

Draft Minutes

River Study Committee

January 7, 2016

1. Convene the Meeting

Chairman Lionel Ingram called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office building. Members present were Frank Ferraro, Roger Wakeman, Rod Bourdon, Ginny Raub, Peter Richardson, and Richard Huber. Also in attendance was Paul Vlasich, Town Engineer, Eric Hutchins from NOAA, Pete Walker from VHB, and Selectman Don Clement.

2. Minutes of the September and October meetings

The Committee first discussed the minutes of the September 3, 2015 meeting. Mr. Huber had an amendment to page 1, changing an “own” to “owns”. He had an amendment to the same page, in the last paragraph, changing a “fi” to “if” and “scow” to “scour”. He had an amendment to page 2, under Grants, adding “2016” to reference the year.

Motion: A Motion was made by Mr. Ferraro and seconded by Ms. Raub to accept the minutes of the September 3, 2015 River Study Committee meeting, as amended. Motion carried- all in favor.

The Committee went on to discuss the minutes of the October 29, 2015 meeting. Mr. Huber had some amendments for these minutes. First, Frank Ferraro needed to be changed from a BOS rep. to a Committee member. Then, there were multiple misspellings of Eric “Hutchins” that needed correcting. In the first paragraph under PREPA, the word “projected” should be changed to “project”. The next paragraph needs some rewording when referencing the “at the Conservation Commission level”. In the last line on that page, the word “four” needs to be deleted. On the next page, under Title 4 Section, it needs to read “Great Dam Removal”. There was a typo on that page, changing a “that” to “they”, and the word “the” needs to be deleted from the last paragraph. There is a word missing on page 2 in the last sentence, so “cross vain” needs to be added. In Other Business, Mr. Huber suggested rewording “celebration of the dam” to “river restoration”.

Motion: A Motion was made by Mr. Wakeman and seconded by Mr. Bourdon to accept the minutes of the October 29, 2015 River Study Committee meeting, as amended. Motion carried- all in favor.

The Committee then moved to agenda item 4.

4. Grants – Paul Vlasich and Eric Hutchins

Mr. Hutchins said the NOAA grant is 100% confirmed. It is official that the Town was granted \$610,960 to support the removal of the Great Dam and river restoration. He said

everything is pulling together. He said this was a very competitive grant. Only two projects were selected in the Northeastern US. Mr. Hutchins said this is the strongest town commitment project he has worked with. He thanked the River Committee for making this happen and he looks forward to starting this project.

Mr. Ferraro thanks Mr. Hutchins, Mr. Vlasich, and VHB for their work on this.

Mr. Vlasich said this grant was about 75 pages. He said it was a lot to put together and everyone did a wonderful job. He went on to say that he has another grant in the works through the Fish & Game Fish Habitat Grant for \$75,000.

The Committee then moved to agenda item 3.

3. Design and Permitting – Paul and Jake

Pete Walker, of VHB, showed a map of the design from a profile view. He explained the map. The design was put together to balance a number of different things. He said the trickiest part was the fish passage. He said they shortened the grading a bit on the newest plan to help with fish passage. They also moved the hydraulic control upstream a little and modified the design to make sure the stream bed stays at a certain elevation. DES has concerns about eels getting into the drainage pipes, and Mr. Walker said they want to prevent that so they have modified that area a bit as well. DES has a requirement of getting written permission from all the property owners within 20 feet of the area. There are 11 abutters, and 8 are within 20 feet. He said they are still looking to get a letter from the Green Bean owners. There is a waiver process from DES so permitting may go on without this approval letter. However, he said they are still hopeful the Green Bean will sign the letter.

Mr. Walker said next week they will get a permitting decision from DES. The Corps of Engineers also has jurisdiction. The key thing with the Corps is complying with Section 106. Chair Ingram stated so if they do not get the waiver, they will still need to work with the Green Bean. Mr. Walker said that is correct.

Mr. Vlasich said one condition of the NOAA grant was to provide a fish cage. He said the logical location for that is Pickpocket Dam. The estimate for that is \$20,000. Another condition was to monitor the stream bed for two years to make sure things are stabilized. Mr. Richardson asked if there is an estimate for that monitoring. Mr. Vlasich said it is included in the \$20,000. Mr. Ferraro asked if they are still within the bond number that was in the Warrant Article. Mr. Vlasich said yes, it includes the \$20,000.

5. Section 106 – MOA – Paul and VHB

Mr. Richardson said the MOA is fully signed and has been distributed back to all parties. Mr. Vlasich distributed Great Dam Stipulations to the Board. He went through each stipulation. Stipulation 1 has been complied with. Stipulation 2 relates to the plan review. Mr. Vlasich said the plan set has been submitted to DHR and approved as of 12/18/15. This stipulation has been complied with. Stipulation 3 relates to historic photos being made accessible to the public. This also references a video that would be taken at the Dam removal. There will be two

sets of material; one for the library and one for the Historical Society. Stipulation 4 relates to digital photos during Dam removal and making them accessible to the public. Stipulation 5 relates to an outside marker. Mr. Vlasich said this is to be reviewed by a qualified historian. Chair Ingram said if the town can do this marker themselves, he suggested going with that. He said they should let the Heritage Committee make the decision on how to do that. Stipulation 6 relates to a historical exhibit at the library. Mr. Vlasich said this would go beyond a standard plaque. It would include photos and some text. He said this is another task that he has asked VHB to help move along. He said the library has been very cooperative. He asked the River Committee if they want to be involved in this. Mr. Richardson suggested including information on previous dams in that location. Mr. Walker said they have compiled all information that exists. Mr. Richardson said this would tell the history of that strip of the river that this current dam does not tell. Mr. Hutchins said natural resources are part of the history. He said it was the fish that attracted people to this town. He said they need to make sure part of that historical interpretation is included, and noted that the town seal does include a fish. He asked for a general updated schedule on things. Chair Ingram said they would get to that next.

8. Other Business

Mr. Vlasich said he has a project schedule that was sent to NOAA. He talked about an alternate ground water supply and said the water treatment plant is operational. He said they do not have a wetlands permit yet. The prequalification package is due at the end of February. In the beginning of March, they should receive the notice to prequalifiers. Bids are due the beginning of April and the award for construction will be at the end of April. He said they will hopefully have the construction permit by July 1. Construction in the river will take a couple of months, and cleanup will follow. Mr. Hutchins asked how they will fill holes in the budget. Selectman Clement said they can find ways through the budget process to pull money. He said he is not concerned with any expenditure. Mr. Vlasich said they have the NOAA money and they need to make all the moving parts in the budget work.

Mr. Wakeman asked if there is any threat to the schedule based on bids coming in higher than budgeted. Mr. Vlasich said yes, there's a threat, as there is no mechanism to go back for more money.

6. Mill Intake - Paul

Mr. Vlasich said in the feasibility study he knew a major obstacle when removing the dam would be removing the penstock which is supplying water to the mills for their cooling systems and fire protection. There is an agreement between the town and the mills where there is a town expenditure reimbursement of \$437,500. He said originally the mills had proposed a cooling tower in the lawn area near Chestnut Street and String Bridge Street. However, the Planning Board opposed that. The latest design moves the cooling tower to the back of the building along the Squamscott River. A waiver is needed for the setback. The mills know they won't be able to use water come June. So far, the town has paid out \$209,000 for some equipment that the mills have already purchased.

7. CAPE Report – Kristen Memo

Chair Ingram read a memo from Kristen Murphy regarding the CAPE report. He said the report is available on the town website. He is hoping CAPE will come back with some findings. Also, he is hoping to have a public session for an update.

Mr. Ferraro said when the CAPE rep. was here he asked them questions and got no answers. He said they have consistently delayed. He said they have now put out a final report and they are not even present to go over it. He was disappointed about this.

Selectman Clement said he is working with Ms. Murphy on the CAPE study. He said they did have a meeting amongst staff. He said one issue with CAPE is that Paul Hirshen has not left UNH. He said he and Ms. Murphy have mentioned they want another meeting, so they will meet on January 19. Mr. Huber said that is an internal meeting, and not public. Selectman Clement said they think some their hypotheses are lacking. He said they need to make sure they are accurate. He will get it resolved and get it out to the public. Chair Ingram asked if there is a process to correct it. Selectman Clement said yes, and that it is an ongoing process. He mentioned this is not a final report that the town has to accept. He said it does include a lot of good information. Mr. Huber mentioned there is no more funding for the project. He said there is a list of people they can reach out to that have worked on this. Chair Ingram asked for one person's contact information so he could invite him in front of the Committee. Mr. Huber said he could get him some contact info.

Mr. Ferraro said before they issue a final report, they should have met with staff and such. He said they could have issued a draft report to the stakeholders before it went out on the website.

Mr. Wakeman agreed that the process was significantly flawed and they should recognize that.

Motion: A Motion was made by Mr. Ferraro and seconded by Mr. Wakeman that the River Study Committee recommend to the town that CAPE revise their report to mark it as "draft" and not finalize it until after meeting with the town. Motion carried – majority vote. Mr. Huber abstained.

Ms. Raub gave a follow-up on PREPA. She said they will be in front of the Planning Board on January 14. They will be asking to add the definition of "fertilizer" to the town ordinance. They are also asking to prohibit fertilizer use within the shoreline districts.

Selectman Clement spoke about the WISE report. Mr. Richardson said this report will be publicized as it contains a lot of good information. Selectman Clement said he just received it a week ago. He said it is a lengthy document with a lot of detail, graphs, and pictures. Chair Ingram asked Selectman Clement that the River Committee be put in WISE's schedule so someone could come educate about the report. Selectman Clement said he would relay that.

9. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

10. Adjourn the Meeting

The next River Study Committee is TBD.

A Motion was made by Mr. Wakeman and seconded by Mr. Ferraro to adjourn the meeting at 10:59am.

Respectively submitted,
Nicole Piper, Recording Secretary