

Minutes of Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee

Police Station, Milford New Hampshire

October 21, 2021

In attendance were members Cory Ritz (New Ipswich), Bill Mahar (Wilton), Peter Howd (Wilton), George May (Merrimack), Nelson Disco (Merrimack) Rich Hart (Amherst), Rob Clemons (Amherst) and Kleta Dudley (New Ipswich).

Approval of Minutes -September 2021 minutes approved.

New Business

New Hampshire Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)-is meeting on Tuesday, October 26, 2021 from 1:00-3:00PM at NHDES Offices 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, in room 208C. The meeting agenda and additional meeting materials are available on the RMAC Forum. Meeting is open to the public, RSVP Cory cannot attend and there is no remote option. This committee is staffed by NH agencies personal.

Tebbets Project-Burn's Hill Rd. Wilton Lot D106-4-This proposal was for a permit to allow a house with a garage, driveway, septic system and other parcel improvements within the 250' Shoreland Zone of the Souhegan River in Wilton NH. This is at the Horseshoe. Peter asked his Planning Board contact and they didn't know anything about it. No town permits have been issued and they probably won't need any variances. Looking at the plans the house appears to be perched on a cliff. Peter says the owners have been very open to town visitation to the site. They are using a crossing that already existed for driveway. The owners are allowing water testing on the site.

Cory didn't see any reason to comment on anything except driveway. He had some questions as to whether there will be upgrades to existing crossing. Wilton's Conservation Commission should look at it as a culvert might need to be upgraded.

Wilton Rail Road Crossing Upgrades-They will be upgrading the tracks and signaling to meet current standards. This is approximately where Stoney Brook becomes a Class 3 stream. They are offering mitigation. We were not clear what for, but George mentioned the mitigation could be used for the River Walk or something the Conservation Commission might be planning. Peter forwarded to Bart Hunter as Wilton’s Town Administrator is leaving in about 20 days. Bill will follow up with Conservation Commission concerning mitigation ideas. The mitigation would go first to the town. As this wasn’t anything that really pertained to the river, Cory did not see a need to comment as we did not have any plans.

Wetlands Permit-This is a Forestry Project, but it is clearly stated on the permit that it is not subject to LAC review.

Watershed Management Planning-Cory has sent an outlined proposal to Antioch. He had expected a reply within 2 weeks but has not heard back from them. If we want to have a more focused updated Watershed Plan we need to determine what is important. Our next step is to take starred items and determine if we need to add anything to the list.

- i. What are the benefits and concerns about the Souhegan River and watershed?

Benefits		Concerns	
<i>Starred *</i>	<i>Not starred</i>	<i>Starred *</i>	<i>Not starred</i>
Wildlife habitat	Freshwater	Public access	Overdevelopment
Water quality improvements	Historical importance	Water quality issues	Monitoring land use changes
	Recreation	Riverbank protection	Permitting loopholes
	Hydropower	Habitat loss	Floods
	Irrigation & Agriculture	Public education	Culverts & bridges
	Open Spaces	Tributaries	Channelizing
	Tourism		Lack of intuitional memory

	Aesthetics		Lack of regulatory enforcement
	Town involvement		Two states MA/NH
	Drainage, flood flow		Land protection
	Protected corridor		Loss of ecological function

Rich Hart thought we should add issues related to climate change and global warming like flooding and drought to the list.

Cory then outlined that we need to Build Partnerships by:
 Identifying key stakeholders
 Identifying issues of concern
 Setting preliminary goals
 Developing indicators and
 Conducting public outreach

And finally, the Watershed Plan would explain the purpose and vision for the project's existence, the meaning of what is done and the ambition or dream pursued by the project and team.

Peter asked who are stakeholders besides Conservation Commissions, he also felt we needed a Watershed wide streamlined effort with mapping and overlays identifying wetlands, steep slopes, etc. He thought it needed to be made clear who had regulatory authority over the water. The LAC only comment on issues 250 feet from river, then the State has authority over level 3 streams Cory pointed out that SoRLAC represented all the towns in the Watershed and not just the towns with the River in it. George agreed that we needed to develop a corridor map identifying all the streams in the watershed and where the water is coming from.

Rich wanted to know if we had any idea how many acres are in the watershed. He felt we needed to impress the stakeholders that we need to work together in order to have clean water.

Mapping the corridor would be a first step to addressing a lot of the issues. There was a short discussion about NRPC's and SWRPC's Role in development as we all noted that development was moving west. Cory questioned if we needed to do more to engage towns with regards to planning for future development.

For the next Meeting, Cory would like to refine list and everyone should be thinking about coming up with a list of stakeholders. He thinks a simple plan, more general in nature with links to more detailed subjects.

There was a brief discussion about how towns got the Watershed Plan adopted into their Masterplans.

NHDES Supplemental Watershed Plan and Environmental Assessment (Plan-EA)- This is to consider improvements to flood control dams in Temple NH. Improvements will be funded by a federal grant from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), "to address current dam design safety and engineering criteria and performance standards." The complete letter is included as an attachment to these minutes. There will be a virtual meeting (link in attachment) Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021 from 2-3 PM.

Wayne Ives will be present and Cory and George felt this was an important meeting that we should tune into if possible.

Local Updates

Souhegan Watershed Association-They had a sparsely attended meeting to address rejuvenating the organization. George is more in favor of a project oriented group (i.e. a salmon project or trout project) rather than membership oriented. There will be an informal Zoom meeting Nov. 10th at 7:00 PM that we will all be invited to attend. George gave us a brief history of the organization. Informally it was started about 30 years ago and formally started in 1995. They began water quality testing in 1997. They were responsible for nominating our group (SoRLAC)

New Ipswich-Nothing to report

Greenville-Nothing to report

Temple- See above, last item in New Business

Wilton- Still talking about River's Edge. It is still in permitting process. Conservation Commission wants a notice of Timber cutting. There was a somewhat contentious Planning Board meeting (10/20/21) over the number of lots and the length of the deadend road. The development is a 22 acre subdivision. Wilton allows 1 house per acre but there is no allowance in this development for steep slopes and wetlands. There were questions as to if it was necessary to remove "special land characteristics" before determining the number of homes that could be built on the acreage. They want to put 22 houses on the property and Wilton hasn't refined its town's ordinances to prohibit this in light of the characteristics of the terrain.

Milford- Nothing to report.

Amherst- The Canoe Launch, an Eagle Scout project, at the 122 crossing finally got its permit approval today. The Scout has till Nov. 17th to finish the project.

Amherst has created an Open Space Advisory Committee.

Work on Amherst St from center of Amherst to Milford Rd. has been completed. It is now bicycle friendly.

Merrimack- The town has redesigned the boardwalk for the pedestrian trail to satisfy wetland issues with former design. Nelson says it will be a lot more expensive so there may be financial issues now.

George asked about progress on the Pedestrian Bridge. Nelson said the Town has applied for funding through the NRPC and is now on the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) 10 year plan. It should be addressed before 2030. Something most of us hoped we lived to see.

Merrimack- Construction of the Woodbury Street Sidewalk has begun this week.

Next Meeting is **November 18, 2021 at Milford Police Station**

Submitted by Kleta Dudley, sec. Sept. 20, 2021

