

Mount Ascutney River Subcommittee January 24, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Subcommittee Members Present: Cordie Merritt, Hartland; Ted Moynihan, Plainfield; and Michael Meeks, Cornish
CRJC Staff: Rachel Ruppel and Victoria Davis, UVLSRPC
Others: John Broker-Campbell, Southern Windsor Regional Planning District and Bernie Folta of Claremont

The meeting was called to order at a little after 7:00 pm at the Pizza Chef in Windsor, VT. As there was not a quorum, there was no vote on the previous meeting's minutes. There was discussion about the Subcommittee's bylaws regarding a quorum and the minimum number of six members required to vote on minutes. Vickie and Rachel will make sure the bylaws are legally appropriate.

Summary of CRJC Past and Current Status

Rachel Ruppel gave a summary of past events related to CRJC since the last meeting in February 2011. In the late spring of 2010, CRJC financial problems became apparent and Adair Mulligan was laid off, leaving no staffing. As noted at the February 2011 meeting by Tom Kennedy, a CRJC Commissioner, CRJC's current finances are provided by the States of New Hampshire and Vermont, totaling about \$66,000 each year. CRJC has contracted with the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) for one year (ending June 30, 2012) to provide administrative services including working with the Mount Ascutney River Subcommittee. It is anticipated that CRJC will continue contracting for services for the next three to five years.

Rachel stated that because the Connecticut River Watershed is so large between Quebec and Massachusetts, the administration of the Subcommittee Regions of New Hampshire and Vermont are being shared. The two northern most regions (Headwaters and Riverbend) will be administered by the North Country Council, a New Hampshire regional planning commission; the two central regions (Upper Valley and Mount Ascutney) will be administered by the UVLSRPC, and the southern region (Wantastiquet) will be administered by the Windham Regional Commission, a Vermont regional planning commission.

The CRJC Commissioners are currently working on a strategic plan. They are reviewing the existing plan of 2008-2013 which provided for four full-time staff, and the Commissioners are expected to make the strategic plan "leaner" and more concise. They will be reviewing what has been accomplished by the organization and where to go from here.

The River Corridor Management Plan from 1997 has been partially updated with two chapter updates: Recreation and Water Resources. Each of these two chapters provides a Riverwide Overview and a separate plan for each region. The regional recreation plans have never been published; and there needs to be an effort to get them printed and in circulation.

Each subcommittee should review the remaining chapters of the Connecticut River Corridor Management Plan to determine what was recommended and what was actually accomplished. Updated chapters should reflect what still needs to be done as well as new issues that have arisen, in particular due to the effects of Hurricane Irene flooding.

Ted Moynihan suggested that the updates are more event-driven from the aspect of the subcommittees, and the primary work of the updates should be handled by the Commissioners with input from the subcommittees. He stated the people coming to the subcommittee meetings typically come for specific interests such as fishing, dam licensure, or permit reviews.

Rachel stated the CRJC website will be updated and made more accessible, including the use of more maps.

Vermont Recovery from Hurricane Irene

John Broker-Campbell provided a summary of the recovery from the August 28, 2011 flooding in Vermont. He provided a map showing an incredible number of local roads in his district that had been damaged during the floods. Only one road remains to be brought up to standard at this point. He also provided a rainfall graph for August 27-28. He stated the biggest problem now is debris left by the flood waters: propane tanks, appliances, dirt, trees.... FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers had difficulty determining which agency will pay for debris removal and management. Another issue is the emergency work done in the stream channels. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources was overwhelmed as they only had three inspectors at the time. Much private reclamation work was done inappropriately and without permits. It will be up to the towns to make sure that culvert replacement include sizing to handle future storms.

Ted Moynihan inquired if any fish studies had been performed since the flooding. John responded that no studies have been done as yet, and there had been much fish kill due to the water contaminants such as raw sewage, transformers, and sediment. Some fish ladders were damaged. Mike Meeks suggested that an anecdotal water quality study be done by the subcommittee.

Other Business:

Cordie said the Ottaquechee Natural Resources Conservation Service is seeking a grant to develop a river flow model for educational purposes. She suggested the Subcommittee support the request if asked.

Cordie suggested that Judy Howland of Hartland might be interested in being on the Subcommittee. Rachel said a letter would be sent to Hartland asking if they would be willing to nominate Judy to the Subcommittee. Suggestions were made to reach out to the Conservation Commissions for members. John stated Windsor does not have a Conservation Commission, but they have the Paradise Park Commission. Mike Meeks said he would ask the Cornish Selectboard for possible nomination ideas. Bernie Folta offered to talk with the Claremont

mayor. Rachel provided a letter to obtain town nominations which included the purpose of the CRJC and subcommittees.

The Subcommittee decided to meet next in April after town meetings and giving Rachel and Vickie a chance to round up more members. It will be determined then how frequently to meet.

Respectfully Submitted by
Victoria Davis
Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission
As CRJC staff