.

Mr. Walker: Include homestead slides, dam removal slides, flyer for March 8 meeting.

Dr. Becker asked about advertising for the meeting on March 8. Dr. Becker will formulate a press release.

Mr. Huber noted an email address was at the bottom of the flyer of events and no emails have been received.

Mr. Ferraro suggested running the press release in every edition so people will see it.

Next Meeting: March 20 at 9:00 a.m. in the Nowak of the Exeter Town Offices.

Mr. Huber asked if the River Study Committee charter will change after a vote. Mr. Ingram said to see how the vote will go and the engineering work will be done by the Department of Public Works (DPW) without the help of the committee. The charter does not have to be renewed.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah McGraw