

Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee
July 26, 2016 at Pease Public Library
Plymouth, New Hampshire

Minutes

Members Present:

Max Stamp (Bristol); Dan Paradis (Bristol); Bill Bolton (Plymouth); Barry Draper (New Hampton); Fred Gunter (Thornton); Leigh Sharps (Ashland).

Also Present:

Dave Jeffers (LRPC)

Call to Order:

After explaining that Jane Kellogg and Dan Stack were attending a workshop on scenic and historic resources in Ashland sponsored by the Counsel for the Public, Chairman Max Stamp called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

Max pointed out that the draft minutes should be amended to include Fred Gunter's last name and town under "Members Present". With this amendment, Fred Gunter made a motion seconded by Barry Draper to approve the minutes of May 31, 2016. The motion carried with one abstention.

Visit to Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest:

Bill Bolton had suggested that he could arrange a visit to Hubbard Brook to get an inside look at their activities. The members were asked if they were interested in doing this at some future date and Bill Bolton, Fred Gunter, Dan Paradis and Max Stamp responded positively. Bill will follow up on this.

Report on Mitigation Property Visit:

Max reported on a site visit to a 38 acre property on the river in New Hampton which Northern Pass has proposed as a mitigation area for wetlands impacts resulting from the transmission line project. Participants in the site visit included PRLAC members Max Stamp, Bill Bolton, Barry Draper and Dan Stack as well as New Hampton Town Administrator Barbara Lucas. The group showed little enthusiasm for getting involved in determining the suitability of this parcel for wetlands mitigation.

Public Hearing on SWQPA Rules:

Most SWQPA rules were scheduled to expire July 1, 2016 but the deadline for revising them has been extended. The changes proposed by DES originally included a revision whereby LACs and towns would only be notified of projects within the protected shoreland rather than being sent copies of the plan and asked to comment on them. This proposal received a strong negative reaction from the LACs and towns and has now been dropped by DES. A public hearing on the rules revisions will be held at DES Headquarters on Hazen Drive, Concord, Rooms 110-111 on August 1. The proposed revisions reflect changes made to RSA 483-B between 2009 and 2013 as well as clarifications of existing provisions.

Northern Pass Transmission (NPT) response to PRLAC's questions:

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to discussion of NPT's response to our questions. The aim was to determine if each response was adequate or not and to determine which items we might drop. NPT's responses were projected on a screen and discussed one or two at a time. The results will form the basis for our response to NPT which is due by August 1, 2016. The numbering below is the same as that used in the NPT response document.

1-1 and 1-2: These deal with NPT's understanding of a watershed and effects on water bodies more than ¼ mile from the ROW. PRLAC continues to object to NPT's assertion of no effects beyond ¼ mile.

1-3 and 1-4: These deal with the effects of existing lines on Blake Brook. PRLAC recommends use of a neutral third party to assess current conditions, particularly with regard to erosion.

1-5 and 1-6: These challenge NPT's understanding of "extreme weather events" and their effects. The consensus was that DES is on top of this, so we do not need to pursue this further.

1-7: This deals with erosion damage at river crossovers. PRLAC should provide photos and continue to push on this in line with a draft response prepared by Max.

1-8 and 1-9: These deal with possible impairments due to effects on feeder streams, "temporary" and "secondary" wetland impacts. PRLAC should request that tests be done on a representative sample of feeder streams.

1-10: This deals with fragmentation of habitats. PRLAC should hand this off to DES.

1-11 and 1-12: These ask about the number of construction segments occurring simultaneously and how this affects oversight. The consensus was to drop these, again deferring to DES..

1-13: This deals with plans to deal with fluid spills. This is another area where we should defer to DES.

1-14: This concerns herbicide use. We need to seek clarification on who is the final decider on use – town/DES or NPT.

1-15: This deals with safe storage, servicing and refueling of machinery. The information requested is not known at this time, so this can be dropped.

1-16: This deals with the location of access roads outside the ROW. The consensus was that this is primarily a town issue, so we can drop it.

1-17: This deals with past violations of the contractor. Information requested was provided.

1-18: This deals with the potential increase in post-construction traffic due to increased maintenance requirements. The applicant maintains this will not amount to a doubling as we supposed. Unless we can find evidence to support our claim, this may have to be dropped.

1-19: This is a request for data regarding the area of tree cutting on a town-by-town basis. The applicant's response fails to provide the data asked for. We need to insist on a complete answer to the question.

1-20: This asks for the chain of command during construction. This is outside our sphere of expertise and should be dropped.

1-21: This asks about ROW traffic during construction. This is primarily a town issue so PRLAC can drop.

1-22: This deals with visual impact studies. The response from NPT refers to the Visual Impact Assessment and to documents uploaded to the ShareFile site. We need to request further information to help us locate the documents on the ShareFile site.

1-23 and 1-24: These questions address the use of underground technology vs. overhead technology including cost. Although the responses from NPT are not very responsive, this is another area where we are lacking in expertise, so the decision was to drop these.

1-25: This questions the choice of Franklin for the transfer station where DC is converted to AC. We have no basis to challenge this decision, so should drop the issue.

1-26: This deals with inspection of the ROW for degradation post-construction. The applicant says qualified arborists will make periodic inspections. We should ask them to provide us with a sample arborist's report so we can assess the thoroughness of these inspections.

1-27: This deals with contingency planning for catastrophic events. This is an SEC item so we can drop it.

Adjournment:

Dan Paradis made a motion seconded by Barry Draper to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel A. Paradis
Acting Secretary

DRAFT