

Central NH Regional Planning Commission

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Warner River Nomination Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 15, 2016

Warner Town Hall, 5 East Main St, Warner NH 03278

7:00 P.M.

Minutes:

Attendees	
Chris Connors, Trout Unlimited	George Embley, Town of Webster, Trout Unlimited
Scott MacLean, Town of Bradford	Susan Roman, Town of Webster

Commission Staff: Sam Durfee

The meeting began at 7:04 P.M, convened by Sam Durfee.

Review of Minutes from last Meeting

Approval of the May 18th minutes was deferred until the next meeting.

Comments on Draft

Members of the committee had no comments on the draft of the nomination document. Ms Connors asked if Tracie Sales of NHDES had responded with any comments on the draft. Mr. Durfee replied that he hadn't received any comments from Ms. Sales.

Update on LAC Outreach

Mr. Durfee began the update explaining that he had reached out to all existing LACs for information regarding any successes had or challenges faced since designation. He followed by reading part of an email from the Exeter-Squamscott LAC detailing a few of the projects that LAC has participated in. The text from that email is as follows:

- Exeter River Geomorphic Assessment - led and funded by DES and USGS as a pilot for the statewide program, resulted in projects that towns have implemented, and received grant funds for, including bridge and culvert repairs, habitat protection, infrastructure improvements;
- Effects of Urbanization on Stream Quality - led and funded by DES and USGS, resulted in site-specific information regarding the impacts of land use and impervious surface on water quality and riparian habitat in the Exeter River;

- WISE - Watershed Integration for the Squamscott- Exeter - led and funded by UNH, DES, Great Bay NERR, with funds from National Estuarine Research Reserve - assessed ways in which three towns along the Squamscott River could work together on stormwater and wastewater management, resulted in town-specific options for water quality management.

Mr. Durfee also explained that there are many other LACs that have responded and that he has compiled their responses in a word document and plans to send it out to the committee. He continued to summarize the feedback from LACs by saying that generally, LACs in more populated areas, such as the sea coast typically are more active and obtain more funding. This is in contrast to some other LACs that have struggled to maintain active members and for whom funding is an issue. Mr. Durfee went on to explain way in which LACs obtain funding, saying grant funds and/or annual dues from communities associated with the river corridor.

Mr. Durfee highlighted a project from the Connecticut River Mt. Ascutney LAC called the Smart Septic Workshop which targets landowners, septic workers, home builders and realtors.

Email from Sue Hemingway

Mr. Durfee explained that because Ms. Was unable to attend the meeting, she had sent an email with a number of points to be discussed by the committee. The email is as follows:

Hi Sam

I'm sorry I can't attend tonight and it sounds like there will be no other representation from Warner either.

I couldn't view the new map on my mobile device to see the details, so I do have a couple of comments.

Re the mapping; I advocate that all locations are documented of past, present, and *future* mill sites so the river classifications reflect true *potential* use. Especially since it appears that it is very cumbersome to change the classification after the fact. I would imagine it is hard to identify a potential site without actually walking the river.

At the risk of belaboring the issue, I'd like to restate that I feel it is important to be thoughtful about how we solicit, tally, and use the public comments. Because this project touches folks on personal, experiential, professional, and emotional levels it can be challenging to be objective, to hear and sit with other perspectives without defensiveness, and to ultimately think outside the box. For example, being open to consider implications that were not even on the radar (like climate change, harnessing renewable energy resources) when the protection program was conceived. We likely all agree on the importance of healthy rivers, but I think need to make sure we're receptive to tough and unpopular questions and dialogue about the purpose and value of this particular designation. I think we are doing this to a degree, but my view is if we don't welcome and value other perspectives, but rather strategize to convince I think we may lose the support and respect of some of the very people you're targeting; the land owners abutting the river.

I am beginning to be of the mindset that because of the strong sentiment about this, both pro and con, it might be more fair to advocate for town meeting votes and the democratic process.

My 2 cents for what it's worth.

Sue

Ms. Roman asked how does one determine future dam sites along the river. Mr. Durfee responded that as he is not a dam engineer, he does not know. Ms. Connors followed up by expressing that she feels the committee has done its due diligence to ask for dam information and cited that since day one, Peter Ladd said he would take on the responsibility to get in touch with fellow dam owners. Ms. Connors also said she feels it is not the duty of the committee to walk the length of the river to determine potential locations for dams as no one on the committee has the knowledge or experience needed to accurately determine suitable locations for dams. Mr. Embley added by saying the Warner River had been heavily dammed in the past and any potential dam sites have already been discovered. He also suggested that the Warner Energy committee should be responsible for identifying potential sites. To that, Ms. Roman responded by saying the Energy Committee would just have the whole river put under Community designation and expressed concerns that they would identify sites without proper scientific due diligence. Mr. Durfee stated that he would check in with Ms. Sales as to how other nomination committees have handled the issue and what options the committee might have going forward.

Ms. Roman stated that she would just to be able to know what is required so that when asked, and the committee has to defend itself, they can have information to point to. In a follow up point she said the committee has canvassed the owners for information and has already made several compromises to put a larger portion of the river under Community designation. She explained that there are other features of the river that need to be protected and the river is not simply to be used as a hydroelectric generator.

Mr. Embley expressed that it seems like the committee is being "held hostage" by concerns over the future ability to build dams, due to the fact that whenever the committee compromises, there always seems to be another task or measure the committee is asked to meet. Ms. Connors suggested putting out a public notice and holding a special meeting for dam owners and those interested in dam with attendees from NHDES and the Dam Bureau.

Mr. Durfee added that on June 21st from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM there will be a public meeting held at the NHDES building in Concord for the purpose of beginning the instream flow rulemaking process. He said he will forward the email to the committee.

Ms. Roman expressed the importance of having clear and concise answers to the question of why nominate in the first place, citing that the committee did not seem to have strong answers at the public information session held on 4/20/16. The following discussion focused on historical pollution of the river from previous industry. Mr. MacLean mentions several Superfund sites within the river corridor in Bradford. The establishment of an LAC would help educate the communities and would help to ensure water quality but preventing or lessening future pollutants. Ms. Roman also brought up the fact that an LAC has enhanced standing with state government, a strength that seems under appreciated.

Ms. Roman read through some of the language within RSA 483 and discovered that LAC are considered “governmental instrumentalities” which are separate from state government and are created to fulfill needs which the state is unable to. The committee agreed that this is something that should be highlighted when sharing with the general population. Mr. Durfee also added that an LAC has the power to check and comment on all local, state and federal development permit applications and given that there is a large amount of state and federal roads (I-89 and NH 103) that run through the river corridor, an LAC would have a substantial say when it comes to any DOT project in the area.

Master Presentation

The committee reviewed the slides Mr. Durfee had supplied as a draft of the master presentation. Ms. Roman noted that it is important, not only to define nomination, but to define designation and to define it objectively. Ms. Roman also thought it would be helpful to include the DES factsheet in the presentation. Mr. Durfee agreed, but explain his vision that if this presentation is to be hosted on a webpage, the factsheets and other supporting resources should be linked on the site, rather than embedded in the presentation. Although he noted there are some items on various factsheets that should be directly incorporated into the presentation.

Ms. Roman suggested to place the more important information (definitions and explanation of nomination, designation and the processes associated) in the beginning of the presentation, followed by the listing of other designated rivers and more Warner River-centric information. Mr. Embley added that there should be information on the impetus for the Warner River nomination and the work the committee has done so far.

Ms. Connors shared that she feels the presentation should be more exciting and that it should have more information on the Warner River, pulled from the presentations given at the public information session. Mr. Durfee explained that this is a draft and that it will be “dress up” with pictures and other content will be added.

In terms of the timeline for the roadshow of presentations, Mr. Durfee wanted to clarify that the plan is to develop a master presentation, have town reps, with assistance of other committee members if need be, approach the selectmen and either discuss the project or give the presentation and hear their thoughts and also to inform them of the committee’s intention to present to the towns. The committee agreed that is the general plan.

It was discussed that the roadshow presentations should begin in October, the committee should rehearse the presentation at the September meeting, and it was suggested that the committee cancel the August meeting in fear of low attendance and also because between the July and September meetings and email communication, there will be enough time to prepare without holding a meeting.

Extending the Scope of the Nomination

Mr. Durfee explained some of the changes made to the revised Proposed Classifications Map. He began by showing that the definitions for each classification were added and that three dams just beyond the

western extent of the river were added. He clarified that these dams are not on the Warner River and would not be affected by designation, they are simply shown so that viewers of the map know they exist.

Ms. Connors made the point that there is a lot of information on the map and for someone viewing it for the first time, it may be difficult to taking in all the information. She made the suggestion that the words at the beginning of each definition be in the same color as the corresponding classification. Mr. Durfee said he can make those edits.

Next Meeting Date

The next Warner River Nomination Committee meeting is scheduled for July 20th, 2016 at 7:00 P.M., in the Warner Town Hall.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:34 P.M.

DRAFT