

River Advisory Committee

January 18, 2018

1. Convene the Meeting

Chairman Richard Huber convened the meeting at 3:04 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office building. Other members present: Rod Bourdon, Lionel Ingram, Virginia Raub and Selectmen representative Don Clement.

Also present: Paul Vlasich, Town Engineer

2. Approval of Minutes of November 16, 2017 meeting

Mr. Huber had a number of grammatical corrections to the minutes that were passed on to the recording secretary for revision. With no other comments, Mr. Clement moved to approve the minutes as amended; seconded by Mr. Bourdon. Vote was unanimous.

3. Update On Various Related River Issues

Mr. Vlasich stated he was asked by Kevin Lucey of NH DES for a summary of costs associated with the Great Dam removal project. Mr. Lucey is currently working with the Town of Dover on a similar project and was looking for amounts for comparison and what costs might be anticipated.

Mr. Vlasich distributed a prepared summary sheet divided into six categories of costs associated with the Great Dam Project starting with the Feasibility Study and the associated expenses. The other categories included Project Design and Permitting, Construction Activities, Post Construction Activities, Grant Sources and lastly a Project Costs where four phases (Feasibility, Project Design and Permitting, Construction Activities and Post construction Activities) were totaled for a cost of \$2, 203,479.00

Questions from members sought to differentiate what figures were before and after the Town vote and what actions were included in the Coordination and Meetings total listed under the Feasibility Study. Mr. Vlasich responded to the questions noting the figures were what brought the Town to formulate the bond article for voter approval. The amounts listed in the Post-Construction Activities were associated with those activities completed in 2017 i.e. river bottom monitoring, Section 106 materials and the FEMA Flood plain revision (LOMR) and were not part of the warrant article but budgeted in the Town 2017 budget. He also added the \$941,156 dollar amount listed in Grant Resources was received and returned to the Town.

As a condition of the Wetlands Permit, the annual river bed monitoring was complete in fall of 2017 and the report forwarded to NH Wetlands Bureau. There will be an additional two years of annual monitoring for DES and an additional two years as a requirement of the NH Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) funding program.

The revised flood analysis data submitted to FEMA was referenced at the November meeting and Mr. Vlasich stated a response was received in December requesting additional information. The consultants, VHB, have provided the requested data and resubmitted to the agency. The Town is now in another 90 day review period. Mr. Clement asked when the analysis is accepted, does the Town need to take any formal action in accepting the document. Mr. Vlasich felt when approved, an informational meeting be scheduled to notify those affected owners of the changes. But then again, FEMA has a 6 month wait time before it becomes the official document. As to why another 6 months wait time, he was unsure but Mr. Ingram thought perhaps it was time allotted for owners to make any changes needed.

Mr. Vlasich displayed a sketch of the design that will appear on the etched glass panel to be installed at the library on the window facing the river. In his rendering the black lines on the print will be the “etched” lines on the final glass panel; a reverse design. The design is such that when the viewer stands before the panel and “squints”, they will be able to superimpose varying images of the former dam onto what is there now. He provided details on the challenges this project entailed as there were no pre-removal photos taken from this vantage point to use for the design. With a CAD designed model, it helped in manipulating the different images/elevations they wished to illustrate. This panel is currently in production.

An 11 x 17 in. handout was given to members with the material for the 3 x 4 ft. interpretive panel to be placed on the wall next to the etched-glass panel. The panel entitled *The Great Dam: Bringing Water Power to Exeter*, outlines the design and function of the early dam harnessing the water flows of the Exeter River. A separate insert diagrams the four major element of the Great Dam with a description/function of the components. Also included is a period photo of workers of the Exeter Manufacturing Company with a narrative of why the Dam was removed in 2016. Balancing off the panel is an enlarged section of a vintage aerial map showing the relationship of the Dam and the Mills in the surrounding landscape. Mr. Vlasich commented the panel was designed with input from the Heritage Commission.

Also, nine photos, courtesy of the Exeter Historical Society, are being prepared to be placed in the stairway entrance of the library. They are interchangeable so should the library undergo any renovation they can be used elsewhere. Again, all these projects will fulfill the Cultural and Historical permit of the Section 106 requirement.

At the June River Committee meeting a short video produced by Morning Star Aerial, LLC was shown with footage from low flying altitude flyovers of the Dam at various times both pre and post dam removal. Mr. Vlasich was asked then if there were funds available for this type of documentation to be included in the archives. At that time Mr. Vlasich was unsure of what funds would be remaining. At this meeting, he confirmed there were budget monies available to acquire the video from Morning Star Aerial. The short feature entitled River Restoration documents various phases of the Dam removal project; before dam removal, during the drought conditions in summer of 2016 and high water flows in late spring 2017. After viewing, Mr. Clement asked if this could somehow be available at the library for viewing. Bob Glowacky of the Town Information Technology (IT) Department, who was present, agreed there are a number of things they could do to make this accessible to the public. This particular video will also be given to the Historical Society for their archives.

Concluding, Mr. Vlasich referenced the breach analysis for the Pickpocket Dam and noted the report is complete following the verification of the elevations of some structures close to the breach flood limits. Presently, it is being reviewed internally before being submitted to NH Dam Bureau.

4. Other Business

Mr. Huber distributed a copy of the River Advisory Committee report he prepared for the Town’s 2017 Annual Report. It reviewed the events of this past year and listed a number of agenda items to be considered for the upcoming year. Members thanked Mr. Huber for preparing the report.

Mr. Huber also stated he attended the Piscataqua Region Estuary Partnership (PREP) conference held on December 8, 2017 where The State of Our Estuary report for 2018 was released. Having a copy of the

report, he reviewed some of the topics covered in the document and felt it presented excellent details. There is also both a municipalities and citizens' report outlining what each may do to contribute to the health of the estuary. He praised the program and the reports. Mr. Clement added the Planning Department has copies of the report. The report may be viewed at StateofOurEstuaries.org.

The Master Plan for the Town is complete and the document will first be presented to the Planning Board at a work session at their January 25, 2018 meeting.

The Chair asked Mr. Clement on updates from various Town Committees. Mr. Clement has not had any report from the Seacoast Drinking Water Commission with Bob Kelly as the Town's representative. It is a relatively new committee and he is not sure if they have met. He reported the Exeter Energy Committee is working and focusing on structural issues; looking at ways to conserve energy in Town buildings. It was noted they will be present at the Community Open House on February 6, 2018.

Ms. Raub then passed out copies of the flyer detailing the Community Open House on Climate Change, Adaption and Resilience set for Tuesday, February 6, 2018. The workshop will be at the Town Hall from 4:30- 7:30 pm with ten groups represented. The interactive exhibits of the represented groups allow the visitors to learn of the activities going on in Exeter that are addressing climate change and how the Town might adapt to create a more resilient and sustainable future. The workshop is sponsored by the Town and The Setting SAIL project with grant coordination from the Rockingham Planning Commission. (The Master Plan will also be an exhibitor at this event.)

Mr. Huber asked if the Town learned anything about storm surge, flooding from events of the recent extreme winter weather events. Mr. Vlasich responded that other than the Parkway being closed during the peak high tide, the Town did not experience any structural damage that he was aware of.

When asked for suggestions for agenda items for the next meeting, Mr. Ingram thought a review of the topics/issues outlined in Master Plan that were applicable to the this committee's focus would be helpful. Also the group might want to invite PREP back to speak with the group on issues that we should follow.

Mr. Vlasich had no specific topics for the next meeting as the MS4 permitting requirements and the Nitrogen reduction plan being worked on are ongoing items.

The next meeting will be Thursday February 15, 2018 at 3:00 pm

Mr. Ingram moved to adjourn meeting; seconded by Mr. Bourdon.

Meeting adjourned at 4:03 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Virginia Raub