

Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee
January 31, 2017 at Pease Public Library
Plymouth, New Hampshire

Minutes

Members Present:

Max Stamp (Bristol); Dan Paradis (Bristol); Barry Draper (New Hampton); Carl Lehner Holderness); Bill Bolton (Plymouth); Kelly van Lingen (New Hampton); Leigh Sharps (Ashland).

Also Present:

Dave Jeffers (LRPC); Gretchen Draper (New Hampton); Andy Roy (Thornton).

Call to Order:

Chairman Max Stamp called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM. He asked the members to introduce themselves for the benefit of potential member Andy Roy.

Approval of Minutes:

Carl Lehner made a motion seconded by Bill to approve the minutes of November 29, 2016 as presented. The motion carried unanimously with one abstention.

Northern Pass:

Max summarized briefly what had happened since our last meeting. A data request from Northern Pass Transmission LLC (NPT) needed to be submitted by December 30, 2016. This was completed and submitted by Max, Barry Draper and Gretchen Draper. On January 27, 2017 Max, Barry and Gretchen attended a "Tech Session" in Concord making a presentation and answering questions from the NPT lawyers as well as the Counsel for the Public, Peter Roth. Max asked Gretchen and Barry to describe their presentations at this session.

Gretchen explained that the theme of her presentation was to review how we got to this point, starting from the serious pollution which characterized the Pemi in the early 1960's. She also described today's uses of the river and the continued improvements being made such as the Livermore Falls park development initiated by the Friends of the Pemi group. She felt some of the questions asked were an effort to reduce PRLAC's credibility, but thought we did a good job answering them.

Barry's focus at this session was on the flora and fauna of the river corridor, along with the aesthetic values of the Pemi and its contribution to tourism. He illustrated his presentation with a number of photos.

Max then provided more detail about his testimony, which was directed toward the scale and scope of the project. He challenged the need for increased power capacity, citing data from ISO New England showing no projected increases in demand for the New England region through 2020. He also challenged the description of Northern Pass as a "green" energy project, particularly when the effects on the native peoples in Quebec are taken into account. He questioned the assertion by NPT's consultants that the visual impact of the transmission line and its associated facilities would be zero. All of the presenters commented on how useful the Management Plan was in giving PRLAC more credibility. Dave Jeffers pointed out that the PRLAC Management Plan, the results of the public survey associated with it, and all the minutes of PRLAC meetings going back several years are available now on the PRLAC website.

There was a brief discussion of the role and effectiveness of the NH Department of Environmental Services in protecting the river and the consensus was that cuts in resources at DES have severely limited their ability to fulfill their regulatory functions.

At this point, Max outlined the next steps in the Site Evaluation Committee's process culminating in the SEC's decision in September of this year.

Finally, there was some discussion regarding the possible relevance of river overlays in local zoning ordinances. Even though these river protection ordinances might not be enforceable with regard to NPT, they

illustrate the importance of river protection to the bordering towns and are something the Counsel for the Public has asked bordering towns and PRLAC to provide.

Proposed Changes to RSA 483-B (Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act):

Max had emailed an explanation of this proposal to members prior to the meeting which he reviewed at this point. One aspect of the SWQPA is a 50 foot waterfront buffer within which a point and grid system is used to determine how many trees and saplings must be retained. The current standard is 50 points in each 50' X 50' grid cell. Some landowners have violated the spirit of the law by clustering the retained trees and saplings on the outside edge of two adjacent grid cells, in effect creating a nearly 100' clearcut. The current proposal (SB 10) would reduce the cell width to 25' and require the retention of 25 points within each 50' X 25' cell. While not a perfect solution, this proposal has been endorsed by DES and was seen favorably by the group. Max said he would send out details of the proposed change via email.

Northern Pass (continued):

Max said there is a potential for site visits by the intervenors on the NPT transmission line project. He asked the members to try to come up with at least four locations which would be appropriate.

Plymouth Salt Shed Relocation:

Bill Bolton brought up an issue which was not on the published agenda but which he had learned of earlier in the day. The Plymouth Highway Department would like to move their salt shed about 50 ft. to a location only about 15 ft. from the top of the bank of the Pemi. The proposal does call for a concrete floor, but still would appear to be a threat to the river. Bill asked for suggestions which would encourage the Highway Department to reconsider this move. Kelly van Lingen suggested we might write a letter expressing our objections. Dan Paradis thought the Plymouth Conservation Commission might be able to help. Dave Jeffers suggested contacting the New Hampshire Homeland Security and Energy Management office to see what assistance they might be able to offer.

Financial Report from LRPC:

Dave Jeffers passed out a one-page income/expense summary covering fiscal years 2008 to 2017. We are in relatively good shape with a balance of roughly \$1,000.

Adjournment:

Barry Draper made a motion seconded by Kelly van Lingen to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:08 PM.

Financial Report from LRPC:

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel A. Paradis