

Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee
June 28, 2011 at Boyd Hall
Plymouth, New Hampshire

Minutes

Members Present:

Dan Paradis (Bristol); Barry Draper (New Hampton); Fred Gunter (Thornton); Carl Lehner (Holderness); John Kelly (Plymouth)

Also Present:

Dave Jeffers (LRPC)

Call to Order:

Since Chairman Max Stamp was recovering from surgery and unable to attend, Dave Jeffers presided over the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

Dave Jeffers pointed out two errors in the June 28 minutes: Rick Van De Poll's name was misspelled and the word "abut" should be replaced with "about" under "Local Goals and Objectives: Bristol-New Hampton". Barry Draper made a motion seconded by Fred Gunter to accept the minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of September Meetings:

Dave reviewed the LRPC meeting held in Meredith on September 26th which dealt with the revisions to the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (now known as the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act or SWQPA). Speakers included Darlene Forst who administers the program at DES, Paul Susca of DES and Cordell Johnson from the Local Government Center. The meeting was well-attended and informative. For the benefit of those who hadn't attended the meeting, Dave passed out copies of Darlene's Power Point presentation, which is also posted on the LRPC website. Carl Lehner, who attended the meeting, felt Darlene had done a good job of conveying her reservations about the changes to the Act to the extent that she could. Carl also thought it was likely some towns would want to create local regulations which are stricter than the SWQPA. Dan Paradis pointed out that it would be difficult to integrate two sets of regulations; for example it would be very confusing to have two different point systems to measure vegetation. The second topic discussed at the meeting concerned whether water could be regulated as a natural resource, and the answer was basically "Yes".

The first of two kick-off meetings on the new PRLAC Management Plan took place in Plymouth on the following night, September 27th. Dave went over some of the points that came up, which he had already summarized in a set of notes on the meetings. Fred Gunter pointed out that one of the major suggestions was that the plan should include the entire Pemi watershed. Dave said he had reviewed some of the enabling legislation, and that it does allow the management plan to consider the entire watershed.

The second kick-off meeting, held in New Hampton on September 29th elicited some lively discussion, with the major points also summarized on Dave's notes of the meeting. Ralph Kirshner helped to fill in some of the history of protection efforts on the Pemi, including the controversial attempt to obtain "Wild and Scenic" designation. He also suggested we try to include more information about the river itself and not just the shoreland. Another suggestion was that a website be established to improve communications up and down the river, particularly when there are flooding concerns. Dave reminded members that he had found and emailed the nomination materials submitted just over 20 years ago when Designated River" status was being sought for the Pemi. He thought some of the materials there would still be relevant and useful.

Town Fund-Raising 2012;

For the benefit of the new members, Dave went over how the grants which originally funded LRPC support of PRLAC's activities had been terminated, requiring us to seek support from the towns for the past several years. Our annual request for \$200 from each of the towns has just gone out. Dave suggested that members keep track of and support the request if they have the opportunity to do so. Copies of the letter were emailed to members earlier.

Water Resources Management Section of the Management Plan:

The discussion was based on the 10/13/11 revision of Max Stamp's original proposal for this section. This turned out to be a wide-ranging discussion based loosely on the proposal. Dan Paradis once again expressed his reservations

regarding the emphasis placed on population growth. As reflected in the statistics Dave handed out, growth varies widely town-by-town, making the effects much more significant to some towns than others. Dan also suggested that state-wide projections are even less useful and probably should not be cited. Although Fred Gunter pointed out that water quality concerns, especially about bacterial contamination are universal, for the most part the discussion brought out the unique concerns of individual towns. John Kelly pointed out that in Plymouth the only growth has been in the student population at PSU, requiring extra services but not adding to the tax base. He also questioned why so much emphasis is placed on the river itself when the water comes from the hills. He is concerned that the Groton wind energy project could result in the stripping of many acres of forest land and ultimately cause problems with runoff. While the financial benefits accrue to Groton, Plymouth has to deal with the environmental effects.

With regard to Impairments (No. 5 on the proposal), Dave suggested that milfoil is perhaps the main impairment on the Pemi. It was also brought out that the *e. coli* data collected by the VRAP groups over the past several year show an increase in *e. coli* bacteria after heavy rain events, which could also be considered an impairment. With regard to failing septic systems (No. 6 on the list), there was general agreement that very few facts are available to document the seriousness of the problem. The Massachusetts approach of requiring inspections when a property changes hands was mentioned, but not endorsed, as a possible approach to the problem.

Project Progress and Timetable:

Dave showed the group new land use maps under development. He pointed out that the newer aerial photography from which the maps are derived now has much higher resolution than it did in the past, allowing for more accurate maps.(The higher resolution photography is only available for the southern part of the corridor.) He asked members to take photographs on the river if possible and to submit them to him for inclusion in the plan. When asked what was next in the Management Plan process, Dave said we were still accumulating data and taking public input. The goal is to complete the plan by the end of 2012 or sooner.

Adjournment:

Fred Gunter made a motion seconded by Barry Draper to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel A. Paradis
Secretary