

Town of Exeter, N.H.
River Advisory Committee
Nowak Room
September 19, 2019
Draft Minutes

1. Convene the Meeting

Chairman Huber convened the meeting at 3:00 pm, September 19, 2019. Members present constituted a quorum and included Richard Huber, Chairman; Virginia Raub, Conservation Committee; Carl Wikstrom, Water / Sewer Advisory Committee (W/SAC); Lionel Ingram and Terrie Harman. Members absent included Dan Jones and Rod Bourdon, Kathy Corson and Warren Biggins.

2. Minutes of the August 15, 2019 River Advisory Committee Meeting

Chairman Huber introduced the Agenda item and reminded everyone to adequately use their microphones for recording purposes. Chairman Huber noted two lines requiring clarification that involved corrected terminology and a budget figure. There were no further comments. Terrie Harman moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Lionel Ingram. All were in favor and the Motion passed unanimously.

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

Chairman Huber received a telephone call from Mr. Vlasich who reported no updates at this time. Chairman Huber reminded the Committee of the documents that maintained their involvement with the progress for Pickpocket Dam – Letter of Deficiency, Letter of Intent to Complete Repairs, Letter of Compliance for the Letter of Deficiency and the Operation, Maintenance and Response Form dated July 25, 2019 – denoting their on-going involvement with the project, thus keeping the item on future Agendas. There were no further comments.

4. Discussion of the newly published report: “NH Coastal Flood Risk Summary – Part I & Part II”

Chairman Huber commented upon a recently published Report, the: “NH Coastal Flood Risk Summary Parts I & II,” and opportunity for open public comment on this 80-page report during which people may forward their concerns through the end of September. According to Huber, the document reported “melting glaciers and ice sheets thousands of miles away are major contributors to the sea level rise” as an important aspect for intended coastal land use planning. Chairman Huber indicated that the document originated from the Science & Technology Advisory Panel (STAP,) set up by the Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission. STAP studied ocean rise concerns in NH and decided the study should be repeated every five years. The report contained scientific information and guidance, including forms with which to apply for proposed projects in

areas potentially affected by sea level rise. Highlights from the report are inserted below the following discussion.

The Coastal Adaptation Workgroup (CAW) held meetings the previous week in Rye and Newmarket, NH. These were 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 future land use planning and decision-making. Mr. Ingram provided a summary of his attendance at the Newmarket meeting: two reports were received by the participants, the first being the scientific findings and explanation and the second, an interactive look at the process for determining at risk areas. Mr. Ingram's "team" [*as an exercise only*] looked at factors that surround Seabrook's Wastewater Treatment facility. Following the established criteria, Mr. Ingram stated, they quickly found reason to recommend that Seabrook start the process of moving the plant which sits nearly on the beach. He noted that an unusual high tide with heavy surf would result in water rise over the plant walls that definitively showed the roadway would be under water, preventing any access to the plant. Mr. Ingram said that the exercise following the provided model and based upon available data was a good one and worthwhile for analyzing and understanding any imminent concern. Mr. Ingram concluded by stating that the Town of Exeter had been proactive with a similar look in the area of Newfields Road and was shown to be in good shape. Further discussion surrounded the present location of Seabrook's wastewater plant, potential for analysis of the nuclear power plant and the long-term effect of seawater against concrete.

Chairman Huber summarized the key impacts from the science portion of the Study. Key findings of the Study are shown here:

*From the 2019 NH COASTAL FLOOD RISK SUMMARY PART I: SCIENCE
SECTION 3 page 9:*

Key findings related to projections of relative sea-level rise (RSLR), coastal storms (CS), groundwater rise (GWR), precipitation (PPT), and freshwater flooding (FWF) are summarized below. Additional detail and supporting information for each key finding is provided in Sections 4-8.

RSLR 1. Relative sea level (RSL) in New Hampshire is rising.

RSLR 2. The rate of ice mass loss from the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets is accelerating, and land ice is now the primary contributor to sea-level rise.

RSLR 3. Relative sea level in coastal New Hampshire is projected to rise for centuries.

CS 1. Inland and coastal impacts from storm surge in coastal New Hampshire will increase with RSLR.

CS 2. Future storm surge increases as extreme storm intensity increases.

CS 3. Current 100-year return period storm surge estimates vary.

GWR 1. Coastal groundwater levels will rise with RSLR.

GWR 2. Mean groundwater levels are projected to rise as a percentage of RSLR with the magnitude of groundwater rise decreasing with distance from the coast.

GWR 3. The magnitude and extent of RSLR-induced groundwater rise is influenced by the coastal geometry, geology, and the proximity of freshwater discharge areas such as streams and freshwater wetlands.

PPT 1. The magnitude of daily extreme precipitation events has increased by 15 - 38% in New Hampshire's coastal watershed since the 1950s.

PPT 2. The frequency of extreme precipitation events is projected to increase over the course of the next several decades, especially in the springtime. This increase will likely result in an increased risk of flooding.

PPT 3. The magnitude of future flooding will depend in part on how much the effective impervious surface changes in the coastal watershed due to development both inland and along the coast.

FWF 1. Freshwater flooding in coastal New Hampshire has increased in magnitude and frequency.

FWF 2. Freshwater flooding is expected to increase in the future.

Chairman Huber noted that the original report did not address groundwater rise as a result of sea level rise; however, this report and future reports will do so. Mr. Ingram noted that the data reported is presented in terms of probability rather than as collected, specific data.

To download the Report, visit: <https://scholars.unh.edu/ersc/210>

Comments will be accepted, particularly on Part II (guidance) until September 30, 2019.

5. Update Related to Plans to Host Melissa Paly and Mindy Mesmer

Ms. Harman reported that Melissa Paly, Great Bay Waterkeeper agreed to speak at their meeting scheduled for 3:00 pm on Thursday, October 17, 2019 and Mindy Mesmer, Founder, N.H. Safe Water Alliance will speak on Thursday, November 21, 2019 at 3:00 pm. Ms. Harman requested a discussion to fine tune the general topic. The Committee decided to focus on the following topic/questions with Ms. Paly:

- a. General state of Great Bay with a concentration on potential impacts to the Bay and how they can be managed
- b. Quantitative affect upon fishing, oyster beds and wildlife resultant from improvements to water quality in the Bay
- c. Examples of how Ms. Paly incorporates testing and reporting resources
- d. Comparisons of Exeter with other towns related to planning and implementation for improved water quality

The Committee focused on the following topic/questions with Ms. Mesmer:

- a. Discuss her experience and the triggers that identify areas of interest
- b. Contaminants noted and addressed in these given areas and what should the Committee be made further aware of?

6. Update Related to Our Collaboration with the Sustainability Office

Ms. Harman, as liaison to the Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC), reported that the SAC meets with the Select Board at 7 pm on September 23, 2019 to request a line item budget for the Sustainability Advocate. Ms. Harman asked that the RAC attend to show support. Chairman Huber stated that the topic would remain on the Agenda.

7. Update Related to How Our Committee Supports the Master Plan Directives

There were no updates to this item; however, Ms. Raub suggested an invitation to the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board to the October meeting with Ms. Paly would meet their directive toward education and be informative for both groups. Mr. Ingram suggested a periodic report to the Board regarding the Committee's progress or accomplishment to keep River issues in the forefront of everyone's concern. Chairman Huber stated that this item would remain on the Agenda.

8. Update Related to the Proposed River Viewing Platform near String Bridge

Chairman Huber reported that attractive brickwork and fencing had been completed at the site as represented by photos provided by Bob Glowacky. A restored sign indicated the location as the former first mill – the Wilson Mill – but Mr. Huber wondered whether an additional sign might instruct about viewing the migratory fish such as Alewives, from that location. Mr. Clement offered that the restoration work was provided by the Department of Public Works (DPW,) but the Exeter-Squamscott River Advisory Committee might contribute both concepts and/or assistance to adding signage that indicates relevant information about the fish and the river. Mr. Clement stated that he would speak with them. Ms. Raub suggested approaching the folks who completed water trail signage using diagrams for Julie LaBranch. Mr. Ingram congratulated Bob

Glowacky for making the viewing site a reality and an observation look-out to be enjoyed by everyone.

9. Other Business

Don Clement, Thelma Drive, Exeter, noted the on-going Library renovations managed by Kevin Leonard, Principal Engineer include an addition to the library but not an extension of a river walk, as desired. Mr. Clement suggested that as a future agenda item, the RAC could present as an additional resource promoting the benefits of a river walk on either side of the river/library. Mr. Ingram stated that it was a great idea to memorialize the departure of the dam. Chairman Huber proposed that a river walk on either side, connected by the String Bridge was beneficial to the entire community. The item will appear on the next Agenda.

10. Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

11. Adjourn the Meeting

Chairman Huber asked to Adjourn the Meeting. Mr. Ingram moved to adjourn and was Seconded by Ms. Raub. The Meeting adjourned with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Celeste M. Camire

Recording Secretary