

## **River Advisory Committee**

**March 15, 2018**

### **1. Convene the Meeting:**

Chairman Richard Huber convened the meeting at 3:05 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town office building. Other members present were Rod Bourdon, Virginia Raub, Terrie Harman and Selectboard representative Don Clement.

### **2. Approval of February 15, 2018 minutes**

The Chair suggested changes to wording in the minutes and passed them on to the recording secretary. With no other changes noted, Ms. Harman motioned to approve the minutes with changes; seconded by Mr. Bourdon. Motion passed unanimously.

### **3. Update on Various River issues**

Mr. Paul Vlasich, Town Engineer, notified the Chair he had no updates for the Committee at this time. But added at the April meeting he would be reporting more on the Pickpocket Dam, the Great Dam and the FEMA Flood Analysis.

### **4. Overview of the Exeter Water Trail installation project**

Ms. Julie LaBranche of the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) was invited to this meeting to present more details on the poster exhibit, Exeter Water Trail, as displayed at the February Community Open House on Climate Change, Adaption and Resilience. Hard copies of the graphics displayed on each of the larger posters describing the Water Trail were given to the members present.

As background she said this graphic display was one component of a larger NOAA funded project being conducted by RPC and Rob Rosen of Waterstone Engineers for the Town. This study is Phase II that focuses on the 177 acre Lincoln Street watershed and looking at best management practices in reducing stormwater volume and flood impact as well as water quality (as it enters the Squamscott River). The third component of the project was the development of this Water Trail as a means of communication of the principals of the project. By installing graphic signs, they felt it will be more lasting and tangible than flyers.

With both elementary schools, Main St. School and Lincoln St. School, being in the lower part of this watershed and in close proximity to each other, the thought this was a natural in aiding students to learn what is stormwater, where does water go when it rains, what natural features can be designed to help absorb some of the water. With the consent of the principals, four interpretive signs will be placed on the Main St. school campus and one at the Lincoln St. School. A sixth sign will go at Swasey Park detailing the physical outlay of the Exeter-Squamscott

River, the role of the saltmarshes, the fish and waterfowl one might see along the river and what might be the effects of sea-rise on the estuary.

The Water Trail starts at the Main Street School (sign # 1 through 4) and using existing pathways, takes the visitor along the parking lot and through the woods to the Lincoln Street School where sign #5 is placed.

Mr. Clement praised the project but acknowledged he was a history person and asked if more history could be provided on the Kimmens Brook, a natural free flowing stream that flowed from Lincoln Street, across Tan Lane and down to the Squamscott by the boat house many years ago. But on sign #5, that brook is described as “water that flows through pipes underground”. Ms. LaBranche said it was considered but sign space dictated what could be included and the focus of the grant was on “water”. She did say it was an excellent companion piece that perhaps could be added in the future if the exhibit is expanded; perhaps a “before and after” map of the area with the brook highlighted.

Presently, the hope is to have the trail signs installed by the end of April to coincide with the schools’ Arts Integration Fair held the first of May and introduce the visitors to the Trail at that time. Hopefully, they would like to see the Swasey Parkway sign in place for the beginning of the Farmers Market---if the Parkway construction is completed

Mr. Huber commented the sign #6 (at Swasey Parkway) includes a paragraph describing the effect of sea rise and the transformation of the salt marshes into mud flats. But would not salt water seeping into our ground water reservoirs also be a risk to us? Ms. LaBranche added it is but again, working with what space was allotted on the poster forced them to edit and re-edit to find the statement they were comfortable with.

Ms. Harman supported Mr. Clement’s idea of providing more on the history of the area and hoped a future route down to the Parkway could include such an interpretive signage.

Ms. LaBranche offered to forward a date when the Water Trail markers are to be installed.

## **5. Proposal for a film screening and panel discussion of the dam removal film**

Mr. Bob Glowacky, Executive Producer for Exeter TV, distributed copies of a letter addressed to the River Advisory Committee seeking their interest in co-hosting a day of environmental films to celebrate the annual run of alewives in Exeter. He has been working on a documentary on the Great Dam removal for ExeterTV98 and plans on hosting a screening and a panel discussion.

Mr. Glowacky spoke briefly of this project at the February River meeting and then later to the Conservation Commission. That group expressed an interest in supporting and assisting with an event. He envisions a collection of short environmental/wildlife films before the dam removal documentary. His panel for discussion would include personnel from NOAA and Fish and Game, engineers, Exeter Historical Society—those involved with the decision making process of removing the Great Dam and those directly responsible for the action.

He said Mr. Clement also spoke to the Conservation Commission about the Exeter Squamscott River Local Advisory Committee’s (ESRLAC) plan to bring back the Alewife Festival in 2019 and was seeking

their interest and support. Mr. Glowacky thought by charging a small admission fee or asking for a donation at the film showing, it could perhaps be used to support the Alewife Festival.

He has not as yet found a location to hold the venue but had hoped to speak with Ms. Robinson, the Academy representative to this committee, who was not present for this meeting, about the possibility of holding it on the PEA campus. He will reach out to Ms. Robinson for further discussion. A time for the showing has not been determined but felt confident by his preliminary discussions with various parties it could come together in time for a late May/ early June showing.

Mr. Glowacky stated he would welcome the endorsement of this Committee to show support for the project. To that, Ms. Harman motioned for the River Advisory Committee to endorse the project; seconded by Mr. Bourdon. Motion passed unanimously. Discussion continued with suggestions for individuals and organizations to contact for their input and support.

Going forward, Mr. Huber spoke of the constraints of having future meetings posted in a timely manner and minutes being recorded but perhaps a subcommittee or working group would work best. They in turn could keep the full committee posted as events became finalized. There was agreement this was satisfactory and Mr. Huber agreed to be the Committee's representative and Ms. Raub had previously agreed to be the Conservation's representative.

Mr. Glowacky will contact Ms. Robinson for her assistance in securing a possible site on the PEA campus. From there he will proceed with setting a date, time, contacting panel members and film selections.

**6. Consideration of the meeting held by NHDES in Concord on 2/21/18 regarding the first steps in developing the Target Fish Communities (TFCs) on Designated River program**

Neither Mr. Huber nor Mr. Clement were able to attend the February 21, 2018 meeting in Concord. But Mr. Clement, reading from his mail contacts, stated there will be a follow up public information meeting on March 29, 2018 describing the QPPQ Transform Method for determining historical daily flows at ungauged locations. Mr. Huber queried how could one follow the river issues without going to Concord? Mr. Clement, reading further from his contacts, found a program announcement that he will pass on to the Chair for him to share with the RAC membership.

(In that notice is the link to the Instream Flow Program's blog at [https://www4.des.state.nh.us/blogs/rmac/?page\\_id=3525](https://www4.des.state.nh.us/blogs/rmac/?page_id=3525) that may offer more information.)

Also, Mr. Clement speaking further on instream flow rates stated DES will be putting forth draft rules for five NH rivers by the end of the year and the Exeter River will be one of the five. Each river will have its own specific rules in order to have adequate water levels/flow to maintain aquatic life. Presently, the Lamprey and the Souhegan Rivers each have their own specific instream flow rules.

**7. Consideration of issues to bring to PREP related to their State of Our Estuaries 2018 report Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP)**

Mr. Huber noted he placed this on the agenda if members had any questions after viewing the PREP report online to pass on to the Partnership as they were not prepared to come to this Committee's meetings at this time. There were no questions.

## **8. Consideration of the Town of Exeter Master Plan and our Committee's request for changes**

At the February meeting, the final draft of Master Plan was reviewed for tasks/topics that the Committee felt should be included in the document. After reviewing the Action Agenda portion of the Plan, the group felt the RAC should be added to three Town Support tasks in the plan. The Chair passed those recommendations onto Mr. Sharples, the Town Planner. He replied saying the additions were received and included in the final document.

Mr. Huber went on citing an article from the Foster's Daily Democrat noting that Dover was releasing a 64 page chapter on Climate Adaptation to be added to their Master Plan. (The document may be viewed at:

[http://www.dover.nh.gov/Assets/government/city-operations/2document/planning/master-plan/Climate/Climate\\_Adaptation\\_Chapter\\_Certified.pdf](http://www.dover.nh.gov/Assets/government/city-operations/2document/planning/master-plan/Climate/Climate_Adaptation_Chapter_Certified.pdf)

The chapter was responding to the Coastal Risk and Hazards Commissions report that suggested each town include a chapter on climate adaptation and how the town would address such. The newly drafted Exeter Master Plan does not have a specific chapter on the topic although there are numerous references on such. Mr. Huber suggested reviewing Dover's plan so if the opportunity arises, we would be familiar with other towns' responses.

## **9. Notice of vacancies in the membership of the River Advisory Committee**

Mr. Huber stated Mr. Peter Lennon, the representative of the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee, submitted his resignation from this committee. The committee now has two vacancies.

## **10. Other Business**

Mr. Huber spoke of recently attending an Active Retirement Association meeting (ARA) in Durham where Ms. Nathalie Morison of the NH Setting SAIL program was the presenter. She spoke of her role in working with Dover in the development of the climate adaptation chapter for their Master Plan.

And, this month's issue of Yankee Magazine has an excellent article on Exeter but more importantly, the cover story focuses on Maine and what challenges the state is facing with climate adaptation.

Mr. Clement remarked that in the first nor'easter storm this month, Exeter experienced extensive flooding along the Parkway, behind the retail stores on Water Street and the parking area by the boat launch area. It was a combination of precipitation, high winds and unusually high tides and storm surge that brought on this flooding. Photos and videos of the flooding were posted on various Town social media pages and he found very compelling that indeed changing climate events are here.

Returning to the discussion of the Town's Master Plan, Mr. Clement said the Planning Board is working on a plan to visit each Town Board, committee and commission to discuss how the Plan relates to their group

Mr. Clement returned to the discussion of a future Alewife Festival. Beginning in 2000 the ERLAC group (now known as ESRLAC with the addition of the Squamscott River to its charge) hosted the Festival in late May-early June celebrating the River. There were different activities, and exhibits on and along the River. It was an annual event for about five-six years but discontinued because of costs. This year the

Minutes approved with edits at April 19, 2018 meeting

group suggested reviving the event for 2019. Mr. Clement noted the Conservation Commission agreed to support and he hoped the River committee would also lend their support.

Mr. Huber, speaking for the committee, felt it would be something for the group to support and participate in the planning. Mr. Clement thanked the group and will return to his group advising of such.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Virginia Raub, Recording Secretary

**NOTE: Next meeting will be Thursday, April 19, 2018 at 3:00 pm**