

CRJC Headwaters Subcommittee

Draft Minutes

Thursday, September 15, 2016

Columbia Town Hall

Present

Ed Mellett, Northumberland
Tom Caron, Canaan
Ken Hastings, Columbia
Kevin McKinnon, Colebrook
Bill Schomburg, Columbia
Tara Bamford, staff

1. Chairman Mellett called the meeting to order at 7:10. Membership was discussed.
2. The minutes of February 25, 2016 were approved as presented by motion of McKinnon/Schomburg.
3. Permit Reviews-

The resurfacing of VT 253 in Beecher Falls/Canaan was discussed. It was noted that the resurfacing goes into the river.

Ed reported that Beaver Brook Planning and Design had submitted a letter about a project in Pittsburg rather than a permit application. The project is a 40 ft. long portion of shoreline on First Lake. It eroded during a high water event. It is above the normal high water mark. The landowner wants to replace soil to address exposed tree roots. Filter fabric and stones will be used. It is within TransCanada's flowage rights. It will be a minimum impact dredge and fill. It is a year-round home. It was agreed that the only comment would be to make sure TransCanada sees it.

Ed reported that he has seen two Permit By Notifications lately for projects less than 1,500 square feet with no comment opportunity. He asked DES about this. One was TransCanada borings. The other was the state taking down a log cabin on Lake Francis.

One other permit that came through was the bank stabilization project on Bissell Brook that CRWC and others are undertaking at the request of Headwaters Subcommittee using RR mitigation funds in part

Ed presented a new application for geotechnical borings on the Connecticut River where Northern Pass wants to cross. He explained that DES requested the borings to assist with their review of the application. It is just below the steel bridge, below the Washburn Family farm. There are 13 borings. SEC extended DES's deadline to March 31st. The drilling will be on Northern Pass's own property. They will be 6" diameter using a small amount of soil, water and polymer. The water is filtered using BMPs. The question was raised as to what the polymer is. Consensus was to ask for the MSDS as it might end up in the groundwater and river. Tara offered to draft the letter and send it out. It was noted that DES in their preliminary report said that Northern Pass wasn't minimizing the impact on wetlands as required and should be burying the line down Rte 3.

4. Northern Pass Update -

Bill and Ed participated in the scenic impact meetings held in Colebrook and Lancaster. Ed also met with the economic impact specialist and participated in the meeting of Conservation Commissions with Peter Roth. Ed noted that Concord and Pembroke are both very involved, i.e., it is not just a northern issue. Concord and SPNHF have taken it to the Supreme Court. The next step is technical sessions in Concord in November. Northumberland has an attorney working on it. To participate in the technical sessions it is necessary to be an intervener and sign a confidentiality agreement. It was observed that there is a financial incentive not to bury the line b/c HydroQuebec would have to pay Eversource for the ROW vs if it is buried it would be the state that gets paid. The final decision is due in September 2017. Sununu has spoken in favor of the project. Ed said he asked Peter Roth if the SEC can require it to be buried. He said no, they have to rule on the application as it stands. they can however recommend a new application.

5. Annual housekeeping-

By motion of Caron/McKinnon Ed was reelected Chair. By motion of Hastings/Caron Bill was reelected Vice Chair.

It was agreed to plan to meet quarterly in 2017 on the 3rd Thursday. The next meeting will be December 15. Kevin will arrange the Colebrook Town Office for December and March. Bill will arrange for the Columbia Town Hall for June and September.

Some future meeting topics suggested were:

*Vt River Conservancy-Paddlers Trail - new access at Lyman Falls, Columbia River Bridge, campsites

*Wildlife crossings - TNC Pete Steckler

*Conte Plan

*New owners of dams

6. Updates -

Ed reported that he was asked for and wrote another letter of support for the TNC Burrell property project. The focus of the project is game connectivity.

Tara asked what events might make sense to partner with Conte on outreach with their educational exhibits. It was agreed that the top choice would be the annual Moose festival held in Colebrook and Canaan. Other suggestions were the Lancaster Fair, Pittsburg Old Home Day, Colebrook's 4th of July celebration, the Lancaster Street Fair, and Stratford's Funtastic Fridays (every Friday in the summer).

Bill reported on the river access at the Columbia River Bridge put in by the Vt River Conservancy for canoeing and fishing.

Ken and Bill touched base again with Rob Livingstone at DES about the creosote on the RR tracks over Lyman Brook. It is owned by DOT. Bill will follow-up.

Kevin spoke with Brendan Whittaker about Act 64, legislation filed in VT to include the Connecticut River and its tributaries in the state's new shoreland law. Brendan is concerned as a tributary farm owner. The consensus was that there should be some regulation but not overly stringent and not up the tributaries.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tara Bamford.