

# Minutes of Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee

Online

April 16, 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 of LAC members and invited any guests to introduce themselves.*

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

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

## **Business**

**Review of NH DOT project to address existing RR crossing NH Route 31 and Burns Hill Rd. in Wilton.-** This is to cleanup site, update equipment and upgrade track and signals. This is at a confluence of roads that meet downtown near the police station and just downhill from the High School. In the letters that DOT provided, they clarified that no work should affect the stream, however, they sent no plans. Peter Howd stated that the clean up of the intersection was due to safety concerns. His only concern was that the work might affect drainage. Tracie Sales said she had not seen anything about this come across her desk yet. She noted that since there was apparently some realignment of the road, that there might be some concern but with no plans, she concurred that we needed more information.

Cory will request that we need more information before we can comment.

**Land Surplus Disposal-** This was about converting a small piece of property that had been acquired as a State right -of-way, back to original land owner in Milford. State had acquired it as a right of way into a super fund site nearby but it has not been used. No one had any issues with returning it to owner. Cory will respond to Tracie and she will forward it onwards.

**Logging operation on old Hayward Farm, Milford, NH-** Celeste had sent an inquiry into DES regarding heavy equipment at the old Hayward Farms. The trees along the river, several hundred feet and around an oxbow were removed and stumpage is currently stacked in middle of field. They also have a permit to fill holes with dirt. She had taken pictures which she had sent around and dug into the permit process. The permit to cut (think clear) was done under a forestry permit. Forestry permits for Timber harvest do not require adhering to the 250' setbacks required in Shoreline Protection. Reasons for cutting were for agricultural purposes it stated on permit. They also have a permit to fill holes with dirt. The permit also stated the need to level a small structure on the site for fear of contamination. There is a super fund site nearby.

The property was once before us as a future golf course. During the course of the meeting we tried to sort out the chain of ownership from then to now as the owners listed on the current permit are different but there appears to be a connection between the company (Ryefield Development) and the former owner. Ryefield Development also owns apartment/condo down the river from this property toward the center of Milford.

George felt this was a clear violation of the intent of the exemption for forestry permits of the 250' shoreline protection act. He felt the forestry company must have known what they were doing was illegal.

We wondered why the State would not recognize that a "timber harvest" wouldn't be applicable in a corn field. Hopkinton Forestry and Land Clearing is the contractor. Rob questioned if the Milford Conservation Comm. had reviewed the permit and Celeste did not know. She said when she spoke with a state forester, Jay, he voiced concern that this was a loophole in the system and that a lot of folks were taking advantage of the current circumstances (Covi19 issues) to do things knowing there was not adequate staff to inspect sites or delve into what was actually happening.

The form will be sent by SoRLAC to DES, cc-ed to Milford Conservation Commission, Town of Milford and whatever organization oversees the Forestry Dept. at the state level. It will be noted that large mature trees were removed in the riparian zone between an agricultural field and the river (not a forest or woodland.) Noting the floodplain and the oxbow which will probably cut the field in half. Noting it is unclear how the rubble is going to be addressed. We would also like a mitigation plan that includes a planting plan.

Tracie said going forward we should be on the watch for turbidity. This is not a test we usually test for. There is a visual call for it on the form but nothing standardized.

George thinks the forestry company should be cited for violations. Tracie offered to help in any way she could.

**And as long as we are discussing Milford**-there were questions about a “Stonehenge” in Keyes Field. Celeste explained that there use to be a quarry behind the area where the County Store presently is. On the land where the quarry was there was a small stone structure built entirely of stones from the quarry. As the owner has developed a lot of the land over the years, there was a group of people in town (Celeste referred to them as the “Stoners”) that thought it would be nice to save the structure or at least use the stones from the structure somewhere in town rather than just have it demolished prior to development. A small amphitheater has been built in the Keyes Field.

**Special Topics for Discussion**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>SoRLAC rep.</b>
<b>2/20</b>	<b>WWTP- how they work</b>		<b>Jim</b>
<b>5/21</b>	<b>Results of Dam removals</b>		<b>George</b>
<b>5/21</b>	<b>Results of testing at Superfund sites, PCB in fish</b>		<b>Celeste</b>
	<b>BMP for wetland projects, i.e. culverts, dams, culvert mapping</b>		
<b>6/18</b>	<b>Climate changes in rivers, its effect on critters</b>		
<b>7/16</b>	<b>State fish stocking program</b>		<b>George</b>

8/20	Green Burials		Cathy(?)
9/17	Surface Water Runoff During Construction Projects		
10/15			
11/20			
12/20			

## Local Updates

**Souhegan Watershed Association-** George is not sure if there is going to be water testing this year. George also received a letter from the new owners of the Horseshoe in Wilton. They will be building one structure on the property. George had emailed the letter to members of the committee and he wrote back and explained roles of Souhegan Watershed and SoRLAC.

**New Ipswich-** Cory asked Kleta to check out a house being built on River Rd. South of Gibson Corner's. Appears to be very close to River. Tracie commented that there is an App that maps permit applications.

**Greenville-** Nothing to report

**Temple-** Nothing to report.

**Wilton-** Sustainability fair has been cancelled

**Milford-**See above

**Merrimack-** Nelson said nothing new. George commented that Condos on Chamberlain Rd were looking better than he'd expected. Rob asked about a lot near Seavern's Bridge Rd. that appeared to be near the river. Nelson explained the history of the subdivision and explained that the lot is not on the River but the original lot it was subdivided off of is.

**Amherst-**Rich reported that the town had bought Buck Meadow Golf Course. It will be conservation and recreation land. It is a 40 acre piece of property with an

18 acre easement in a floodplain. He also announced that he will not be renewing his position on the Planning Board. His decision is a result of the town voting to make the position an elected office.

Next Meeting May 21, Online

Submitted by Kleta Dudley, sec. Apr. 17, 2020

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