



CRJC Mount Ascutney Local River Subcommittee

Tuesday, January 10, 2017

Windsor Welcome Center

3 Railroad Ave, Windsor Vermont

Minutes

Present:

Colleen O'Neill, Cornish

Judy Howland, Hartland

Matthew Magnifico, Windsor

Nancy Heatley, Weathersfield

Bill Manner, Springfield

Thomas Hernon, Rockingham

Margaret Perry, Rockingham

Tara Bamford, staff

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:08 by Nancy Heatley, Chair.
2. Minutes of November 15, 2016 were approved as presented by motion of Magnifico/Howland.
3. Permit Reviews - The application of the City of Claremont to replace leaded drinking water lines was discussed. There was discussion about the need for projects like this, and that there has been a lot of deferred maintenance associated with most of our public utilities due to voter pressure to keep costs down instead of spending money on maintenance and upgrades on an ongoing basis. It was assumed that precautions will be taken as appropriate to ensure lead does not get into the drinking water supply while the pipes are being replaced. There were no concerns about impacts on the River. Tara was asked to convey this to NHDES.
4. TransCanada relicensing Preliminary Licensing Proposal (PLP) - Discussion points included:
 - Voluntary vs. permit-required ramping rates
 - Pros and cons of run of the river
 - Need for mitigation for impacted properties
 - Need for stakeholder group being organized by CRWC reaching out to new dam owners
 - Benefits of casting a big net to engage stakeholders, different tactics/avenues, e.g., landowners and recreation interests
 - Benefits of town meeting article like Charlestown and Lyme examples

It was suggested that a coalition of towns voting on the warrant article would get decision-makers' attention. By consensus, everyone agreed to take it to their towns. It was agreed that some might mention both Wilder and Bellows Falls dams, and others might only feel they are impacted by one or the other. Methods for getting something on the warrant for town meeting were discussed such as

asking the selectboard or collecting signatures. In some cases it was suggested the conservation commission could recommend it to the selectboard. By consensus it was agreed there should be a letter from the Mt Ascutney Subcommittee to selectboards recommending the article. Margaret noted that she can attest to the need as she has lost acres to erosion. Colleen offered to reach out to Plainfield so all Mt Ascutney Subcommittee towns would be covered. Nancy offered to draft the letter to all of the towns and include a template along with the Lyme and Charlestown examples. The letter will be emailed to selectboards with a cc to Subcommittee members. Tara was asked to share the letter with the Upper Valley and Wantastiquet Subcommittee members as well, and to convey to CRJC's FERC work group that the Subcommittee supports the mitigation fund and modification of dam operations to reduce impacts.

5. The Final Draft of the Conte Refuge plan was discussed. The consensus was that it is discouraging that it looks pretty much the same as the draft, and that it wouldn't be of any value to comment again.
6. The draft Weathersfield Town Plan water resources elements were discussed. It was recommended that stronger language be included on the need for vegetated buffers, including reestablishing vegetated buffers and revegetating buffers where stripped. It was agreed that the corridor plan provides a good foundation and source document for that recommendation.

It was agreed that there is a need for more education and data on drinking water quality. Rockingham did a study that can provide a good model using state well water data.

There was a question about whether or not Vermont town plans still need to be updated every 5 years. Tara said she thought it had been changed and offered to look into it.

7. Updates- Nancy updated the group on her participation in the basin plan through her representation of CRJC on S. Windsor RPC's Clean Water Advisory Committee (CWAC). She asked for input on projects by mid-March from towns and NGOs. Nancy has received information on about 8 projects. She has met with town officials. Several projects include culverts and road erosion, another is access to the river in Perkinsville. The CWAC will prioritize projects for the basin plan from this list.
8. Other business - Colleen announced that she bought the Cornish General Store and will be working on reopening that community's focal point. She was also thanked profusely for the wonderful cookies.
9. It was agreed to move the next meeting date from March 14 to March 21 to avoid a conflict with town meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Minutes respectfully provided by Tara Bamford.