

Mount Ascutney River Subcommittee January 16, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Subcommittee Members Present: Kelly Stettner & Bill Manners, Springfield; Gil Whittemore & Nancy Heatley, Weathersfield; Judy Howland, Hartland; and Dorée Russell, Claremont.

CRJC Staff: Victoria Davis, UVLSRPC

Others: John Broker-Campbell, SWCRPC

Subcommittee Members Absent: Elise Angelillo & Ted Moynihan, Plainfield; Michael Meeks, Cornish; Cordie Merritt, Hartland; Barbara Rhoad, Windsor; Kurt Staudter, Springfield; Tom Hernon & Margaret Perry, Rockingham.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm at the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission in Ascutney, VT. Since four of the eight participating communities were represented, there was a quorum.

- 1. Approval of Minutes:** Judy made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 28, 2012 meeting. Nancy seconded the motion, Dorée and Gil abstained as they had not attended that meeting. There was unanimous agreement by the remainder of members in favor of the motion.
- 2. Permit Application/Proposed Work Review:** The VT Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) provided documentation about a draft discharge permit and application for non-contact cooling water from a hydroelectric facility named the Ottaquechee Hydro Company, Inc. at 46 Mill Street in North Hartland and apparently owned by Enel Green Power in Andover, MA. The public comment period ends on January 30, 2013. Marie Caduto had pointed out in an e-mail that this is a new non-point discharge at this facility. The "Draft Discharge Permit" states that, "This is a new permit." An undated letter (stamped received by WsMD) from an engineering consultant for Enel Green Power states the discharge is existing.

The Subcommittee discussed this permit application wondering why the facility would need discharge if it did not have discharge prior to this permit application. Vickie reported that she had inquired by e-mail when she contacted Carol Carpenter at VT ANR. She did not respond to the inquiry.

The Subcommittee also discussed that the permit applications and accompanying documentation does not come to them in a timely manner. Vickie had researched this earlier, and the VT ANR stated this documentation is sent out at the same time to all concerned parties. The Subcommittee felt this overall time table for the State was not timely enough for thoughtful review.

Gil made a motion that Kelly and Vickie write a letter to VT ANR to inquire why the Ottaquechee facility now needs to have discharge into the river since it is not clear in the documentation. He added to the motion that Kelly and Vickie write a separate properly researched letter to VT ANR to request that draft permit information be provided to concerned parties more quickly. Judy seconded the motion, and unanimous agreement followed.

- 3. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and TransCanada Grants:** John provided the Subcommittee with an update on the FERC meetings that have been held at the regional planning commission offices. He stated that concerns of the Subcommittee were being discussed at the meetings. Nancy suggested asking TransCanada for assistance to meet recommendations in the draft Recreation Plan such as signs at the boat launches. John pointed out that TransCanada has a grant program, and the Subcommittee could apply for funding. Kelly suggested a kiosk and boat launch at Hoyt's Landing would be a good project. A gravel filter could cleanse the water before reentry into the river, and water could be pumped from the water for washing the boats. Vickie suggested there should be a study to evaluate the effectiveness of vinegar for cleaning boats instead of the recommended bleach. Vickie will look into the grant program.

John stated that Christine Walker, Director for the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission had volunteered to coordinate requests from towns on the NH side of the river for studies to be completed by TransCanada under the FERC.

Dorée made a motion to allow Kelly to submit a TransCanada grant application relative to the above suggestions and with e-mail consultation with the Subcommittee if there is a deadline prior to the next meeting. Gil seconded the motion, and unanimous agreement followed.

- 4. Septic System Workshop:** Vickie reported that she had contacted the Granite State Designers and Installers Association about providing a workshop on septic system design and maintenance. She was told that they would be glad to do a workshop, and they will request volunteer speakers from their Board at the next meeting this January. It was the consensus of the Subcommittee to pursue hosting this workshop. Vickie will keep the Subcommittee posted.

The Subcommittee discussed various ways to inform the public about the workshop when a date is set including GIS property owner generation, local e-mail lists, zoning administrators, town web sites, articles in newspapers, and local radio and TV stations. It was also suggested that a local TV station might tape the workshop for future playing. It could also be a YouTube video for the CRJC web site.

- 5. 2008 Recreation Plan Update:** The updated draft was not sent around to the Subcommittee members so it will go out shortly. Final comments are requested by the end of January. Vickie reported that the State of NH Recreation Plan is due to be available sometime this month so she will make the relevant changes after that time. The Subcommittee discussed that they want to make sure there are definitive recommendations that can be achieved and not just "pie in the sky" recommendations. Vickie suggested using a prioritization process similar to that used in hazard mitigation plans to determine which recommendations can be "knocked out" quickly and which ones need more time or funding. Gil suggested the priorities be reviewed each year. Vickie will provide a sample prioritization sheet to Subcommittee.

It was suggested that the Mount Ascutney Subcommittee circulate their draft Recreation Plan to the other four Subcommittees along the river. Vickie responded that Rachel Ruppel at the UVLSRPC is responsible for ensuring that the Subcommittee plans have the same factual data,

and she may not want to divert other subcommittees from their own work as they may not be as far along as the Mount Ascutney Subcommittee.

6. **Goals for Upcoming Year for CRJC Budget:** The Subcommittee discussed that their greatest concern is the longevity of the organization. The Subcommittee goals do not currently require a lot of money except support staff time, but they need to know if CRJC will continue to be funded by the Vermont and New Hampshire. They would also like to know if grants have been found. Kelly will reiterate this in any upcoming conference calls with CRJC Board members.
7. **Other Business:** Nancy suggested that the Subcommittee develop its own contact database to engender greater involvement in river issues and events. She said she would be glad to work on this database. The Subcommittee inquired if they could have access to the contacts for the CRJC newsletter. Vickie will check to see if this information can be provided. Gil suggested having the Subcommittee members make a list of their known relevant contacts. The Subcommittee was in consensus to move forward with this item.

Next meeting: The Subcommittee determined to have regular meetings on the third Wednesday of every other month at 7:00 pm at the Southern Windsor Regional Planning Commission in Ascutney when possible.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 20, 2013. The Subcommittee will discuss what “chapter” of the River Corridor Management Plan should be updated next after the Recreation “chapter” is completed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

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

Tentative Agenda for March 20

Review Recreation Plan “chapter” and finalize draft for publication
Decide which “chapter” should be updated next
FERC meetings update
Septic System workshop
Publications to be available at BRAT Herrick’s Cove Wildlife Festival table
Prioritize goals included in the Recreation Plan