



Minutes of the Steering Committee
St. Barnabas Church, Norwich, Vt.
October 19, 2009

Attending: Bev Major (chair), George Watkins, Nancy Franklin, Joe Sampson, Cleve Kapala, Cheston Newbold, John Lawe, David Deen, Peter Gregory, Hank Swan, Sharon Francis, Rebecca Brown, Adair Mulligan.

1. Bylaw discussion. Beverly, as CRJC president, should chair all steering committee meetings, according to the bylaws. The group decided that minutes of the steering committee will be kept and approved. The agenda for the steering committee will be sent to all commissioners, who may opt out of receiving them if they choose. The draft minutes will be posted on the Web site. Minutes may be sent for approval electronically. Peter, Nancy, and Bev will review the Bylaws, with the intent of making a recommendation to the full commissions for changing the duties of the steering committee to reflect that it may take action in lieu of the commissions between full meetings. A public comment time will be added to the end of the agenda for full CRJC meetings, and the chair has the option of calling on others during the meetings.

2. River projects. Sharon reported that the EDA has approved the contract for the **Colebrook Business Park**. An engineer has been selected and that contract also needs EDA approval. Rebecca showed video and photos of the **Mohawk project**, where the log jams were installed last week.

Ammonoosuc River project: The technical advisory committee met September 22 and reviewed eight potential sites from John Field's assessment. The group settled on a site in Lisbon along Route 302, a privately owned field the school uses as a soccer field. The town has been trying to address erosion at this site for some years. There are floodplain restoration and aquatic habitat restoration possibilities upstream. A public presentation was held the same evening in Littleton, with about 60 attending. Meetings are scheduled in the individual towns this month and next, with select and planning boards, and conservation commissions. Field will present his findings, and towns will be encouraged to include these in their planning. The Ammonoosuc River Local Advisory Committee will also incorporate them in its river management plan. Timing for follow up funding is challenging because bad weather delayed the field work this summer. NH DES has told us to wait a year to apply again, to finish Colebrook and Mohawk work, and focus on landowner contact in Lisbon. A pre-application to MEF got feedback also questioning whether we were ready to move ahead on engineering, and suggesting that we focus on landowner/town relations for project development. Hank recalled that Ray Burton was involved in a river straightening project north of where 302 crosses the river, to prevent ice jams, and suggests touching base with him.

Cleve Kapala said that MEF is looking at meander belts issues, realizing that not all erosion can be stopped and that the fund wants to target its efforts based on scientific assessment. Projects seeking to restore a natural river from an altered river will have appeal. AMC has done a first level analysis of the river, and will do phase 2 by end of the year. David Deen said the fund will change to an RFP basis, with internally held dollar amount of what will be spent. GIS layers of wildlife and aquatic habitat will help select critical areas, geographically, habitat, and spatially. A grassroots emphasis will also continue, separately. Adair asked whether a requirement to conserve an entire meander belt width would apply on the mainstem, where protection of natural valley flood storage is so critical, but the valley is so wide that it is not realistic to expect to be able to conserve an entire belt with in one project or with one landowner. Sharon asked how CRJC could become engaged in discussion of MEF's revised criteria. Cleve and David responded that Nat Tripp is CRJC's liaison on the committee.

3. Water Resources Plan update. Two LRS plans have been printed; two are being prepared for the printer, and the last is being designed. All will be complete soon. Distribution is targeted to each region. Adair presented the schedule for the rest of the fall meetings. Commissioner presence at these meetings is very beneficial. Cheston suggested that commissioners could also show the presentation themselves – it is available on the commissions' laptop computer or on a CD, and a short orientation by Adair would set them right up. The presentations are designed to be essentially self-narrating.

4. Byway Signs. Sharon explained that Peter Gregory and Chuck Wise on his staff have kept the process going and we are soon to sign a procurement contract for the wayfinding signs (these go in the towns, pointing to particular destinations). A subcontractor will be in each town to check signs on delivery and installation.

5. Atlas Presentations. A powerpoint presentation is available for use by commissioners and staff. The presentations may be customized for various regions. Adair has done the presentation in Lyme, and Sharon is scheduled in Westmoreland, and Rebecca has been asked to do one in Littleton, and Adair has been asked to make a presentation on this and other CRJC activities at Dartmouth's ILEAD program. David has added the Atlas to his presentation on the river. Sharon would like us to work with the two state humanities councils for presentations.

6. Governors' Tour. The tour Oct. 7 in northern NH and VT, with Ray Burton, emphasized economic downturn and development, and Sharon said our projects were reviewed and highlighted also. Adair showed photos from the tour. Sharon spoke with Gov. Douglas, who did not know ANR had dropped our funding 36 percent. She asked him to reconsider, given that NH has decreased our funding only 5 percent. David suggested that a follow up letter to the governor should cc the heads of the legislative committees, or we could send separate letter to them, and/or a letter to the ANR secretary who has some spending discretion.

7. Other Business. Peter said that he, Steve Long, Nancy, and George have been working on personnel policy changes. Sharon said that Brenda is doing well in learning the operations, and she expects Brenda will pick up more of the financial record keeping. The accountant has been delayed on finishing the September financial statement. There was a discussion of the financial management, with Peter questioning the timeliness of financial reports, and the handling of time sheets in particular. Cleve agreed we need to be more transparent, and that the board should support any work. Sharon might need to learn Excel or other tools. Sharon explained that with Barbara's illness and death, she had to fill in as office manager all summer – in addition to her ED work. She knows our financial status, and there are no issues for commissioner concern, other than the delays of some invoices due to the backup of office work.

8. Approval of September 11, 2009 minutes. George Watkins motion, Joe Sampson second. Unanimous.