

Draft Minutes

River Study Committee

October 20, 2016

Note: the video of this meeting can be streamed at: [but there was no audio recorded for the first 4.5 minutes.]
http://www.townhallstreams.com/locations/exeter-new-hampshire/events/35614/Nowak_room

1. Convene the Meeting

Chairman Lionel Ingram called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Office building. Other members present were Rod Bourdon, Roger Wakeman, and Richard Huber. Also in attendance was Eric Hutchins from NOAA, and Board of Selectmen Representative, Don Clement.

2. Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the July 21, 2016 and the September 15, 2016 meetings of the River Study Committee were reviewed.

It was noted that the date in the footer of both minutes had not been updated since the minutes of 6/16/16. The date should be changed to agree with the title page date.

In the minutes for July 21, 2016, in the first full paragraph on page 3 the word “addressed” needs to be added: “He said the dam removal feasibility study had [addressed] all these issues and is available on the Town website.”

Also in the minutes for July 21, 2016, in the last line on page 4 the word “case” needs to be added: “Mr. Hutchins suggested they set an August meeting just in [case], even if it gets cancelled.”

Motion: A Motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2016 River Study Committee meeting and the minutes of the September 15, 2016 River Study Committee meeting as amended. The motion carried – all in favor.

3. Climate Risk in the Seacoast – (Julie LaBranche, RPC)

Julie LaBranche was unable to attend this meeting. She requested that her CAPE/C-RiSe update to the River Study Committee be postponed until the December meeting. She has a commitment to speak at a conference on Nov. 17th and she has two other projects that ended on Sept. 30 and require her attention. She says that she should have a complete update on both the C-RiSe and CAPE assessments by December.

It was discussed and decided that no November meeting would be scheduled and the next meeting would be tentatively scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 1st.

4. Great Dam Project Update

Paul Vlasich, Town Engineer, provided the following note for the meeting:

Lionel: As a reminder, I will be on vacation next week and unable to attend the River Study Meeting. Here are some notes that you can relay to the group:

1. Dam Area
Work is done at the dam area and Founder’s Park, except for a park sign that will be installed when delivered.

2. Post-Construction River monitoring
The town needs to survey the river bottom at five cross-sections as a basis for five additional years of post-construction monitoring. The town and VHB have proposed the locations, but NHDES has not yet approved the locations. VHB will conduct the survey once there are approved locations by the regulatory agencies.
3. Town Water Intake
The water intake pipe was lowered to allow additional river water supplies to be pumped to the surface water treatment plant. The contractor will need to install the permanent screened tee at the end of the pipe when it arrives from the manufacturer. In the meantime, the pump house is operational. *[Comment by Lionel Ingram and Don Clement: the lowering of the intake is to ensure availability of a million gallons a day or more if needed.]*
4. Breach Analysis
VHB has started the surveying for the Pickpocket Dam breach analysis. The analysis should be complete by the end of the year. *[Comment by Lionel Ingram: Breach analysis determines if the dam meets the obligations with the state for safety requirements with regard to whether the dam can be breached.]*

Thanks, Paul

5. Public Business

Chairman Lionel Ingram called attention to the fact that we have two vacancies on the committee due to the departure of Frank Patterson and Frank Ferraro. He asked those attending to contact people who may be interested in serving on the committee.

Discussion proceeded to the concern that some long-serving members may not have voting privileges as they have been representing institutions (e.g. Roger Wakeman who represents Phillips Exeter Academy). It was proposed that at another meeting, when we have a quorum, there could be action to adjust the charge from the board of selectmen to allow voting privileges. Selectman Don Clement offered to look into this issue.

Now with the dam gone, there will be ongoing river-related issues that will need to be addressed in the public venue provided by this committee: sea level rise and other issues. We will need to monitor the C-RiSe program and the fate of the CAPE study. We need to fill the vacancies.

6. Public Comment

Eric Hutchins from NOAA brought several issues to the attention of the meeting:

He brought several copies of the latest NOAA Restoration Center outreach brochure on our program that funded your dam project entitled ***Restoring Coastal and Marine Habitat*** and left them for members to view. The brochure details the history of the NOAA Restoration Center and the various objectives it pursues. It provides descriptions of some case studies: The Penobscot River Restoration in Maine, the Cosco Busan Oil Spill in California, and the Barrier Islands in Barataria, Louisiana.

More RFP funding will be out in December. Pickpocket dam is nowhere near ready but maybe in the future there will be interest.

He recommended that the River Committee stay closely in touch with the Letter of Map Revision (LOMAR) process. People will continue to ask about it and he will continue to follow it closely. NOAA funding was involved in resiliency funding, not just fisheries, but also protection of house, home, infrastructure, and jobs. Follow the process to see what the end result is. It will probably be a long and involved process but it will document the flood plain changes

resulting from the dam removal project and it will most likely have a positive impact on flood insurance costs for affected residents. [Comment by Don Clement: \$60,000 has been budgeted for the LOMAR study in 2017.] The benefits of the project have already happened but the formal recognition of the benefits will be documented by this process.

Also, it will be valuable for the River Committee to monitor the status of the water supply intake and evaluate changes related to the dam removal project. There will be ongoing concern about the water resources for Exeter. Paul Vlasich, Town Engineer, will probably be able to provide the data. People who opposed taking the dam out looked upon the river as a source of water for the town. They still have concerns. Monitoring and reporting the ongoing status of the town water supply would be a valuable action for the River Committee.

VHB has sent details of their monitoring plan. The NOAA funding provided had some conditions: post construction topography, and fish counts. The \$100,000 compensatory mitigation funds that may be coming from some wetlands mitigation bank come with some standards as well. The Army Corp and DES needs to know that they got their aquatic value through some kind of monitoring. That is the last piece that is being negotiated right now. The monitoring period may be up to 5 years. The data will also document for the record the benefits of the dam removal project.

Eric Hutchins said that from a visual, aesthetic, and functional perspective, he has not seen a project this nice. The exposed bedrock will make the waterfall view under flow very attractive. He will be attending a national conference in Louisiana in December and he is nominating this project as an example of a project with so many favorable outcomes. He may be able to tell the River Committee how this goes at our January meeting.

7. Adjourn the Meeting

The next meeting will be on Dec 1 at 9:00 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 am.

Respectively submitted by Richard Huber, substituting for Recording Secretary