

River Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, July 15, 2021
3 PM
Nowak Room, Town Offices
Final Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Members present: Richard Huber (Chair), Lionel Ingram, Carl Wikstrom, Dan Jones, Rod Bourdon, Warren Biggins, PEA Rep, and Paul Vlasich, the Town Engineer. Niko Papakonstantis, Select Board Rep, was present remotely via Zoom.

Members Absent: Terrie Harman. Ginny Raub is no longer the Conservation Commission Rep.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Huber at 3 PM.

1. Approval of Minutes

a. May 20, 2021

Corrections: Mr. Huber, page 2, to the sentence “Mr. Huber asked Mr. Vlasich if they need to hold the next RAC meeting,” they should add “in one month.”

MOTION: Mr. Ingram moved to accept the minutes as amended. Mr. Bourdon seconded. All were in favor.

2. Update on River Issues

Paul Vlasich said the Public Works Director Jennifer Perry sent the Dam Bureau a letter asking for an extension for the letter of deficiency on Pickpocket Dam. By June of next year they aren't going to have this figured out nor applied for the various permits. The town asked for a two-year extension, to June 1, 2024. They also asked that the timeline for completing the reconstruction of the dam be extended two years, to December 1, 2027.

They need more funds to continue the analysis. They have some left over from previous CIPs, but are about \$300,000 short for the feasibility study. Through the CIP process, they submitted a request for \$300,000. Also, with the help of consultants, they applied for a Clean Water State Revolving Loan for \$350,000, with a potential \$75,000 in principal forgiveness.

Mr. Wikstrom asked why the project is short \$300,000. Mr. Vlasich said the general figure for a full feasibility study is about \$400,000, and to date they've gotten \$110,000 or so. There's about \$300,000 that they've never had for the full feasibility study.

Mr. Vlasich said they will also be putting in an application for a Coastal Resilience Grant, which is due at the end of this month. This grant is a maximum of \$40,000, with a 4:1 match, so the town would have to put in \$10,000. Mr. Ingram asked if that was for taking the dam out; Mr. Vlasich said it would just be to help us understand the situation.

Mr. Jones asked if they know how many acres of wetland would be impacted by the removal of this dam, and Mr. Vlasich said they do not know that. There might be an estimate with the GIS information, but there won't be a solid number, since they don't know the exact water level or ground elevations. Mr. Jones said if he were a developer looking to drain wetland, he'd have to come up with pretty accurate numbers. Mr. Vlasich said there will be some idea of impact to wetlands with the feasibility study.

Mr. Huber asked if Mr. Vlasich saw the need for another meeting in the next month or two. Mr. Vlasich said he doesn't know when the State will reply to their extension request, but it will likely be within that one month timeframe. They will also likely know this month whether they have been selected for the SRF loan. That said, he doesn't know if those subjects would require a full meeting.

Mr. Huber said the public should be updated on those issues, so they should have a meeting. They could cancel if there was nothing to report. Mr Ingram said they could wait until September.

3. Other Business

- a. Mr. Huber said they are missing a rep from the Conservation Commission now that Ginny Raub has moved on, so they need to approach that group regarding another rep.
- b. Mr. Huber got an email from Kristin Murphy, who has begun the VRAP [Volunteer River Assessment Program] process. With volunteers, they visit rivers in Exeter, take samples from bridges, and send them to DHHS. All helpers are welcome.
- c. Mr. Huber said Kristin Murphy wants to bring back the Alewife Festival and has been reaching out to the environmental boards to gauge interest in creating a multi-board temporary committee to bring it back next year. She asked that they designate a rep from the committee if there is interest. Mr. Ingram suggested Don Clement.

4. Public Comment

- a. There was no public comment at this meeting.

5. Review Committee Calendar

- a. The next meeting will be September 16, 2021 at 3 PM.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Ingram moved to adjourn. Mr. Jones seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Bartell
Recording Secretary