

Minutes of Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee

Milford Town Hall, Milford, NH

February 17, 2022

In attendance were members Cory Ritz (New Ipswich), Celeste Barr (Milford), Cam Lockwood (Temple), Rob Clemens (Amherst), Marshall Buttrick (Greenville), Bill Mahar (Wilton), Peter Howd (Wilton) George May (Merrimack), Nelson Disco (Merrimack) and Kleta Dudley (New Ipswich).

Approval of Minutes -January minutes approved.

New Business

Permit appeal by Tonnesen and Dugger-Appeal was filed with DES. These are landowners adjacent to Gardent Property in Milford. SoRLAC reviewed Gardent project in December 2020. Activity that appears to be the operations of a sand and gravel operation has prompted the neighbors to seek an administrative appeal. There was concern that an AoT (alteration of Terrain) permit was issued after the fact. Cory asked Marshall to look into whether we should comment further on this permit. Apparently, the appeal is stuck with the Water Council which did not have a quorum at January's meeting so could not rule. Should they decide to accept the appeal, and should they want our input we'll probably hear from them in May.

RMAC Updates- The 2022 Rivers and Lakes Programs Legislation Tracking Spreadsheet can be found on the RMAC Forum. Remote meetings continue to be optional.

Informational Meeting with NRCS scheduled for April 21- This was to be a presentation on Best Management Practices for landowners that live along the river in regard to cutting and clearing timber and riparian borders. Celeste has booked the banquet room at the Milford Town Hall. There was discussion as to whether we should still have this presentation. NRPC would have to attend via Zoom due to Covid restrictions and other invitees might have reservations as well. We have not come up with an invitation list or identified all the stakeholders. The acoustics in the room do not lend themselves to a Zoom presentation. Short discussion followed on other events that are being impacted by Covid (Sustainability Fair in Wilton for example.)

If we do have the meeting, we need to start our regular meeting at 6:30 in order to conduct monthly updates.

Rob will confirm if they need audio and video equipment and Celeste will confirm if we can use the audio and video equipment on hand.

Watershed Management Plan

Cory created a Stakeholder registry on Google Sheets. We need to determine who the Stakeholders in the watershed are and enter their contact and other pertinent information into the spread sheet. It was decided to let representatives from each town compile a list and fill in the information. If you have

problems entering data, contact Cory or Celeste and they will assist you.

We discussed what our goals are and how to determine the awareness (of SoRLAC and of issues to do with river) among stakeholders. We recognized that Covid has affected the ability of the State and local towns to monitor and enforce rules pertaining to the River.

Cory would like to insure that our Watershed Management Plan (WMP) is accepted into the town's Master Plans. There is a lot of data that is out there is not being looked at because it is not necessarily known to be available. For instance, George has 20 years of water monitoring data that are a great base line going forward to determine how healthy the River is. We need to gather list of information that people need and figure out who and where it is collected or monitored and stored. Cory has read a lot of Water Management Plans, and he has been reading a lot of information about a river in plans but not always a lot of information on what is working in those plans to sustain a healthy river.

We need to come up with a questionnaire that can determine what are the stakeholders' concerns or feelings about the future of the river. Celeste commented that the way we ask our questions can also be a form of educating the stakeholders. Cory said he was going to send an email to Tracy, no point in re-inventing the wheel and as we got more of our idea and information in order, we would begin the process of trying to get a grant to help us pull together a survey and work on WMP. Peter suggested that the surveys could be tailored to

communities' goals by starting with a smaller group of stakeholders to help develop a more targeted survey. George suggested publishing a one-time newspaper with short articles and pointers to websites that dealt with specific issues (i.e. use of phosphorus free fertilizers.)

It would be helpful when entering in a stakeholder into the Google Sheets to provide a contact name, affiliation if a town official and email address if possible.

SoRLAC Stakeholder Registry:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1YYE2-ra2NZnDQ_k7D8KuF_f51sbBJzGV3h7b-wFkUEs/edit?usp=sharing

Local Updates-

Souhegan Watershed Association- Nothing to report

New Ipswich- Nothing to report

Greenville- Nothing to report

Wilton-Nothing to report directly concerning river. There are some changes in reservoir for residential uses. The River's Edge project has changed ownership apparently. They project is now on town water and sewer and is working on less lots than initially proposed. Peter suspects that they will get hit with demands for pervious surfaces on some lots. Peter also mentioned that the owners were talking about allowing some public access to River but he was hoping it wasn't a "bait and switch" situation.

Peter said he was contacted by the Planning Board asking if we could weigh in on plans. Cory said we don't usually do that until we have

been sent plans after permits have been applied for, but Cory said he though we could give advice if Peter had access to plans beforehand.

Milford-Celeste checked with NH DES re: Fish Tissue analyses for PCBs for impaired section of river in Milford association with Fletcher Superfund site. The analytical lab has not finished the work yet.

The NH Forest and Lands Ranger/enforcement person that Celeste had been directed to contact regarding future potential 'timber harvests' on the Souhegan has yet to respond to her inquiry. It was an earlier incident of this that triggered our planning some proactive education for landowners along the shores of the River.

Milford's Conservation Commission is working on Stormwater Management Plan for Amherst Labels Co. on Elm Street.

Brookstone Apt. in Milford owns some open space. They have been approached by a group of individuals that want to establish a dog park. The town wants to acquire a Conservation Easement on the property. and it would be easier for the town if Brookstone would agree to sell the property to the town. This elicited a lot of discussion because no one on our board thinks a dog park is a reasonable thing to have so close to the River. Dogs are responsible for huge amounts of E.coli in waterbodies as it is without concentrated large numbers of them so close to the shore.

Amherst-Nothing to report.

Merrimack-Nothing to report concerning River, but George felt it would be appropriate for us to voice concerns about doggie park or do some education on Best Management Practices to make it less hazardous. Nelson related Planning Board issues about doggie parks.

Next Meeting March 17th location to be announced, hopefully Police Station in Milford but Cam has secured space in Temple is need be.

Submitted by Kleta Dudley, Sec. Feb. 18, 2022