

River Advisory Committee

March 16, 2017

1. Convene the meeting

Chairman Lionel Ingram called the meeting to order at 9:12 am in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office building. Other members present: Rod Bourdon, Roger Wakeman, Richard Huber and Virginia Raub. Also in attendance: Kristen Murphy, Town Natural Resource Planner.

2. Minutes of January 2017 meeting

Mr. Ingram after asking for comments, Mr. Huber wished to have his statement on praising the work of Ms. LaBranche on the Preparing NH for Projected Storm Surge, Sea Level Rise and Extreme Precipitation report be expanded to include the collaborative work of the whole team. He remarked it was an exciting experience to take all of the input and integrate it into something useful.

With no other comments, the Chair asked for a motion to approve. Motion so moved; motion seconded and approved.

3. Climate Risk in the Seacoast

Julie LaBranche from the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) was present to give an update on the C-RiSe report. The final draft report was fine-tuned; maps and data updated. Dates are now being scheduled with Town staff to review the final draft report. Their (RPC) deadline for all materials to be given to the Coastal Program is March 31, 2017. After that time the final draft, CD of report and maps will be delivered to the Town; it is the Town's report and they may do with it as they wish.

The second part of the C- RiSe report was to obtain funding for implementation of the recommendations addressed in the C-RiSe and Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission (CRHC) reports. This second phase is titled New Hampshire Setting SAIL; SAIL being an acronym for Science, Assessment, Implementation and Legislation Recommendations. The NOAA funded program will conduct outreach and provide technical assistance for Great Bay communities to implement recommendations from the NH Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission final report. Approximately \$6,000 will be available to each of the five Great Bay towns in the RPC district and the five Great Bay towns in the Strafford Regional Planning District (SRPC). Prepared copies of the Request for Proposal (RFP) were distributed and noted a workshop is scheduled for March 23, 2017 at the Newmarket Town Hall for interested members to learn how other communities have used such funds and to brainstorm what projects might be implemented in their towns.

The projects are limited in scope with the technical support being offered by RPC staff i.e. maps, GPS etc. The public input and outreach component of each project will have the assistance of UNH Cooperative Extension and the Great Bay Natural Estuary Reserve staff. Ms. LaBranche spoke of the types of projects that other towns have funded. As an example,

funds were applied for the addition/ integration of a chapter on Climate Change and Adaption to their Town Master Plan. Another project alerted coastal residents and businesses affected by flooding on the importance of coastal buffers and ways to provide such. There will be just one application per town and the project must be completed by February 2018.

Mr. Huber added RPC made available five copies of the *NH Coastal Risk and Hazards Commission's final report, **Preparing NH for Projected Storm Surge, Sea Level Rise and Extreme Precipitation*** for distribution to the respective Town departments, committees and a copy is at the Town library. Again, the report may be viewed on line at www.nhcrhc.org. This report also requests each community have a chapter in their Master Plan on Climate Adaption as outlined in the recommendations.

Ms. LaBranche noted another possible idea for the SAIL project. The RPC has a contract with the Coastal Program to continue a project with Exeter, primarily with the DPW; the Lincoln Street Watershed Stormwater Project Phase 2. It is NOAA funded and RPC will be working again with consultant Rob Roseen of Waterstone Engineering, who worked on Phase 1 of this Lincoln Street project. This phase will prepare Best Management Practices and draft designs for those areas that often experience flooding. Ms. LaBranche felt by bringing together the stakeholders in this area; the Academy, the Main St. and Lincoln Street schools, and the businesses and residences in the Swasey Parkway area, this project could possibly develop a Climate Adaptation policy and some implementation recommendations similar to what the Climate Adaptation Plan for Exeter (CAPE) was to do. With the application of the \$6,000 grant amount from the SAIL program the Lincoln Street project could possibly be expanded to include all of the Town; just an idea for consideration.

With the scope of project and funding already established, PEA representative. Mr. Wakeman questioned how the project was to proceed. Ms. LaBranche said they are in the early stages of the project but there is a strong communication component to the project of enough importance that a communication specialist subcontractor is being brought on board to ensure a well-rounded and complete outreach project. The project is just getting underway and Ms. LaBranche and Mr. Roseen are currently brainstorming ways to proceed but will be contacting stakeholders for their interest in participating. Again, she noted because of the same funding source and similar deadlines (March 2018) there was some compatibility in working with this project as a SAIL initiative. Mr. Wakeman expressed his interest in the Academy participating as a stakeholder and suggested Mr. Jeff Clifford of Altus Engineering be included as he has worked with the Academy on drainage issues/designs in that area.

When asked, Ms. LaBranche stated future NOAA grants/funded will most likely be in jeopardy based on the current Federal budget talks. However this funding was secure with the contracts signed; the effect would be evident when grant applications are normally offered in early fall.

Returning to the discussion on how the \$6000 might be used, Ms. LaBranche had no specific thoughts; up to the needs and desires of the Town Boards and Departments. Either way it could close the gap left by the CAPE endeavor by expanding the Lincoln St. project to have a more intense focus.

Discussing the recent distribution of the comments/outcome of the public Visioning Session held in conjunction with the Master Plan (MP) updating process, it was noted the topic of climate change did not appear to be a topic of immediate importance. Not necessarily because the public did not think it was important but perhaps because the issue has not had as much attention/education as it should. If the MP ends up being more visionary, then there is the possibility a climate adaption section could be added as a technical appendix with more specifics/recommendations. Mr. Wakeman felt for the MP to be successful, climate change/adaptation would need to be a strong component of the plan; methods to implement the recommendations could be outlined. The Chair added it would be up to the Planning Department to determine how the policies would be structured going forward. But at same time, there was the CAPE project not being completed, how do we focus on bringing the issue back for Town discussion? Is there a role for the River Committee in this task?

In summation, the Chair agreed to speak with the Town Manager on the two possibilities of using the SAIL funds for addressing Climate Adaption. And also of concern the MP might not have significant answers in terms of climate adaption. Ms. LaBranche will confer with the Town Planner with this discussion for his thoughts.

4. Updates on Pickpocket Dam Breach Analysis and Letter of Map Revision

Paul Vlasich of DPW was unable to attend; his report will be rescheduled.

5. River Reconnaissance

Mr. Wakeman noted the Academy had planned for some time on doing a physical River reconnaissance with PEA staff and its resources. Now with the dam out, the profile of the river has changed and it seemed like an opportune time to proceed with the project. They will travel upstream from the former dam site documenting hazards to navigation and evidence of source point pollution if visible; will depend how far the kayakers can go. The project is anticipated to begin this spring/early summer. Mr. Wakeman anticipates a final report summarizing the data in narrative and graphic representation. It will be given to River Committee and depending on findings, a determination of what action can or will be taken.

Ms. Murphy asked if the methods/objectives could be shared before they go out; may be an opportunity for (Conservation) Commission members or volunteers to cover the whole or an extended area. Mr. Wakeman agreed to collaborate on the project. It was emphasized there would be no water quality testing; just visual observation

6. Committee's New Charge

Following the January 30, 2017 discussion and approval from the BOS, Mr. Ingram stated the committee is now an 11-person committee; nine voting members and the two Town staff members, Mr. Vlasich and Ms. Murphy, the non-voting members. Currently there are open seats for a citizen representative and for a Water Sewer Advisory Committee representative. He added he was comfortable with the WSAC vacancy as Mr. Vlasich can and does oversee that function. The approved name change from the Exeter River Study Committee to *River Advisory Committee* reflects the focus is to be on all rivers and watersheds of Exeter. The Committee charge reads: An 11 member-person committee (9 voting, 2 non-voting) charged with providing advice to the Board of Selectmen in all matters relating to the management of the Exeter and Squamscott River, tributaries, and watershed within the Town's boundaries, including but not limited to, flood control, public and private water supplies, land use, environmental habitat, recreation, public safety and water quality. There is no limitation on the Committee; it does have the ability to form sub-committees if so deemed.

7. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 am.

****The date for the next meeting is Wednesday April 19, 2017 at 9 am****

Respectfully submitted

Virginia Raub
Recording Secretary