

Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee
February 22, 2011 at Boyd Hall
Plymouth, New Hampshire

Minutes

Members Present:

Chairman Max Stamp (Bristol); Dan Paradis (Bristol)

Also Present:

Dave Jeffers (LRPC); Carl Lehner (Holderness Planning Board); Sharon Penney (Plymouth Town Planner)

Call to Order:

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

Approval of Minutes:

Lacking a quorum, the January minutes could not be approved.

Legislative Update:

Max reported that four rivers have been nominated for Designated River status under the RMPP program. They are the Oyster, Lamprey, Mascoma and Exeter-Swamscott Rivers. It is expected that at least the Oyster and Mascoma Rivers will be reported out of committee in the House. The Oyster River application seeks to include third order sections, but this is unlikely to be approved.

Max explained that HB 470-FN would repeal RSA 483-B, the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (CSPA). Those present found it hard to believe that such a drastic measure could have much chance of enactment. Carl Lehner said he had been at a hearing in Concord where approximately 20 people had testified on the bill. Of that number, only two thought CSPA should be repealed. The rest of the group was split between those who thought it should be modified and those who thought it should be left alone.

A more serious threat to CSPA may be posed by Senate Bill SB 154-FN, which proposes extensive revisions in the law. Max passed out an outline he had prepared of some of the proposed changes. These would include changing the shore frontage required for building from 150 feet to 50 feet, reducing natural woodland buffers by more than 50%, removing "individuals" from those subject to the law, changes in the point system to allow for removal of more trees in the buffer etc. Enforcement of the law would be made more difficult by cutting the time DES has to review applications by 50% and by creating an appeals committee made up of at least 50% shoreland owners. The bill does increase funding for outreach education, but its overall effect would be to greatly weaken the protections afforded by the current law. Dave said that nine senators are co-sponsors of the bill, leading conservation-oriented groups to work to amend SB 154-FN rather than trying to block passage altogether.

The discussion turned next to a letter Max had drafted in opposition to SB 154-FN. The letter points out that the current law already reflects compromises reached by a 24 member study commission in 2007. It then outlines some of the more egregious proposed changes and refers to the need to plan for future population growth. It concludes by asking that SB 154-FN be soundly defeated. Dave Jeffers suggested that the economic benefits of clean water should be included in the letter. Sharon Penney suggested that the letter might expand on the study commission process and the scientific basis for the current law. There was some discussion that if SB 154-FN were enacted, many towns might feel the need to pass their own stricter measures, leading to a lack in uniformity of shoreland regulations. Max felt this might be worth including in the letter. He asked that any ideas for the letter be funneled through Dave Jeffers. Dave also said that LRPC would be glad to support the mailing of the letter to senators, the governor, house members representing PRLAC towns, etc.

Management Plan:

Dave Jeffers reported that LRPC's application for a 604(b) grant to support PRLAC's revision of the Pemi management plan had been approved by DES and awaits the governor's signature. He then summarized the steps which were included in the proposal. They include gathering data, mapping, outreach, creating a web page, and responding to feedback from PRLAC. The question of how to attract public review of the proposed plan came up and it was suggested that it might be possible to combine a good speaker with a feedback session.

Next on the agenda was a preliminary discussion of present and anticipated problems to be included in the new

management plan. A handout Max had prepared summarizing problems he thought should be included served as an outline for the discussion. Since there were only two PRLAC members present, no attempt was made to create a definitive list for the updated plan. Dave reminded us that once the list has been compiled, the 604(b) proposal calls for LRPC to do the actual write-up.

Other:

Dave alerted us that one of the planners he works with, Eric Senecal, has worked extensively on groundwater protection issues and might be asked to make a presentation to PRLAC at an appropriate time.

Adjournment:

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel A. Paradis
Secretary