



Minutes

Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Executive Committee Meeting

CRJC Office, Lebanon, NH

Monday, October 15, 2012, 2:00 – 3:55 pm

Attendance:

Commissioners: Rebecca Brown, Chris Company, Bob Christie, Gayle Ottmann, Mary Sloat, Brendan Whittaker. Staff: Patricia Crocker, Rachel Ruppel

Vice Chair Chris Company called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

Consent Agenda

Rachel Ruppel introduced the consent agenda and explained its use for in moving non-controversial items that do not warrant full board discussion such as previously distributed meeting minutes. The whole consent agenda is moved and seconded.

There were three items on the consent agenda for the meeting: Approval of 8/20/2012 Executive Committee Minutes, review of the September staff progress report and October work plan, and previously discussed letter of support for LiDAR acquisition in NH.

Mary Sloat moved and Gayle Ottmann seconded a motion to move and approve the entire consent agenda. *Vote: Unanimous.*

Meeting Schedule

Rachel Ruppel noted that the two meeting dates in January and February 2013 fall on federal holidays. Mary Sloat suggested that these be moved to the Tuesdays following the federal holiday. The members agreed by consensus to that recommendation.

Chair Rebecca Brown arrived at 2:17pm and assumed the chair.

September Financial Report

Yutian Zhang presented the monthly financial report. From a financial point of view CRJC is stable and has a fund balance. The auditors are now working on the FY 12 year-end financial report.



Bob Christie raised concern about the on-going need to raise funds through investigating grants available. Discussion followed about seeking grant funding. This task is explicit in the work plan, but CRJC needs to develop a clear concept about what role will most effectively support the mission. Culvert inventory grant was not successful. Another source for that work is on hold because of re-programming at FEMA. A planning session to focus on this topic has been suggested so that the CRJC can identify the type of projects it would like to fund. Rebecca Brown suggests that the Commissioners need to have that discussion about where CRJC wants to go from here and would like to have a discussion with the EC at its December meeting. Chris Campany also suggested that it would be most timely to have this discussion following the elections in November.

Bob Christie moved and Brendan Whittaker seconded a motion to approve the financial report as presented. *Vote: Unanimous.*

Commissioner Town Visits

Ten towns don't have representation on the CRJC Subcommittees. Three of the ten towns are already covered by volunteers. Seven towns remain to identify which commissioners may cover those. [See Attached List] The three-fold goals for the Commissioners' outreach are a provision of a status of CRJC, presentation of the strategic plan, and a request that the towns appoint a representative to their local river subcommittee.

There are four open commission positions in Vermont and three in NH. Discussion of the interest/expertise area that would be helpful followed. Chris Campany suggested that someone with a fisheries background would be a good addition. Gayle Ottmann pointed out that neither state had someone with an agricultural background serving. Gayle Ottmann suggested the individual that runs 'River Excitement' John Marshall might be a good choice, as was a member from Lower Cohase Chamber of Commerce. Chair Brown noted that staff was preparing a press release on the new officers and commissioners and that might spark interest from others.



CRJC Involvement in FERC Dam Relicensing

CRJC Involvement in the FERC relicensing process was reviewed. Discussion followed about who might be best suited and have an interest in this to specifically work on this. Various individuals and their backgrounds were discussed. For an October 17th stakeholders' meeting, Rebecca Brown suggested that Rachel Ruppel speak to Jim McClammer to determine his interest along with Bev Major and David Deen. It was thought that one spokesperson would be best to represent the CRJC position. Various individuals will be contacted to determine their interest or to obtain suggestions for a person to serve in this role.

Antioch Intern

Discussion followed on the pros and cons of participating in the Antioch Internship Program. Antioch Environmental Science Grad students are required to do two internships. Chris Campany suggested that staff move forward with interviewing an intern, but that they carefully check references outside the school and find the individual that is most suitable and can be most productive on the job. The travel stipend for mileage reimbursement was considered. A question arose about the workers comp and other insurance implications of having an intern. A stipend of up to \$800 could be made available for expenses such as mileage reimbursement. Mary Sloat moved that the expenditure of the stipend up to \$800 be authorized as long as there are no organizational liability issues for CRJC and that the individual has successfully completed all the background checks. Gayle Ottmann seconded the motion.

Vote: to approve unanimous.

Policy on Commission Involvement in Local Committee Issues

Involvement in Local issues by CRJC was reviewed. The 1999 draft policy was used as a baseline for discussion. Gayle Ottman suggested that CRJC should act in an advisory role and provide information on various sides of an issue and present them for discussion. Mary Sloat suggested that the important role was to get the facts out to the public on various issues. Bob Christie suggested that CRJC in its advisory role could take a position once they have studied an issue.



Rebecca Brown stated that CRJC can convene educational and informational events, but must judiciously take a stand on issues on cases where it clearly there has or will be an impact on the river.

CRJC should always be a source of information that is fact-based, but should be free to point out the consequences of certain activities to the health of the river. The river management plans should be kept lively by using them and skillfully playing and advisory role that preserves the integrity of the CRJC. Rebecca Brown also noted that the role of convener and source of educational information is an important role that is fundable by other organizations. The CRJC role as conveners of educational forums could be a natural role.

An example of a local issue is the potential for moving tar sands through an existing pipeline in the river's watershed. Bob Ball is currently monitoring this issue and the consensus is to monitor issues until it becomes clear that convening a forum on an issue would be beneficial. Another significant issue is the dairy farms along the river and this is a significant land use issue. Global warming and challenging storms and invasive species were also cited as topics appropriate for educational events.

Other Business

Brendan Whittaker asked that a subject be added to the agenda for the next full commission meeting. He serves on a board that insures municipalities and they discussed the complexity of insuring inter-state cooperation in river rescue activity. An event occurred in VT several years ago and the NH rescue came to assist. The victim drowned in NH's rescue attempt. The NH rescue squad was covered by a different state sovereign immunity protection than Vermont. The liability protection was more favorable to the victim on the VT side of the river and thus that claim was significant on the Vermont squad. There is no action to be taking, but CRJC might be a forum to consult an expert on risk management for communities on the river. Concern was voiced that this was beyond CRJC's realm, but might try to determine whether there is something similar to the VT RPC emergency management group in NH that might discuss how this matter has an impact on river recreational activities in both states.

Bob Christie opened a discussion about ways to avoid excessive travel to meetings. He would like to hear when this be addressed. Staff explained that NH law still requires that a quorum be physically present in the same room. The Executive Committee discussed the possibility



for amending the NH open meeting law, recognizing is not something that is easily modified. This topic will be revisited at a later meeting.

Adjournment

Gayle Ottmann moved and Bob Christie seconded a motion to adjourn at 3:54 pm.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled for December 17 from 2:00-3:30pm at CRJC offices in Lebanon, NH.

Minutes Pending Approval on 12/17/2012.

DRAFT



Attachment

Strategy for Reconnecting with Riverfront Towns

Who: CRJC Commissioners with Local River Subcommittee members (if interested)

What: Meet with Boards of Selectmen in riverfront towns

When: October and November 2012, to be continued over time

Why: To reconnect with riverfront towns and engage them as partners in CRJC's work, specifically:

- 1) To provide an update on CRJC's activities and share CRJC's strategic plan and annual report;
- 2) To better understand the town's concerns about the river and watershed;
- 3) To ask about town concerns RE: dam relicensing of Wilder, Bellows Falls and Vernon Dams;
- 4) To encourage active participation in the Local River Subcommittee.

How: Riverfront towns with no current representation on the Local River Subcommittees will be top priority for outreach this fall. CRJC's staff consultant will provide talking points and printed materials for distribution. CRJC Commissioners will coordinate with the Subcommittee Chair and will contact the Town Board of Selectmen to request to be placed on the meeting agenda.

- Wantastiquet Region –
 - Walpole, NH – Donna Drouin
 - Hinsdale, NH – Bev Major or Bob Harcke?
 - Vernon, VT – have recruited new member Stephen Skibniowsky – Chris Campany?
- Mount Ascutney Region –
 - Claremont, NH – new Subcommittee member Doree Russell – Jim McClammer
 - Charlestown, NH – wait for Jim McClammer to be appointed
- Upper Valley Region – Norwich, VT – Tara Bamford
- Riverbend Region – Ryegate, VT – Alison Low
- Headwaters Region –
 - Clarksville, NH – ask Brendan Prusik
 - Lemington, VT – potential member introduced by Bill Schomburg
 - Brunswick, VT – Brendan Whittaker – give him the paperwork
 - Groveton, NH – Bob Ball, Brendan Prusik
 - Lancaster, NH – Bob Ball