

Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee
October 29, 2013 at Pease Public Library
Plymouth, New Hampshire

Minutes

Members Present:

Max Stamp (Bristol); Dan Paradis (Bristol); Dan Stack (Ashland); Fred Gunter (Thornton); Barry Draper (New Hampton); Mike O'Donnell (Holderness)

Also Present:

Dave Jeffers (LRPC)

Call to Order:

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

Management Plan Introduction to Towns:

Since a quorum was not present at the start of the meeting, approval of the minutes was passed over. The first item of business was a brief review of efforts made since the last meeting to introduce towns to our new management plan. Max reported that he had spent about 45 minutes with the Plymouth Planning Board. They showed a good deal of interest in water quality issues and suggested we monitor upstream and downstream from the effluent coming from the treatment plant. Max explained that we are already doing as much as we can with limited resources. He managed to steer the conversation around to the stormwater runoff issues which are highlighted in the plan.

Barry Draper spent about 35 minutes with the New Hampton Planning Board. The discussion of runoff led to some discussion of the effects of the new public services building which is located a short distance from the Pemi. The Board felt that runoff from the new complex is not a problem, but Barry has not had a chance to check this out for himself. Although Barry felt welcome by the Board, he got the impression they would prefer to call on him if they desired any further input from PRLAC.

Due to a busy schedule, Dan Stack has not yet had an opportunity to meet with the Ashland Planning Board. They did receive a copy of the new management plan several months ago, and a joint meeting with the Planning Board and Conservation Commission is contemplated.

Next Steps:

Max reminded the group that we had agreed to return to planning boards with specific recommendations to control runoff in new development areas not covered by the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act, the Alteration of Terrain rules, etc. Fred Gunter pointed out that this was a bad time to approach planning boards since they're likely to be working on zoning changes through March. He also reminded the group that state law provides for Site Plan Review only for multi-family or commercial buildings. Anticipating a more extensive discussion later in the meeting, Max reported that he had spent some time trying to determine whether federal (EPA) regulations requiring a Construction General Permit (CGP) for soil disturbances over one acre might be a useful tool. His basic conclusion is that not much help is available there.

The discussion then turned to a wide range of issues addressing runoff, such as regulating development on steep slopes, the use of cluster zoning, and other so-called "innovative land use planning techniques". Dan Paradis showed a copy of the comprehensive handbook on these techniques produced by several state agencies, suggesting that although there's a lot of guidance available, the challenge is to motivate planning boards to act. One suggestion was to rate each town's zoning ordinance on each of several relevant regulations and to suggest improvements to them. Mike O'Donnell pointed out that zoning regulations are supposed to be based on the Master Plan, so we really should check that before making any recommendations to towns. In the end, no consensus was reached as to what would be the most effective approach in following up with the planning boards.

Finally, Dave Jeffers told the group that grant opportunities would be coming up soon, and might provide us with professional help in achieving our goals. He pointed out that we would need to have plans which could be implemented in order to apply successfully for such grants.

Approval of Minutes:

A quorum being present, the Chair brought up this item which had been passed over earlier. Dave Jeffers pointed out that the spelling of DES Administrator Burack's name needed to be corrected. Dan Stack made a motion seconded by Fred Gunter to approve the minutes of August 27, 2013 as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

EPA Construction General Permit:

Max expanded on his earlier comment regarding the usefulness of the EPA's Construction General Permit. He spoke briefly about the flow charts sent to members by email which seek to provide guidance with regard to when and how the law applies. Dave Jeffers also passed out copies of relevant pages on the NHDES website. Max reported on his conversation with Newton Tedder, who administers the program for the EPA from Massachusetts, and provided us with a written summary of the conversation. Max concluded that the EPA regulations are not very useful for several reasons. The 1-acre trigger would exclude many if not most single home projects. Further, there is no reliable mechanism for reporting applicable situations to the EPA, and there is no dedicated person for CGP activities in New Hampshire.

Conservation Matters Article:

Max provided extra copies of a revised draft he had emailed to members earlier in the day. Everyone agreed this was a great improvement on earlier drafts, which had tried to include too much material in what is supposed to be a 500 word article. There was some discussion of the proposed headline (Stormwater – Huge Problem or Valuable Resource?) Some members felt that readers might conclude that it's huge problem unless the article clearly defines "valuable resource". Several other suggestions were made to improve clarity, and Max said he would work with Dave Jeffers and Dan Paradis to incorporate these. He will also try to find out how flexible the *Record-Enterprise* is with regard to the 500 word limit. The deadline for submission is November 10.

Other:

- A shoreland permit application has been received for the creation of 8 parking spaces near the hockey rink on the PSU campus. Even though it's a small project, Max feels that stormwater provisions are inadequate. It was pointed out that institutions like PSU should provide leadership in environmental design.
- Max and Dan Paradis reported briefly on the Rivers Conference they attended recently. PRLAC was given an award for twelve years of river water quality monitoring and expansion of the VRAP program and Dan was recognized for 15 years of service.
- Dave Jeffers passed out a copy of the receipts and expenditures for PRLAC. This shows receipts of \$1,900 and a balance as of 6/30/13 of \$337.51. New Hampton has not yet contributed this year due to an omission when the bills were sent out. Dave will follow up on this.
- Max distributed copies of an email from Errin Volitis of PSU providing some information on their comprehensive water monitoring program using data loggers. She listed 11 sites in the Pemi watershed and gave access information to the data. She said she would be happy to attend one of our meetings to talk about the network and how we might be able to collaborate.
- Max reported briefly on a call from Kira Jacobs (EPA Region 1) regarding the Department of Agriculture's 5-state program to protect water quality.

Adjournment:

Fred Gunter made a motion seconded by Barry Draper to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel A. Paradis
Secretary