

# SoRLAC-Online

**April 15, 2021**

*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), Celeste Barr (Milford), Bill Mahar (Wilton), Rob Clemens (Amherst), Rich Hart (Amherst), Cam Lockwood (Temple), Cathy Joly (Temple), Kleta Dudley (New Ipswich), Marshall Buttrick (Greenville), George May (Merrimack), Peter Howd (Wilton), Nelson Disco (Merrimack), guest Peter Zaykoski (Merrimack), guest Chad Dubuc (New Ipswich resident and landowner seeking driveway permit), and guest Erin Darrow of Right Angle Engineering.

## **New Business**

**New Ipswich driveway permit**-Erin Darrow of Right Angle Engineering gave a brief presentation for a driveway proposal for Chad and Anne Dubuc of New Ipswich on River Road. They need a Shoreland Protection Permit. After crossing the bridge (932' elevation and shore height) built approximately 2-3 years ago, the proposed driveway travels about 60' gaining only 2' elevation. At that point there is a moderate grade but the driveway remains off of the steep slopes by curving around them. The area is not in a designated steep slope overlay area. The drive is 16' wide allowing passage of 2 emergency vehicles if necessary. There are stone swells for drainage at the base of the drive just before crossing the bridge. There are also bio retention/infiltration swells to collect excess drainage. There will be natural plantings used in the rain gardens on either side of bridge. Straw rather than hay will be used to initially establish these plantings. The soil in the vicinity of the drive is excellent for drainage. There will be minimal clearing in the path of the driveway. There was evidence that suggest there had been gravel removed from the site at some point in the past. Soil removed from proposed driveway site will not be stored within the 250' shoreline protection boundary.

There was a lot of discussion about the low height of bridge. As it was built by a different construction firm, we were not able to ascertain why it was so low. Erin did point out that it had the advantage of not requiring the road on either side to be built up, which would have required a lot of fill and would have impacted the area very differently. She was of the opinion that the flood plain did not exceed the banks of the shore at that point in the river. We were unsure about that. Rob asked because he felt the retention areas were close to the river and might be overwhelmed in a heavy water event as Amherst has similar problems. George was concerned as to where the snow was going. Erin said, probably the river. Nelson also was concerned about the low height of the bridge and called attention to the fact that Merrimack has had to reconstruct several bridges recently. Cory suggested that the retention areas be set further out from the bridge going into the property. He will write a letter asking for delineation of 100 year flood plain and mention the comments on the bridge. Otherwise, we were okay with the plan.

**Approval of Minutes from March 2021- Done**

## **Old Business**

### **River's Edge Development-**

**River's Edge Residential Development-** There was a tour of the proposed subdivision. Peter Howd, Cam Lockwood and Rich Hart attended. Rich and Cam both agreed that it was a lovely location. Rich said the road up to the site was an old woods road fairly high above the river. They will be moving the road higher up away from river. There were several intermittent streams, a larger one running through a pipe under the road which will be replaced in new road with a larger pipe and some rocks will be removed. Rich voiced concern that the flow rate should be slowed down and not increased and questioned the removal of the rocks.

Cam noted that the neighbors uphill are losing a natural view as there will undoubtedly be little cover from trees once the development is built. She also noted the steep slopes for an area with so many structures proposed and so much impervious surfaces.

Peter said the Zoning Board had granted a wetlands crossing permit after concerns were addressed about issues with the intermittent streams. The culvert will be upgraded to 36" and will be imbedded. The bottom will be naturalized with sediments friendly to aquatic wildlife. There is rip rap proposed downstream of culvert to slow flow, which would accommodate amphibians. Cory asked about using a flat bottom culvert and Peter said the issue would come up again and the stormwater management. Peter is also on the stormwater management team in Wilton. He is concerned that the stormwater plan will concentrate stormwater drainage to the location of the detention pond, focusing water supply and degrading peripheral wetlands by the river. He commented that there is a lot of topography and there will be a big alteration of terrain permit submitted to the state in the future. The slopes are greater than 15% but the area is not in an Overlay district that places local limits on slopes.

Peter will advocate for a conservation easement along the river. There is an abandoned bridge next to the development's driveway on a lot that belongs to the town. Perhaps the town could get access but the permitting could be "hideous" as it is a steep rock ledge slope so attaching stairs will be difficult, but there is a nice flat flood plain for walking just upstream. Town ordinances encourage this type of development to provide conservation easements. The time for this is not now however.

No permits request have been have been submitted to the State (Septic design, Shorelands and Alteration of Terrain.)

**MVC Eye Care-DES** gave them the permit as everything was done properly eventually. There is no drainage into the river and there were no fines or penalties.

**Ted Arcidi Property-**The State gave the approval for the pesticide use. George is still not clear on the high water mark. Tracie had sent an email specifying that the high water was the top of the bank.

Cam wanted to know if we could get a site walk along the river. There was discussion on how to view the property from across the river at the Trombley farm. Rob volunteered to send an email to Chris (a member of Milford's Conservation Comm.) requesting a site walk.

**Town of Merrimack, Pedestrian Walkway-** Permit was approved.

## **Other New Business-**

**54 School St. Milford-**This is an elderly housing unit in Milford facing the fire Department. Celeste felt it was a good repurpose of an old building. It is set back from river and probably not in the flood plain as it sets high up from the river. George thought the parking could be a concern. They are increasing impervious surface by 30%. Rob felt we should hold off commenting until we had a chance to study the plans. We will review it at our meeting in May.

## **Other Items**

**Best Practices-** Postponed

**NHDES 2021 Drinking Water Source Protection Virtual Conference on Wednesday May 19 and Thursday, May 20 Online.-** This year's conference will feature roundtable discussions and presentations on:

- i. Climate impacts affecting public water systems such as drought and flooding, and how to manage, adapt or mitigate these impacts.
- ii. Results of a statewide public health study concerning human exposure to metals, pesticide, and emerging contaminants found in drinking water.
- iii. Examples of how to use federal and state dollars to conserve critical water supply lands.
- iv. Public education: The keys to ensuring your message is compelling and effective.
- v. \$35, Register at the American Ground Water Trust website: [www.agwt.org](http://www.agwt.org) (click on events)

Cam will probably register and attend this.

**Souhegan River Watershed Management Plan (2013) Renewal Plan-** This needs to be updated. Cory is working on a plan to determine what we can do and how to secure funding. Cam mentioned that the UNH student

routinely have worked on plans for other groups and could be a source of input. She also noted that individual towns should include the plan in their town plans. Peter Howd expressed interest in helping with this.

**Souhegan Watershed Association-** Website is coming along with help from Peter Zaykoski and Rich Hart. George said there have been several inquiries about water monitoring this summer. He thinks there may be a few test at certain sites.

**New Ipswich-** Short discussion on previous topic of driveway on River Rd. 98 Acres with one house, maybe we should suggest a conservation easement on some of the property.

**Temple-** Conservation Committee wants to be more proactive acquiring easements. Discussion on how some towns put up bonds to buy land. Rob noted that Hollis is 32% preserved.

**Greenville-** Nothing to report

**Wilton-** Peter showed us pictures of the Conservation Committee's Riverwalk's construction site which was in pretty sad shape. The silt fence is in major disrepair and not working. He jokingly commented that as the Storm Water Management person he's already written himself up twice. Cam asked if SoRLAC should write a letter to the town. Peter says he wants to wait until after the next deadline passes and maybe he will contact DES on behalf of the stormwater drainage team.

**Milford-** Celeste reported that the Recreation Committee is looking at plans for building a Recreation and Community Center in Keyes Field. There are concerns about greatly increasing the impervious surface with buildings and parking lots in what is a major open Greenspace for the town. However, it is not an imminent concern, more of a long range project along the river to keep an eye on.

Milford Community Development Office informs us that the Souhegan Boys' and Girls' Club is planning to solicit the Attorney General to break a permanent Conservation Easement they gave to the town that connects the Post Office area to the Souhegan River trail. The town accepted half a

million dollars in federal grant money to build a bridge and sidewalks for walkability and to connect to the easement trail.

The Boys' and Girls' Club now wants to turn the easement trail into a road 8' wide so their buses can have a second exit from the facility and leave a very narrow pedestrian walkway. This trail is currently bounded by fencing and is approximately 12' feet wide

Celeste said there are issues with traffic at the exit point. George was skeptical of the ability to remove snow from between fences. Marshall told Celeste she should contact the Attorney General's office soon and notify them of her concerns so as to be "put into the loop" of what is being discussed. It was decided that this was something SoRLAC should comment on. Celeste was hoping George would still have copies of a letter she had written in July 2016 about this very matter to the Attorney General which outlined the timeline and history of the Town procuring the Federal Grant and the Easement as well as a former attempt of the Club to amend the river trail easement.

Discussion followed on the support of other River, Watershed and Conservation Groups that had weighed in giving support in favor of maintaining the Easement.

Celeste will put together a letter and send to Cory to review and it will be sent from SoRLAC.

**Merrimack**-Hoping to get Souhegan River Trail built.

**Amherst**-Rob says the only thing that might impact river is the Open Space Warrant Article. Rich says they are working on vernal pools and new walkways at the old golf course.

Next Meeting, May 20, 2021 online

Kleta will not be present. Cory might not be present.

Peter Howd will contact Cory with Zoom information

Submitted by Kleta Dudley, sec. April 16, 2021

