Notes from Dam Remembrance Committee, public session 2 – March 24, 2015

Notes by Barbara Rimkunas, Exeter Historical Society and Dick Huber, River Study Committee, edited by Bill Jordan

PowerPoint presentation (Bill Jordan and Pete Walker)

From public comment session:

Question (Frank Ferraro): Could the sluicegate and gears be removed & relocated and just what exactly is the trash rack protecting?

Answer (Pete Walker): We don't know exactly what is under the trash rack, but it might well be covering an unsightly penstock entrance.

Comment: (Frank Ferraro) Rebuilding the trash rack (it had previously been mentioned that this structure was decaying) would create a new maintenance task for the town.

Comment: (Pete Walker) The base of the trash rack would only be exposed to water in unusually high water times.

Comment: (undocumented) Removing the abutment might expose the headworks to deterioration also creating a new maintenance task for the town.

Comment: (Frank Ferraro) Not speaking for library, but the library is interested in the walkway idea. The library trustees may be able to pursue the walkway as a future project.

Comment: (Greg Colling) Signage can become clutter and foul the view of a natural, pleasant environment.

Comment: (Brian Griset) Create etched glass viewing stations at 1) String Bridge looking up stream 2) Founder's Park at the former spillway and 3) Great Bridge looking down stream. Looking through the etch glass photograph the viewer would see the former dam superimposed on the current landscape.

Question: (Barbara Rimkunas)From the library side of the river? The historic photos of the dams are primarily from the vantage of the west side of the river. Would these be installed in the businesses on the Water Street side?

Ans: (Brian Griset) Perhaps they could be installed on the String Bridge

Comment: (Greg Colling) This, or any other signage on the bridge, would deteriorate over time creating a cluttered environment. Panel signs or etched glass transparencies would require upkeep requiring a new maintenance task for the town.

Comment: (Dick Huber) Remembrance might also be created through student projects – perhaps a model or video presentation that could then be saved for archival purposes. Concerned that the MOA might have a limited timeline and this type of project would require more flexibility and an open ended time line.

Comment: (undocumented) A student project is an excellent idea, but might be better suited to a project about the river outside of the official mitigation required for this project.

Comment: (Frank Ferraro) Agrees that this is a good idea but would best be handled outside of the MOA. Extra things like the Aliwife Festival should not be included in the memo of agreement.

Question: (Bill Campbell) Will the public be provided with the recommendations of the 106 committee before it is sent to the selectboard?

Answer: (Bill Jordan) Certainly, it could be posted on the town website. Also, the next committee meeting will be open to the public, although committee members only are making the decisions for the recommendations.

Question (undocumented): When will this recommendation be submitted to the selectboard?

Answer: (Bill Jordan) Before May, although this seems soon.

Comment: (Pete Walker & Dave Keddell) Although the timeline looks quite rigid, there is some flexibility. There needs to be a clear recommendation, but the MOA can actually be drafted quite quickly.

Question: (Peter Olney) Owner of empty lot and former wife owns 11 Water Street: There is concern regarding hydrologic pressure and frost heaving damaging foundations of properties after the dam is removed on the west side of the river (this question was not answered, most likely because it does not deal with our task).

Comment: (Peter Olney) Notes that Founder's Park seems under-utilized, would like the town to consider increased use – it's designed like an amphitheater and there is an opportunity to change it for the better to attract more events to this space. Feels this area will be improved once the dam is removed. Also noted that the library seems a natural place for signage – it would concentrate any signage to a specific area, thus reducing clutter.

Comment: (Bill Jordan) Library area for signage might also keep it out of weather and reduce environmental deterioration.

Comment: (Lionel Ingram) some comments on procedure.

Comment: (Brian Griset) suggests brick masters – granite for abutments (I believe this was in regards to question of whether the removal of abutments would be unsightly) also, expressed concerns over costs.

Question: (undocumented) Is there a budget for this project and if so, how much?

Answer: (Bill Jordan or Peter Walker) There is a budget of $30,000 slated for this project., enough for signage & probably stabilization of headworks, but probably not enough for walkway.

Comment: (Pete Walker & Paul Vlasich) We will not know whether removal of the abutment & restoration of headworks will be more or less expensive than the original estimate. We will only know once the project proposal goes to a contractor. Best guess is that it is a wash.

Discussion of next meeting, decided upon Wednesday, April 1st, 6:30 at the Exeter Historical Society.