

Riverbend Subcommittee



Lancaster

Minutes – December 16, 2010

Dalton

Littleton

Monroe

Bath

Haverhill

PRESENT: Rick Walling, Bath; P.J. Blanchard, Monroe; Bill Graves, Barnet; Deb Noble, Concord; Jim Doig, Scott Labun, Newbury; Jan Edick, Littleton; Glen English and John Severance, CRJC

ABSENT: Guildhall, Ryegate, Lunenburg, Haverhill, Dalton, Waterford; Lancaster

New Hampshire

Guildhall

Lunenburg

Concord

Waterford

Barnet

Ryegate

Newbury

Vermont

Housekeeping The August, 2010 members list was passed around for updating of contact information. Members present introduced themselves. Minutes of the meeting of June, 2010 were approved.

Reports by a CRJC Commissioner Glen English reported on the current condition of the CRJC. Glen E reported on past and current grant obligations and the present financial condition and immediate needs of the CRJC. The CRJC Commissioners are running the outstanding grants. The CRJC now has one staff member, Teresa Darling, who has set up an office in her home. The CRJC maintains a PO box in Charlestown. The CRJC is slated to transfer from the NHDEP to the NHDES, a potentially better fit, and remains in the Environmental Commission in VT. The CRJC is currently looking for a planner to interact with the subcommittees. The Connecticut River Byways will have separated from the CRJC and will operate as an independent entity. Glen provided a list of things that the CRJC will do and what the subcommittees can do to move forward. Ideally two CRJC commissioners will attend each subcommittee meeting and the chairs of the subcommittees will attend the six CRJC meetings held each year.

John S reported briefly on the Lakes Region. Jim D asked what comments the Upper Valley Subcommittee had. Bill G noted that it would be helpful if the commissioners could suggest how they would like us to present the CRJC to be presented to the town selectboards. Maybe a couple of paragraphs to present to the towns. Bill suggested that the committee could serve as a buttress to the VT local watershed committees, town boards, and NVPA planners. He also noted that some of the soil conservation districts may have garnered a little money from the information in the watershed plans. Jan E pointed out that we comment, we do not enforce.

Glen noted that the CRJC can help get grant funding and will do its best to help, but noted that they are still a bit concerned about this year. He also pointed out that the commissioners are not paid. Glen then suggested that we should try to get the towns to contribute to the funding of the subcommittee. Rick W asked who would manage the money so collected. Glen responded that the CRJC would set up and account.

Glen noted that Cleve Kapala, TransCanada commissioner, could speak to us about TransCanada at a future meeting.



a local subcommittee of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Jim D asked about some of the recommendations in the Water Resources Plan.

Glen spoke about at length about floodplain development, that it is a bad idea to build in the floodplain and that it is the value of agriculture that keeps these areas undeveloped. Glen distributed to those present examples of flood hazard regulations and model ordinance documents for NH and VT. Deb N noted that a challenge to a development on the floodplain in Concord and as a result the structure may have to be removed. Deb pointed out that it is difficult to get the government to listen. Glen concurred and noted that Haverhill has only nominal floodplain ordinance for insurance purposes. Bill pointed out that the 1980s Barnett town plan noted that after about a decade of NE Regional Planning Commission tended to eliminate provisions that governed a natural area because of difficulties in setting rules to protect areas rather than buildings.

Glen suggested that each subcommittee pick a town to explore a real floodplain hazard ordinance. John S pointed out that a real roadblock is accuracy in the FERC mapping, that it cannot be used reliably and it trips people up who try to use the information. John noted that flyovers are planned to improve the FERC mapping. New techniques will allow for the mapping of topography and provide more accurate delineation of floodplains. Bill pointed out that FERC maps are often off by 5-6 feet. P.J. B pointed out that Ken Alton and other TransCanada folk gave a presentation on the new flood emergency maps. Jim suggested that the insurance industry is a good place to look to for actual/reliable floodplain data.

Permit Reviews Rick reported that three (3) permit applications were reviewed by the representatives from the effected towns and that no comment was required. Glen presented a request for information for the proposed I93 bridge project. Bill pointed out that the bridge across the Passumpsuc River in Barnet required only a public presentation. Followed general discussion on the request and what has happened in the area since the dam and impoundment, including the drowning of the original crossing and the town of Waterford. It was decided that a response would be sent by mid January, 2011.

Other Jan spoke on the proposed Highland Croft property quarry and development and provided a handout. Jan noted that nitrates resulting from the explosives would be diluted to a degree upon reaching the aquifer by the relative to the volume of water present, He also described the problem of suspended solids in surface water resulting from the quarrying activities, noting that special care would be required to ensure that pollution and runoff were controlled. Glen noted that monitoring wells were needed. Bill pointed out that there would typically be a ring of monitoring wells. Jim called for more stringent and more frequent monitoring of wells than that proposed. Deb stated the need to write a letter expressing the concerns of the Riverbend Subcommittee. Jim volunteered to write the letter to be reviewed by the group.

Rick mentioned he had attended in October the ACT presentation Connecticut Valley Agriculture Discussion- Farmland and Floodplain Conservation Initiative. And that he had attended an on site review and discussion and subsequent email interaction of the Fifteen Mile Falls Fisheries Mitigation Velocity Refuge project.