

# Minutes of Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee

Online

August 20, 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), Cam Lockwood (Temple), Celeste Barr (Milford), Kleta Dudley (New Ipswich), Marshall Buttrick (Greenville), George May (Merrimack), Rich Hart (Amherst), and Peter Howd, (Wilton.)

**Approval of Minutes from June 2020 -Approved.**

## **Business**

**Wilton Telephone Co. project permit issued by NHDES-** Permit was issued despite ongoing boundary dispute. Cam and Cory met with DJ Garcia (owner of Pizza Place that is disputing the boundary) for a site tour. Project area likely will be prone to flooding from the river and from areas up the hill, also the project is well within the 100 year flood plain. There is not much we can do at this point. Cory would have recommended to Planning Board to not have built at this site. Rich asked if there has been an update on the flood amounts due to climate change. We don't know. Cory has checked the Cornell site and they are sticking to their mantra of more rain all at once and more dry. There was discussion of insurance cost in flood plain. Peter noted that building codes will need to have better plans for more runoff than currently. Planning Board gave conditional approval to the site plan pending some administrative details, and they required the applicant to secure their stormwater mitigation plan with a bond should it not perform as expected.

There is room for an installed walkway along the riverfront.

**Watson Park in Merrimack-** Merrimack is having a problem with too many visitors and trash at Watson Park. Currently with the Covid Crisis this is a statewide problem according to Tracie at DES, especially in the southern part of the state. Cory did a site visit arriving between 10:30 and 11:00 A.M. on a Sunday and he got the 3<sup>rd</sup> to last parking space. The lot had cars from several states. The town has closed the park and is proposing to put up a fence. The trash so far is being handled by volunteers coming in on Saturday. The problem is the number of people. The parking lot is not huge and people park in private lots and then get their car towed. They cannot make the park for town residents only as Federal funds were used to establish it and cannot restrict anyone. Cory had pictures of the town truck heavily loaded with garbage bags. There was a lot of trash. George does water testing at this site. George also said that Wildcat Falls is also closed because of issues with parking. Celest echoed Tracie's statement that this was happening all over the place but felt the problem would not be an issue under normal conditions and after the weather cools a bit. Cory is working on a letter to the town. He wants people to love the River and not have it be something behind a fence or highway. Our position will be that we think a fence is a bad idea. George thinks the trash is the big issue and he feels that Merrimack can muster volunteer to deal with that issue as we all hope it is a short term problem. Cam thinks a fence might aggravate the situation and lead to erosion as well. Nelson Disco, who was not able to attend, is the chairman of a committee developing a river walkway. This swimming hole is part of that plan.

Since Cory will be writing a letter to the town, George would like Cory to also include a suggestion to take down the cement walls of the Granite Bridge as well. Nelson who could not attend the meeting but noted upon review of minutes that the design for the River Trail has been approved by the Merrimack Town Center Committee, DPW Town Council and NHDOT and doesn't want to introduce any new request into Souhegan River Trail Project at this time. He was unsure of what cement walls on the Granite bridge George was referring to.

### **Near Future Meetings will be online**

**Upcoming Events-** Wild and Scenic Film Festival streaming online beginning Aug. 27<sup>th</sup>. This is a fundraiser for the Rivers' Council. You have 5 days to watch the film. <https://nhrivers.org/film-festival-2020/> Cool poster.

## **604(b) Water Quality Planning Grants Available to Regional Planning**

**Commission-**Cory will reach out to NRPC to find out about this. It appears we need matching funds as well. George says he would be happy to be the head of a subcommittee for an updated water management plan.

## **Local Updates**

Souhegan Watershed Association- Nothing to Report

New Ipswich- Nothing to report-

Temple- Nothing to report

Greenville-The mill pond is down because they are working on the turbines at the mill.

Wilton- Another subdivision is going before Planning Board. It is located on Pine Valley St. It is not within the Shoreline Protection Zone but the way they are routing the water is being noted as it is a sensitive area.

Milford- Celeste said she had had no response on her inquiries regarding the old Hayward Farms site. The State compliance officer thought the town had walked the site so they hadn't been there and the local contact hasn't gotten back to her. On Friday Aug. 21 Celeste emailed a response from Lincoln Daley, Director of Community Development for the town of Milford stating that "the property owner's long term intention is to continue to use the property for farmland (crops and hay). The property owner has no intention of developing the property. "

There will be a Hazardous Waste day in Milford Aug. 28<sup>th</sup>.

Merrimack- nothing else to report.

Amherst- Nothing specific to the River but Rich said they were repairing the road in front of his house some trees were cut. He has ended up with a lot of wood and is working on getting it cut and split. He has donated it to The Wood Ministry which provides wood to the needy. The gentleman in charge is Doug Howe. His email is [knowhowe@fairpoint.net](mailto:knowhowe@fairpoint.net) and/or <http://bridgechurchnh.com/outreach/wood-ministry>

Next Meeting, Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>, online.

Submitted by Kleta Dudley, sec. Aug 23, 2020