

Minutes of Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee

Online

June 18, 2020

Chair Ritz called the meeting, conducted via online meeting, to order at 7:00 PM under the emergency provisions of RSA 91-A, New Hampshire's Right-to-Know law, as allowed by Emergency Order 11 under Executive Order 2020-04 in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. Secretary Dudley conducted a roll call.

In attendance were members Cory Ritz (New Ipswich), Bill Mahar (Wilton), Cam Lockhart (Temple), Celeste Barr (Milford), Kleta Dudley (New Ipswich), Marshall Buttrick (Greenville), Nelson Disco (Merrimack), George May (Merrimack) Rob Clemens, (Amherst), Rich Hart (Amherst), and guests Peter Howd, (Wilton) and Tracie Sales (DES)

Approval of Minutes from May 2020 -Approved.

Spencer Brooks, a long time member of SoRLAC passed away on May 24, 2020. George May shared memories and accomplishments with us. It has been several years since he was able to attend our meetings but his presence was felt despite his absence, and he will be missed.

Business

Aquaculture General Permits- Deadline for comments has been extended till July 10th. We decided to let this pass without comment.

Comment on Milford WWTP permit renewal-There is an extension till Monday June 22, 2020. Jim Taylor sent out an email (forwarded by Cory on June 18, 2020) detailing his views on the issues around the permit review. We felt that it would be best to take this document and restructure it into a letter as our comments to DES. We want to emphasize the need for PFAS monitoring.

There was a brief discussion on the methods of measuring phosphorus, by weight or by concentration. Jim favored by weight, but Rich questioned this method due to the variable flow rate of the river, especially in summer when the river might

be very low. We need to know Jim's thoughts on this. George also wanted to know about a way to measure lead in the water.

Cory will work with Jim to fashion a letter to be submitted.

Legislation- Not too much happening due to Covid19 but there is an amendment to HB 1245. The amendment contains language for SB 627 (establishing a dock registration procedure). Tracie said this was an attempt to get all docks registered in the state. The only objections seem to be that there may be a few old docks out there that will be registered that would not meet current permitting but they will have to be considered grandfathered. This measure has already passed in the Senate and has been incorporated as an amendment into Omnibus bill HB1245.

Update on Milford Complaint-Cory reached out to Policy Officer who is playing email tag with the owner, trying to schedule a site visit. The current Covid19 situation is making that difficult. More discussion followed in Local Updates.

Tracie picked up discussion on clearing brush in the river, reminding us (as she had in an email earlier in the month) that the land under the river still belongs to a landowner. Permission should be sought before beginning a cleanup.

Permit Request for Wilton Phone Comp. The phone company wants to build a building to house vehicles and a few offices for employees (who do not deal with public.) The site is downtown bordering Stoney Brook near to where it meets with the Souhegan. General opinion in Wilton is that the building will be an upgrade to the area. Bill said the Conservation Commission had looked at the plans and there is a lot line adjustment issue. Peter said that the issue is between the Phone Company and the Wilton House of Pizza. Supposedly, the boundary that the phone company claims is on property that the restaurant has been using for customer parking for years. Both sides had shown up at Planning Board meeting with lawyers, so this issue will have to be settled first before a permit is issued.

Because the Wilton Phone Company owns a small parcel of land next to the proposed buildingsite they will be able to incorporate that site to help with stormwater runoff into Stoney Brook.

George suggested we ask for snow removal protocols.

The small parcel of land next to the proposed building site will also provide a vegetative buffer and there is talk of an easement for a Wilton River Walk. This of

course cannot happen until the legal issues are resolved, however, we felt it might be a good idea to reinforce the effort to incorporate an easement for such a purpose. Celeste will write a letter and CC Cory to the Wilton Planning Board (??) expressing that our main concern is with the handling of stormwater runoff into brook and over the spare property. She will also mention that we think the Riverwalk is a great idea and we would support their efforts to that end.

Upcoming Conferences and Education Material- Cory provided this.

From Bill: Mary Tebo Davis of UNH EDU forwarded a University of NH address which may contain some of the information that SorLac may be interested in.

<https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/exoticspecies/index.htm>

George also sent out an email which he thought was interesting.
Waterconnections.net/blog

Presentations and Special Topics for Discussion- Rich Hart suggested and it was agreed by all present that we should postpone these “Special Topic Discussions” until we can meet in person at a site that allows us to view presentations in a public manner as several members are attending our virtual meetings via phones and do not have visual access to materials presented.

Celeste did however discuss the topic of PCB and Fish in the Souhegan around the Fletcher Paint Works Superfund Site. She will email links. Fletcher’s was cleaned up in 2016 and in a separate operation the sediment was removed from the river as well. That was completed in 2017. “Do Not Eat Fish” signs were posted on the River for a mile upstream, approximately where 101 and 101-A intersect. Celeste talked with the Remedial Site manager for the site and there has not been any fish tissue sampling done. Presumably, no young fish would be polluted but there is the chance there are a few mature fish still around (we figured they were too old to leap the dam, hence no postings downstream) Any tissue testing that would happen would have to be paid for by GE as they are the responsible party and the testing was scheduled for this summer. Covid19 concerns will probably cause it to be postponed. When they test and if they find that the threshold of PCB’s is low, the signs will be removed.

Local Updates

Souhegan Watershed Association- There have been two water test at Watson Park. The first test was excellent and results are posted on the website. The second test was June 18, results pending but also will be posted.

New Ipswich- Nothing to report

Greenville- Nothing to report

Temple- Nothing to report

Wilton- Peter Howd is joining our board. Welcome Peter.

Bill said that the Conservation Commission was working on a memorial for Spencer Brooks. Bill also said that a member of the Conservation Commission that also worked on the Riverwalk project believes there is a Cyanide leak near the Police Station. She wanted SWA to look into this but the testing that SWA does not test for Cyanide. Bill had George write the lady a letter explaining this, and suggested she ask Selectmen to get DES to look into this. George said that there had been Cyanide testing done previously in the area that had found Cyanide. There is a piece of property that wants to be put into Conservation but in the past this piece of property was somehow connected to rumors of Cyanide being loaded into containers and encased in cement and possibly being dumped in river. DES is looking into this.

Milford-Celeste reported that renovations are in progress at the old Merrill Gas Station at 101 and 101-A. We had hoped the lot would be cleaned up and left vacant. Cam stated that she thought the tanks had been removed.

The land behind Heywood's Farms has been leveled. No additional permits have been issued. Cory will send an additional inquiry to the State regarding the necessity of a site visit but with the Covid19 situation, site visits are being limited. At present, there have been two permits issued, one is a Timber cut which would exempt the landowner from adhering to

the Shoreland Protection Regulations. Rob pointed out that that cannot be obtained as a first step in a real estate deal. Tracie commented that DES know this is a bad loophole that a few Foresters have used but it would be a huge fight between DES and the forestry industry to get it changed. Someone pointed out that in a "Timber Harvest" the stumps are suppose to be left in place, these were not. Clearly, something else is planned. George reminded us that we looked at this property when it came before our board as a golf course proposal about 5-10 years ago.

Merrimack-The Severn's Bridge Canoe takeout is in rough shape but still being used. George insist it is the best place to have a takeout. Nelson says he looked into what is happening here. There are plans on an agenda "without a timeline" to build a different canoe site just downriver on land that the town owns and provides better parking. George will talk to Kyle (presumably he is with DPW in Merrimack) and see if the project can be moved along. George still thinks the current site is a better site, but Nelson doesn't think the town will support 2 sites. Rob will send the promised letter from the Amherst Conservation Commission supporting the upgrade to a canoe takeout site.

The pedestrian bridge that is beneath the Merrill's Marauder's Bridge on the Everett Turnpike is closed to traffic. Apparently during a recent inspection, the bridge was found to be deficient. Maybe, because of corrosion caused by salt dripping down from bridge above? The bridge was purchased from the city of Portsmouth a few years back. An engineering firm took a look at the bridge and determined that it could be repaired for about \$300,000 or replaced for \$600,00.

Amherst-Rob is renewing membership.

We also had a short virtual tour of Greenville, Marshall offered to give a tour to the historical sites along the river to anyone who is interested. Many years ago we arranged visits along each town's portion of the river and Marshall hosted a wonderful tour through Greenville which I attended. If we do schedule a tour, I highly recommend it and Marshall's backyard is big enough for us all to social distance in. Great view too of the Wapack Range. K

Next Meeting July 16, Online Web X

Submitted by Kleta Dudley, sec. June 19, 2020

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