

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

Minutes

Members Present:

Max Stamp (Bristol); Dan Paradis (Bristol); Dan Stack (Ashland); Bill Bolton (Plymouth); Carl Lehner (Holderness); Mike O'Donnell (Holderness); Barry Draper (New Hampton).

Also Present:

Lisa Doner (PSU research assistant professor); Gretchen Draper (New Hampton citizen).

Call to Order:

Chairman Max Stamp called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

Dan Stack made a motion seconded by Barry Draper to approve the minutes of March 29, 2016. The motion carried with one abstention.

2016 PRLAC Funding:

Max has received a report from LRPC showing we are in arrears by \$645 as of April 15, 2016. The funding requests to the towns have gone out and should yield approximately \$2,000. Max suggested we may need to increase what we're asking for in order to stay solvent. Lisa Doner suggested that the Plymouth Conservation Commission may respond favorably to a funding request at this time.

April 15 Meeting with Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF):

On April 15 Max and Barry and Gretchen Draper met with Will Abbott of PSNHF for nearly three hours to discuss the Northern Pass issue. Each of the participants was asked to report on the meeting. Gretchen Draper said she found Mr. Abbott to be supportive. Much of the discussion dealt with the strategy PRLAC might employ. Mr. Abbott thought it might be useful to develop an explanation of what a watershed is and how it affects the river. A useful tool in presenting our arguments would be a map with a number of overlays such as feeder streams, wetlands, access roads, etc. The impact of the Northern Pass project on future generations should be part of our narrative. Barry Draper suggested that we need to include some explanation of what's in the wetland areas that makes their preservation important. Max reminded everyone that our focus should be on what will resonate with the seven members of the Site Evaluation Committee (SEC). The pictures of the existing river crossing points provide good support for our concerns about the effects of additional development in the right-of-way. As to the role of DES, it was felt we should encourage them to take strong positions on certain areas such as ROW crossover erosion, ROW wetlands, and points where feeder brooks intersect with the ROW. Gretchen Draper said she had been looking at the numerous letters sent to the SEC and suggested that some of them, such as one from Trout Unlimited, contain very good arguments which we might use with permission of the authors.

To Do List:

The discussion then turned to the "To Do List" which had been emailed to the members. Items numbers correspond with those on the list.

1. *Identify with a partner and counsel.* While this was seen as a good idea worth exploring with SPNHF in particular, the likelihood they would partner with us is small. Carl Lehner agreed to work with Max in sounding out the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). Susan Arnold is a contact there.
2. *Meet with Peter Roth (Counsel for the Public)* We need to approach him and make the case for the hiring of an expert to monitor the construction and its effects.
3. *Complete comments to DES on NP shoreland/wetland applications.* This was seen as one of the most important steps to be taken.
4. *Impact on viewscapes Ashland to Hill.* This is likely to be covered by others; we need to narrow our focus on this issue.
5. *Unsubstantiated statements made in the application.* These need to be challenged, particularly if refuted by the science.

6. *Purported benefits of recreation and tourism.* This can be omitted.

7-9. *Impact Areas.* We need to prod DES to help us with this. We might want to argue that the impacted areas are too large but this is a “maybe” for us.

10-14 *Misc.* Passed over.

Items from “Meeting Outline with SPNHF”

This had been emailed to members along with the meeting announcement. The introductory material was passed over and the discussion was based on the “Issues/Concerns” section on Page 2. Item numbering is from the document under review.

1. *Erosion today at ROW crossovers.* There was agreement with the proposal. Mike O’Donnell pointed out that the rules should be at least as strict as those imposed on logging operations.

2. *Tree cutting/clearing within ROW.* This has been addressed by other groups such as Trout Unlimited. We should get permission to use some of their material.

3. *Climate change/stormwater runoff.* Some of these impacts have already been cited. We may need to revise “100 year flood” language.

4. *70% of river flow from groundwater in dry season.* Lisa Doner suggested the 70% figure might not be defensible and suggested we use alternate language.

5. *Effect of new access routes:* Delete reference to cumulative impacts.

6. *Wetlands/streams.* Barry has studied streams using Google Earth. The group agreed that we need be concerned only with those which enter the Pemi.

7. *Stormwater Runoff.* This is OK as presented, but statewide problems with inadequate culverts could be cited.

8. *I-93 gateway.* Emphasis should be on effects as seen from the river; highway is not part of our purview.

9. *Independent “overseer”.* Lisa Doner pointed out that we need to have someone available who can predict risks, not just document them.

Time did not allow for discussion of the last two items on the agenda.

Adjournment:

Mike O’Donnell made a motion seconded by Dan Stark to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel A. Paradis
Acting Secretary