

Town of Exeter, N.H.
River Advisory Committee
Nowak Room
May 16, 2019
Draft Minutes

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7 1. Convene the Meeting

8 Chairman Huber convened the meeting at 10:00 on Thursday, May 16, 2019. Members present
9 included Richard Huber, Chair; Carl Wikstrom, Water / Sewer Advisory Committee; Rod
10 Bourdon, Warren Biggins, Philips Exeter Academy; Lionel Ingram, Virginia Raub, and Dan
11 Jones. Members absent included Terrie Harman and Kathy Corson.
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13 2. Minutes of March 21, 2019 and April 18, 2019 meetings

14 Chairman Huber expressed the nature of the issues, such as member names and ability to hear
15 recorded voices, faced by the new Recording Secretary and suggested to table the Minutes for
16 discussion later in the meeting. Chairman Huber noted the potential early absence of other
17 members and stated they would move next to address other agenda items.
18

19 3. Update on Various River Related Items

20 Chairman Huber introduced Paul Vlasich, Town Engineer to provide his update. Mr. Vlasich
21 stated that he had a few items to discuss that pertained to the River Advisory Committee (RAC.)

- 22 a. Review of migration conditions at the Great Dam as a requirement of the Wetlands
23 Permit. Photographs of the river, and what it looks like in its third year will be
24 provided at the Consultant's meeting with the Fish & Game and NOAA folks this
25 week.
26 b. Review of Pickpocket Dam: the requirement to answer questions from the Dam
27 Safety Bureau and assemble an emergency action plan was managed with the
28 consultant who helped with the FEMA study and will be completed by the end of
29 August.
30 c. Storm Water Permit: the required Storm Water Management Plan is currently being
31 worked on and will be completed within the necessary time-frame and ready for the
32 end of June.

33 Chairman Huber asked would there be any "urgent report" in the time frame for the next RAC
34 meeting. Mr. Vlasich replied that no urgent matters show, to his knowledge, for the rest of the
35 year.
36

37 4. Discussion of Collaboration with the Water / Sewer Advisory Committee (W/SAC)

38 Chairman Huber noted Carl Wikstrom's presence as a representative from the W/SAC and Don
39 Clement attendance among the audience. Chairman Huber opened the discussion with the fact
40 that above-ground sewer pipe was constructed for the duration of fixing the underground sewer
41 pipe, noted the previous bad incidence of sewer water that entered the river. Chairman Huber's
42 general question asked about the present status and stability regarding their current concerns to
43 protect the river. Mr. Wikstrom responded as a new member of the W/SAC who had not yet had

44 an opportunity to attend a meeting of that committee. He agreed to take the RAC questions and
45 offer answers and information at a future date.

46

47 Chairman Huber stated that resources have been allocated for the active construction of the
48 above-ground sewer pipe and the below-ground sewer and hoped that mitigated some of the risk
49 for sewer water going into the river. Because Don Clement was present in the audience,
50 Chairman Huber asked for his opinion about the stability of the concern. Don Clement, Stillman
51 Drive, Exeter, N.H., reported his knowledge that as of today, work began to tie-in for the force
52 main at the north end of Swasey Parkway to the temporary over-lying pipe that connects to the
53 sewer (wastewater) treatment plant. Mr. Clement conveyed the plan to shut-down Newfields
54 Road from the DPW garage to the Parkway between now and November while the force mains
55 and the water line are installed. He said that allowable in-coming traffic would include
56 emergency vehicles, school buses, DPW staff and local residents. Mr. Clement offered his
57 opinion that the temporary over-land sewer line *may* begin processing wastewater at the new
58 facility soon. He summarized stating, “there’s a possibility that our \$50 million plant will be up
59 and operating on a limited basis as early as this summer, taking in some of the wastewater that
60 we generate. The good news, he noted, is the start of reducing the amount of nitrogen that gets
61 pumped into the Squamscott River.

62

63 Chairman Huber noted the importance Mr. Clément’s citation that preventing sewer water from
64 entering the river was even more important than controlling the amount of nitrogen in the river.
65 Mr. Clement agreed it was important and added the information that installation of the temporary
66 water line avoids the entrance of sewer water from the existing line in the event of a break. Mr.
67 Clement stated that since the connection made today, [May 16, 2019] effectively starting next
68 week, there will not be any wastewater in the old pipe, it will be in the temporary line. He said
69 this was good because there will not be any combined sewer overflows (CSO’s) or sanitary
70 storm overflows going into the river during the construction period.

71

72 Chairman Huber next addressed Clemson Pond and the problem of funding a method to manage
73 the issues there. Mr. Clement agreed and stated his opinion that the Town should take a more
74 forward stand to eliminate Clemson Pond as the combined sewer overflow lagoon. He suggested
75 development of an alternative treatment plan as recommended by the DES because a heavy rain
76 event presents the possibility of combined sewer overflow and the next step is to find a way to
77 manage CSO’s to eliminate Clemson Pond as the repository. Mr. Clement supported his
78 statement noting the prevalent positive indicators of a cleaner, healthier Squamscott River such
79 as the presence of alewives that ran the river last week and the smelts that ran last Winter showed
80 the health of a cleaner Squamscott River. He said both are signs of a cleaner environment here
81 and out into the Gulf of Maine.

82

83 Chairman Huber thanked Mr. Clemson and asked the Committee for comments on water / sewer
84 collaborative issues. Mr. Ingram addressed Mr. Wikstrom and clarified that this Committee’s
85 focus fundamentally concerned the river and the linkage between the W/S AC and the RAC and
86 collaboration should be confined to common interests in the [Exeter & Squamscott] rivers.

87 Collaboration should not otherwise complicate W/S AC's primary interest in other water and
88 sewer issues.

89

90 5. Discussion of Collaboration with the new Sustainability Office

91 Chairman Huber referred to a hand out provided last week by representatives for the new Office
92 and commented that it appeared to be a request for brainstorming the requirements for the Office.
93 He related that the information contained research into what similar organizations have done as a
94 basis to compare / contrast Exeter town needs. Mr. Huber asked for comments and opinions
95 about how to collaborate with the new Sustainability Office.

96

97 Virginia Raub stated that since the office and its role in town government remains in discussion
98 with town officials it was too early to determine collaborative ideas this year. Mr. Huber agreed
99 that it was not immediately funded but noted their request to help define the position and
100 responsibilities, skills and capabilities. He summarized the goal as "they would like to
101 accommodate their grandchildren as they were accommodated. Sustainability, that's what we
102 mean by that."

103

104 Warren Biggins asked for clarification of when the office or its funding would exist. Ms. Raub
105 replied that it was voted in the affirmative but whether it is full-time or part-time is unknown for
106 a while.

107

108 Chairman Huber asked Don Clement for his thoughts on the matter. Mr. Clement replied that as
109 a former member of the Board he no longer has a voice. But as a citizen he felt that it's good to
110 talk about the position but that without direct funding for the year 2020, moving forward is
111 unknown.

112

113 Chairman Huber observed that Terrie Harman's membership of the sustainability advocates
114 [group] would help to keep the RAC informed and mentioned they should look for opportunities
115 where issues collide and collaborate with them.

116

117 Dan Jones introduced himself as a former member and Chairman from several planning boards
118 over the years. Mr. Jones commented that in his experience, he sees the presence of such a group
119 as a hindrance to provision of services, or another layer of services: a duplication of service
120 behind the scenes, that gets in the way. He felt; however, that there must be a way to help them.
121 Mr. Huber agreed and observed the danger of having more layers of bureaucracy, but the benefit
122 of collaboration resolves specific issues.

123

124 Mr. Ingram stated that he felt that appointing Terrie Harman as the liaison to formalize the idea
125 and create clarity as they moved along would be beneficial. Many were in favor, but in Ms.
126 Harman's absence it was decided that someone would speak to her and a vote did not occur.

127

128 6. Review of the Master Plan as it Reflects the RAC

129 Chairman Huber provided an abbreviated action agenda that listed 4-5 items by category, from
130 the Master Plan that referred directly to the RAC that showed real opportunities for the RAC to
131 collaborate between committees on many issues. The information included the categories of
132 “Support,” “Prepare,” “Steward” and “Connect” and the related action items, leadership and
133 supportive roles and the general time frame within which to complete the item.

134 a. “Support:” Item #7 of the Master Plan: Develop a public awareness campaign to
135 educate residents and businesses about water quality and state and federal mandates
136 that require the Town to improve and monitor it. Include such topics as what the
137 mandates require the Town to do (new programs, infrastructure projects, etc.), the
138 impact of lower water quality on the quality of life in Exeter, and how residents and
139 businesses can contribute to improving water quality. Town Leadership role was
140 listed as DPW and Natural Resource Planner (NRP.) Town Support was listed as the
141 Conservation Commission, and the RAC. The time frame was indicated as short term.

142 i. General discussion ensued with Mr. Ingram’s observation that the RAC was
143 not the lead for any item. Mr. Huber agreed and stated the lead for this item
144 was the DPW and the Natural Resource Planner. Ms. Raub requested a hand-
145 out for Dan Jones and herself. Mr. Clement addressed the task of public
146 outreach suggesting that the RAC reach out to the newly formed
147 Communications Committee as the most effective way (a great bridge, a
148 mechanism,) to help spread the message about water quality and other issues.

149 ii. Ms. Raub supported the efforts, ideas and aspirations of the Communications
150 Committee of three members and suggested that new members be steered in
151 their direction to help with their mission.

152 iii. Mr. Wikstrom suggested speaking with DPW and the Communications
153 Committee about placing an insert with the water bill (as allowed) as a
154 method for public outreach and education. Ms. Raub replied that the
155 Communications Committee planned a newsletter in coordination with RPC
156 which is something that committees may comment on or contribute to
157 somewhere down the road.

158 b. Chairman Huber next addressed the items listed in the category “Prepare:” Item 2a –
159 Based on most recent data available, inventory properties most vulnerable to sea level
160 rise, storm surge, and other natural hazards. Where possible, estimate the time
161 horizon for impacts, develop outreach methods to educate private property owners
162 about the risks and ways they can minimize impacts to their properties. Town
163 Leadership role was listed as the Town Planner and Natural Resource Planner. Town
164 Support was listed as the Conservation Commission, Planning Board and the RAC.
165 The time frame indicated was short term. “Prepare” Item 2b is listed below. Chairman
166 Huber prefaced the discussion with commentary about his participation with the
167 Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission. He stated that resultant from SB 207 [An
168 Act relative to rules adopted by the department of environmental services pursuant to
169 the 2014 report of the Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission.] He reported on State
170 Legislators’ concern about the method and / or cost to revisit past projects (if

171 completed based on old recommendations) when mandated to review the scientific
172 data every five years.

- 173 i. “Prepare Item 2a” Grant availability - discussion surrounded the opportunity
174 to receive grant funding through UNH as described in an email from Kristen
175 Murphy forwarded to the Conservation Commission as a climate assistance
176 opportunity. Lisa Weiss, Climate Adaptation Program, UNH Extension and
177 NH Sea Grant manage this opportunity for the for the Town to apply to
178 portions of the grant in the following areas: public education and outreach
179 about climate and natural resources and a coastal conservation plan, water
180 resources, supplemental maps and climate change. Also, assistance was
181 available providing guidance for towns updating their Master Plan to complete
182 the natural resource inventory or conservation planning for climate resilience.
183 The assistance was noted as available from July 2019 through June 2020. The
184 deadline for application was stated as 5:00 pm, Friday, June 14, 2019. The
185 discussion investigated ways to expedite access to the funds for the betterment
186 of the Town and concluded that the Conservation Commission intended to
187 apply for the assistance once an issue was identified. Ms. Raub indicated that
188 Committee’s intention and the RAC offered guiding support as needed.
- 189 ii. “Prepare:” Item #2b of the Mater Plan: For areas identified as most vulnerable
190 to sea level rise, storm surge and other natural hazards, evaluate Town land-
191 use policies for these areas and consider alternatives to minimize risk in each
192 area. These might include acquiring property to minimize the impact of sea
193 level rise, chronic flooding, marsh migration, etc. converting it to public and
194 private property or limit redevelopment after flood or storm damage or
195 decisions where to extend or not to extend infrastructure like roads, water or
196 sewer, etc. The Town Lead was indicated as the Town Planner and NRP.
197 Town Support was indicated as the Conservation Commission, Planning
198 Board and RAC. The time frame was mid-term.

199
200 Mr. Ingram noted that floods were not mentioned in this action item and
201 referenced the Pickpocket Dam issue. He continued citing coordination as a
202 non-issue because the work occurred under DPW, also not mentioned. He
203 concluded stating that it is under “Prepare” which was their item.

204
205 Ms. Raub addressed the concern voiced by members of the Conservation
206 Commission about the salt marsh going to fresh water, becoming flooded
207 enough to be marsh migration. Mr. Ingram stated that these are areas of our
208 responsibility and spoke of the need to continue what they were doing without
209 a need to report. Mr. Huber stated that the issues didn’t appear in the Master
210 Plan and that’s okay.

- 211 c. “Steward:” Item #1b of the Master Plan: Review criteria for acquiring land for
212 conservation and consider adding criteria related to sea level rise, marsh migration,
213 chronic flooding, storm surge and other impacts of climate change and natural

214 hazards. The Town Lead was indicated as the Natural Resource Planner. Town
215 Support was listed as the Conservation Commission, RAC and Select Board. The
216 time frame was mid-term.

217 d. "Connect:" Item #4 of the Master Plan: Working with public and private landowners
218 evaluate the feasibility of a pedestrian walkway / access along the Squamscott River
219 from Swasey Parkway to the Library. The Town Lead was listed as the Town
220 Planner, DPW and Town Manager. Town Support was listed as the Select Board and
221 the RAC. The time frame was short-term. Discussion revealed that the topic related to
222 the removal of the dam and the idea that a public walkway would allow people to see
223 the river from different vantage points. Ms. Raub noted the time frame as short term.
224 Mr. Huber stated that given funding issues (and the Library's removal of the project
225 from their budget,) the time frame should be long term. Mr. Ingram agreed
226 referencing the 4-5 months just to review the [alewives] viewing platform. Mr. Huber
227 concluded stating the platform was the next item on the agenda, but in the absence of
228 Bob Glowacky, the item would be tabled.

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- 230 7. Update on the River Viewing Site – Tabled in the absence of Mr. Glowacky.
- 231 8. Other Business – No other business or audience commentary was introduced.
- 232 9. Public Comment – in lieu of public comment, the Committee deferred to address
233 previous Meeting Minutes:
- 234 a. Chairman Huber questioned the history for incorrect information reported by or in
235 the Minutes of this Committee. Mr. Ingram stated that no history existed and that
236 any errors would prove as non-critical to public processes. It was mentioned that
237 Minutes were retained at the website as a permanent record.
- 238 b. The Committee reviewed the March 21, 2019 Minutes and made corrections at
239 various lines related to diction. Mr. Ingram moved to accept the Minutes as
240 corrected and changed. Dan Jones seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- 241 c. Minutes for April 18, 2019: Chairman Huber prefaced the review by noting the
242 difficulties of a Recording Secretary having to view the Meeting from a video and
243 noted several issues regarding names of members, diction or semantics and or
244 department vs. committee. Several lines were addressed for correction for diction
245 or accurate personal identification.
- 246 d. Discussion evolved with Mr. Bourdon querying the need to perpetually review the
247 Minutes. Ms. Raub stated that since the essence of the meeting was recorded or
248 outlined it was more a profile of the Recorder that they examined. After
249 discussion, it was voted to approve the Minutes, with corrections. All in favor
250 were Bourdon, Huber, Raub and Wikstrom.
- 251 e. The next meeting, due to conflicts in Mr. Huber's schedule and to the agreement
252 of Committee members, was scheduled for the third Thursday in July to be held
253 at 10:00 am, Thursday, July 18, 2019.

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255 10. Adjourn the Meeting

256 The meeting was adjourned, with all present in favor, at 11:15 am on Thursday, May 16, 2019.

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Respectfully submitted,

Celeste M. Camire,
Recording Secretary