

# Exeter River Advisory Committee Minutes August 15, 2019

Town of Exeter, N.H.  
River Advisory Committee  
Nowak Room  
August 15, 2019  
Minutes

## 1. Convene the Meeting

Chairman Huber convened the meeting at 10:00 am on Thursday, August 15, 2019. Members present included Richard Huber, Chairman; Carl Wickstrom, Water / Sewer Advisory Committee (W/SAC;); Kathy Corson, Select Board; Warren Biggins, Phillips Exeter Academy Representative (PEA;); Lionel Ingram; Ginny Raub (Conservation Committee;); Terrie Harman. Members absent included Dan Jones and Rod Bourdon.

## 2. Minutes from July 18, 2019

Discussion of the previous Minutes surrounded typographical error and/or audio clarity error. Slight amendments were made to correct names or acronym usage and general commentary unnecessary to the topics at hand. The Minutes and video recording remain available for public view. Ms. Raub moved to approve the Minutes as amended. Mr. Ingram seconded the motion. Chairman Huber abstained and the Motion passed by unanimous vote.

## 3. Update on Various River Related Items (Paul)

Paul Vlasich was unable to attend the meeting but provided a link to recently submitted documents: Letter of Deficiency dated July 25, 2019, Intent to Complete Repairs, Letter of Compliance responding to the Letter of Deficiency, and a completed Operation Maintenance & Response Form indicating procedure. Mr. Huber recommended all members be advised of these updates by viewing them at: <https://www.exeternh.gov/bcc-rsc/pickpocket-dam>. The general public may also access these printable PDF documents from the Town of Exeter website: choose Boards and Commissions, then select Committees, scroll to River Advisory to see the list and select a document for viewing thus increasing awareness of the current state of affairs.

## 4. Discussion of Today's Tour with CLF – Great Bay Piscataqua River Water Keeper, Melissa Paly

Mr. Lionel Ingram, along with Russell Dean, Town Manager, attended the tour with Melissa Paly, Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) Administrator of the Water Keeper Program. Mr. Ingram's observations recalled a small vessel ride from Newington across Great Bay to where the Squamscott and Lamprey Rivers met. Mr. Ingram observed that much of the shoreline remained uninhabited but human activity was viewable along the shores near the bridges. He noted that everything seemed a little wild and the subject of pollutants seemed to be "less what the Town created versus what might be individually created by what residents add to the rivers." He saw eel weed and a few seals which seemed unusual with regard to reported shark observations. Mr. Ingram related Ms. Paly's comment that the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP,) listed Exeter

by comparison to other towns, as in pretty good shape. Mr. Ingram offered that as an interested party in the Great Bay area, Ms. Paly would be an excellent candidate to speak at a future meeting. The ensuing discussion surrounded the health of the estuary and oyster population. Rainfall was noted as problematic to water quality due to the pollutants falling into the bay. As oysters tend to filter the water, they work to improve overall water quality. Ms. Corson stated that since the operation of Exeter's new Waste Water Treatment Facility, the town contributes the lowest amounts of nitrogen to Great Bay than all other communities. Also, Exeter was recognized as a leader whose experience is sought by other towns for its' long-term approach and planning practices. The balance of the discussion involved the success of reducing impact to the rivers and bay, the visual informational benefit of viewing the bay from an educational perspective and the potential advent of eliminating Clemson Pond [as a repository.]

Chairman Huber introduced an upcoming event on Thursday, November 14, from 10-11:30 at the Durham Community Church provided by the Active Retirement Association (ARA,) an educational outreach component of UNH titled, "Reflections on the Water: How Healthy is the Great Bay Estuary?" The forum, led by Melissa Paley, will address pollution issues that jeopardize both fishing and oyster habitats in Great Bay.

#### 5. Discussion of Our Collaboration with the Sustainability Office

There were no updates regarding collaboration with the Sustainability Office.

Ms. Harman referred to her conversation with Melissa Paly regarding PFAS (Per-and polyFluoroAlkyl Substances.) Ms. Paly agreed to speak with the Committee but also stated that Mindy Mesmer, a former Legislator and current water quality environmental activist, was the most knowledgeable person about PFAS who should be sought to speak to that issue. Discussion involved inviting other Board members to hear her speak. The committee decided that Ms. Harman would invite Ms. Paly for the October meeting and Ms. Mesmer for the November meeting and thus allow time for greater attendance. Chairman Huber noted (for informational purposes) that residential drinking water at his condo association was problematic and so he purchased drinking water from Market Basket. However, Market Basket no longer sells that water because the well in Massachusetts from where it derived was contaminated with PFAS.

#### 6. Discussion of How Our Committee is Supporting the Master Plan Directives

Chairman Huber asked to address the Committee's position and action items for its participation with Master Plan objectives included the topics: "Develop a Public Awareness Campaign for Educating Residents and Businesses About Water Quality" and "Develop Outreach Materials." Discussion surrounded how the Committee met the first objective with their invitation to Ms. Mesmer and Ms. Paly to speak regarding water quality issues.

Second, it was decided to film the upcoming public workshop presented by the Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW) as an effort to reach more people with the information. Two public meetings, to be held September 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> in Rye and Newmarket are scheduled to address coping with the issues of coastal storms, groundwater rise and extreme precipitation. The Committee will speak to Bob Glowacky about the possibility for filming on Exeter T.V. Concise information from the announcement is noted here:

“On behalf of the 2019 NH Coastal Flood Risk Science and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) Steering Committee, the NH Department of Environmental Services is pleased to announce the publication of the *NH Coastal Flood Risk Summary, Part I: Science*, as well as a request for input on the DRAFT of *Part II: Guidance for Using Scientific Projections*.”

Two public input sessions to gather feedback, intended to help local decision-makers incorporate the updated projections of sea-level rise, coastal storms, groundwater rise, and extreme precipitation in land use planning and decision-making. All interested state and local government officials, workers, residents and other persons are welcome to attend. Both events are identical and will be held with a light dinner provided:

Tuesday, September 10, 2019 from 4:45 – 7:30 p.m.

Seacoast Science Center  
570 Ocean Boulevard, Rye, NH

Wednesday, September 11, 2019 from 4:45 – 7:30 p.m.

Newmarket Millspace  
55 Main Street, Newmarket, NH

7. Discussion of the Proposed River Viewing Site near String Bridge (Bob Glowacky)

There being no present updates, this item was tabled for future discussion.

8. Other Business

Carl Wickstrom provided a progress report of the Force Man Sewer Project gleaned from an email sent by Matt Berube:

- a. Two new 16” force mains were installed and connected to the new Waste Water Treatment Facility from the new main pump station
- b. The temporary sewer force main was disassembled and removed
- c. A new waterline was installed from Newfields Road to Swasey Parkway is not yet connected
- d. The Contractor will begin excavation for the connection this week. The waterline will then be tested to ensure that it is clean and bacteria free, and approved for use

The question of when Newfields Road will reopen was unanswerable but as the project remains ahead of schedule, the anticipated opening is November. The official ribbon-cutting for the waste water treatment facility is expected to happen next month.

Don Clement, Thelma Drive, Exeter next began a commentary on the successes of the Town of Exeter for its progress beginning with congratulations to the DPW, Water Department, Water / Sewer Advisory Committee – specifically Bob Kelly and Jim Tannis for their roles in design and process and to all the voters. Mr. Clements applauded the 70% voter support of the \$50 million project that showed how people truly care about cleaning up the Bay. Mr. Clement mentioned the Town's ability to lower PFAS levels in its river and noted that the NH Legislature recently passed the "most" sweeping legislation in the country by lowering acceptable limits of PFAS. Mr. Clement went on to note other factors that contribute to PFAS levels such as proximity to manufacturers which produce chemical pollutants such as arsenic, but that levels are significantly reduced. Carl Wickstrom agreed to obtain water quality information from Matt Berube.

Chairman Huber defined PFAS - Per and polyfluoroalkyl substances – as a whole class of chemicals that come from different sources such as fire retardants. It is a national problem according to an informative EPA article- information may be garnered by Googling the term and locating the article. Begin here: <https://www.epa.gov/chemical-research/research-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>.

As discussed by the Committee, the next meeting will be held the third Thursday of the month: September 19, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. The third Thursday of October at the same time is reserved for Speaker Melissa Paly and the third Thursday of November at the same time is reserved for Speaker Mindy Mesmer.

#### 9. Public Comment

Public Comment was addressed above as Other Business.

#### 10. Adjourn the Meeting

Chairman Huber requested to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Harman moved to adjourn, and Carl Wickstrom seconded the Motion. The Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Celeste M. Camire*  
*Recording Secretary*