

CRJC Upper Valley Subcommittee
February 20, 2017
Lyme Town Office

Minutes

Present:

Jim Kennedy, Hanover
Sue Mackenzie, Lyme
John Mudge, Lyme
Linda Matteson, Thetford
Bartlett Leber, Norwich
Chris Bunten, Orford
Carl Schmidt, Orford

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kennedy at 7:05 PM.
2. The minutes of January 23, 2017 were approved as corrected by motion of Mudge/Schmidt.
3. No permits were received for review.
4. The FERC relicensing process for the TransCanada dams was discussed. It was not clear if there will be additional points in the process with a formal comment period. It is expected that there will be an opportunity to comment on the draft state water quality permits.

Jim provided a draft of comments on the Preliminary Licensing Proposal (PLP), incorporating comments on the underlying studies. It was agreed that some points to make on the erosion studies included: 1. the effects of wave action, i.e. waves on exposed bank (when drawn down) cause more erosion, 2. normal fluctuation is more than the level they seem to use as a reference point, 3. the method for coming up with the median is not meaningful, 4. the drawdown leaves an ice shelf that protects the bank but then can rip away dirt. Jim noted that 2.0 ft/sec is considered the threshold for erosion and it is supposedly never more than that in normal project operations. Now at the Wilder Dam the range is 381.5 to 384.5 and they typically operate between 382 and 384. The reports don't provide data on the number and frequency of drawdowns in winter and spring. John would like to see them limit the dam to 382 feet and vegetate the resulting buffers. Jim pointed out that there may be negative effects of that as well. The consensus was to ask for a study of lowering the maximum to 382. The Subcommittee disagrees with the position that there is no significant erosion during normal project operations – normal project operations include drawdowns and floods. Tara suggested Jim include some of the graphics he showed from the studies to illustrate his points in the comment letter on the PLP. Jim noted the erosion study also says they didn't see a correlation between vegetation and erosion. It was observed that this goes back to their original categorization of rip-rapped banks (which are not vegetated) as not eroding. The overall point is that all of these things have more effect because of eroded banks exacerbated by fluctuating water levels. It was agreed to submit comments on the PLP with reference to the comments on the flaws in the erosion study.

Jim reviewed his thoughts on the other elements of the PLP and received concurrence to draft a comment letter which Tara will share with members individually for comment prior to submission.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tara Bamford