

Upper Valley Subcommittee
of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions
Monday – September 19, 2016
Latham Library, Thetford Vermont
Draft Minutes

Present

Jim Kennedy, Hanover
Linda Matteson, Thetford
Melissa Horwitz, Norwich
Carl Schmidt, Orford
Chris Balch, Orford
Alice Creagh, Hanover
John Mudge, Lyme
Tara Bamford, staff
Peter Fisher, guest
Nick Fiore, guest

1. Chairman Kennedy called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and introductions were made.
2. The minutes of August 15, 2016 were approved by all by motion of Mudge/Creagh with the addition of "woodchips" before berm in item #5 describing the Wilson's Landing project.

3. Permit Reviews

Jim reported the application for the **Fisher** project in Orford had gone to the town clerk. He got the plans later but no application. The conservation commission did receive the application. He and Carl went to the site on Friday. They looked at the site and the previously permitted dock. They went back on Sunday with Christine to follow up on the issue with the neighboring property to see, e.g., if the work on one property would be likely to affect the other. They observed big undercutting, gullying and bank failure upstream of the Fisher property on the Wendy Adams property. No new use is proposed, just stabilization, just upriver from the stairs and seasonal dock. It was reported that Wendy is concerned that her erosion will impact the Fisher project. She has a vegetated buffer. Carl said that according to Wendy the previous owners of the Fisher property cut trees and filled a gully with rocks and topped with soil. Peter Fisher reported that he met with DES staff on-site for a preapplication meeting and they recommended using bushes rather than trees because the root systems are more extensive relative to the plant. Nick Fiore from Engineering Ventures discussed the challenges of using a large woody mass and live staking at the bottom given the fluctuating water levels. He's planning to lay the wood flat on the bank so it will always be in contact with the water, put stones at the end and soil anchors, and live staking at the top. He plans to make the bank less steep as well. Biodegradable netting will be used. Jim asked that they check with NH Fish & Game to make sure it is the correct mesh because amphibians get caught in some of it. There was discussion of permitting requirements for working 10 ft into the river vs 2 ft re

navigation. Members asked how they would access the site. Nick explained that they planned to cut 3 ramps to get down. Jim questioned how live staking was going to be successful in a steep sandy bank. Nick replied that their landscape architect was not worried about it. Jim asked if they had considered waddles, e.g., socks with willow bundles like was done at Kmart. Jim suggested using dormant alders when live staking. Jim said he wants to wait to hear from DES before commenting. He'll send a draft after he hears from DES. Craig Rennie will be the DES reviewer. John suggested the applicants read the TransCanada erosion studies to learn more about the bank erosion in the area. He went on to explain that stabilization has not worked and gave the Stocking Farm as an example of failed stabilization. Jim suggested taking the bank down to a 3:1 slope and putting a strong stone toe like Lyme did across from the North Thetford boat launch. A slope of 2:1 had been tried and failed. He went on to explain that it is essential to key in both ends with rip-rap as NRCS recommended.

The **Town of Lyme** has applied for a wetlands permit for riverbank stabilization just above the Hanover town line where River Road is dirt. Jim described the project saying they are proposing to strip vegetation that may be helping to hold the slope and then stabilize the bank with stone. At the previous project just below that they only put down millet and netting. There are no large pines involved that might be important nesting sites for bald eagles. They are proposing a small amount of shrubs on top. Jim does not feel that the river is endangering the roadway as it is far from the road edge at a wide place on the road with a pull-off. He would like to see alders in soil in gaps in the rip-rap. Linda made a motion to not support the project as proposed. There was discussion about DES not really requiring assessment of alternatives like the regs call for. Jim would like to see woody masses to break up the shoreline. Alice seconded the motion. There was consensus that the Subcommittee would like to see a more natural approach creating a varied vegetative buffer. All voted aye with John abstaining.

A shoreland application was received for a project on **East Wilder Road** near the boat launch involving replacement of a garage, an addition, and a new septic system. Jim said he thought it was ok as long as it conforms to the shoreland act. It was so voted by all by motion of Schmidt/Matteson.

4. TransCanada's FERC relicensing for Wilder Dam was discussed. By motion of Kennedy/Creagh it was voted by all to ask Tara to draft a letter to circulate for comment incorporating the main points in the drafts submitted by John and Katie. John reminded the group that the baseline erosion study #1 referenced older studies which were preGPS and Lydar and based on aerial photos with poor resolution compared to today. There was discussion of the water levels most years fluctuating more than the 2 feet that the studies are based on.

John reported that Princeton Hydro was hired by CRWC with assistance from CRJC to do a peer review but that report is not yet available. They met with the stakeholders and were very critical of John Field's methods calling them "unorthodox." Jim reminded the group that the dams are just one cause of the bank erosion.

5. The annual election of chair and vice chair was held. John was reelected Chair by all by

motion of Mudge/Creagh and John Mudge Vice Chair by motion of Kennedy/Matteson.

6. Future meetings were discussed. Jim suggested joint meetings with other subcommittees, and speakers such as John Field, Normandeau, NH Fish & Game and Vt Fish & Wildlife. Topics suggested were eagles, riparian buffers, erosion netting, fishing, and other aquatic habitat topics. Jim mentioned that he saw swallows all up and down the Fisher site; they need a vertical bank and benefit from an overhang. Ron Rhodes from CRWC was also suggested as a speaker.
7. Updates and other business
8. The next meeting was scheduled for November 14 at 7:00. Tara agreed to find a location that would work for a program.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tara Bamford.