



PUBLIC WATER ACCESS ADVISORY BOARD
JANUARY 7, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

9:32 a.m. – NHFG, 11 HAZEN DRIVE, CONCORD, NH 03301

Members Present: Thomas Quarles, Esq., Chairman (general public); Timothy Dunleavy, DOS ; Jim Gallagher, DES; Gary Clark (general public); Ken Gallagher, OSI; Glenn Normandeau, NHFG; Garret Graaskamp, NHFG; Michele Tremblay (river interests); David Bryan (coastal interests); Rebecca Martin, NHDOT; Paul Van Blarigan, GCD;.

Members Absent: Gene Porter (power boat interests); Bill Gegas, DANCR; Dick Smith (fishing interests); Senator Ruth Ward; Rep. Bob L’Heureux; Joe Goodnough, NHLA; R. Andrew Robertson (non-motorized boating interests).

Audience Members: Kelly Buchanan, NH Lakes Association, Edwin Smith, Hinsdale citizen, Kathy Urffer, River Steward, CT River Conservancy, formerly CT River Watershed Council; Ted Diers, DES.

MEETING CONVENED

Chairman Quarles welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS – [Note: Text in bold denotes action items or motions.]

1. Approval of PWAAB Meeting Minutes – November 5, 2018

Michele Tremblay made a motion to amend the November 5, 2018 minutes, with the addition of a sentence on page 2, under Item #3, “The board had discussion on the Boat Safe Study Committee’s report on SB-410, relating to the proposal to expand the hike safe card into the boating safety area.”, amendment seconded by Ken Gallagher. The board unanimously approved the amendment.

Ken Gallagher made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, and Timothy Dunleavy seconded. The Board unanimously approved.

2. Open Hunting Interests position on PWAAB – Scott Biron, E.D. of N.H. Wildlife Federation is interested

Chairman Quarles reported that Scott Biron, Executive Director, NH Wildlife Federation, was currently going through the process to replace Ronald Sowa on the PWAAB, to represent hunting interests.

3. Lower Beech Pond right of way access – boulders have been removed

Gary Clark reported that the ramp at Lower Beech Pond, Tuftonboro, N.H., was fixed and better than before. He reported that the road was repaired and boulders removed. He stated, "They did a good job!"

Chairman Quarles thanked Gary for his efforts in keeping up to date on this on this subject.

4. New Androscoggin Access, Errol, N.H. – NFCT

Chairman Quarles reported on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail (NFCT). He reported that the new Indian Cove boat launch was one of the most popular launching points on the Androscoggin River. He reported that the launch point sees significant traffic from fishermen, whitewater enthusiasts, commercial rafting trips, and canoeists. He reported that the NFCT Stewardship Crew and community volunteers were able to install a set of timber access stairs and a boat slide for rafts. The NFCT Stewardship Crew finished the project in July of 2018.

Tim DunLeavey commented that it may be dominated by use of rafting outfits. He stated, "I can see the potential for this site to be quickly filled with commercial users."

Chairman Quarles reported that when the group contacted him a while ago, he strongly recommended having an agreement/contract in place with Union Waterpower Company, to include the terms of the agreement, indicating restrictions, such as "no commercial use", and to have a specific designation of responsibilities spelled out.

5. DOT/Fish and Game presentation on CT River –Hinsdale sites

Trent Zanes, P.E., DOT, provided an overview of future improvements to the Prospect Street launch site in Hinsdale, NH, on the CT River. The board viewed a slide presentation indicating the site location. Trent explained that the project consists of one bridge to cross over the CT River, which will provide much improved access to the river for outdoor activities, with 8 parking spaces & 1 handicapped space.

Michele Trembaly inquired as to whether there would be designated parking spaces for car-top only. She stated, "That could be an issue for boaters."

Chairman Quarles recommended having 2 to 4 car-top "only" parking spaces in the field area, in the middle of the parking lot, to assist in alleviating issues

with boaters. Trent reported that further parking details on the site would be discussed at a future planning meeting.

He reported that the bridge reconstruction project is scheduled to get underway in September of 2019, and is anticipated to be a 4 year project.

Chairman Quarles inquired as to what the Town thought of the project. Trent reported that the Town has not provided much feedback or comment, however, are aware of the project.

Trent reported that the management & oversight details of the site still need to be discussed. Garret Graaskamp reported that there was potential for a long-term lease with the Town, which is generally for a period of 25 -30 years in length, with the Town maintaining ownership. He reported that he would be willing to work with the Town to address that.

In closing, Edwin Smith, Hinsdale Representative, stated, "I think this is a good plan and excellent project! Edwin stated, "Having listened to the conversation today, I think it's important that we do have proper parking for car-top only at the proposed site."

6. CT River Conservancy Access Survey – K. Urffer

Kathy Urffer, River Steward, CT River Conservancy, formerly CT River Watershed Council, reported that in November and December of 2017, The Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) conducted an online survey and four public meetings to collect additional information related to recreational needs in the Wilder, Bellows Falls and Vernon Hydroelectric facility project areas. As a result of that effort, CRC continues to have conversations throughout the watershed with municipalities and local recreational organizations regarding emerging and ongoing infrastructure needs. In addition, CRC's intern called many of the towns along the river to ask them directly about their recreational infrastructure needs and received informative feedback.

Suggestions received from the survey regarding local access opportunities:

- * Better signage
- * Better parking
- * Improved Access
- * Filtration/Sedimentation
- * Porta-potty use

Main takeaways from the survey:

- *Infrastructure needs
- *River Flows
- *Awareness/Communication

CRC will be asking FERC to require the following:

- *New recreation sites
- *Marketing money
- *Maintenance money
- *Support for CT River Paddlers Trail
- *Conservation Easements

Kathy reported on specific projects in NH:

Hinsdale State Park/River Access –

- Properties owned by the State of NH along the CT River.
- A trail across the railroad bridge would connect hundreds of miles of hiking trails between VT and NH.
- Prospect Street Boat launch is approximately 1.5 miles south of this area.

Cheshire County Jail Complex –

- Discussion of possible hand/car top boat launch site.
- Cheshire County is considering plans for redevelopment of this site.
- River Road in Westmoreland, NH.
- 499 acres of woodland, 129 acres of farmland & 12 acres of wetland.
- 6,700 feet of CT River frontage.

In closing, Kathy reported that she met with Phil Bryce, from NH State Parks, and had discussion on potential State Park sites on the CT River. She said there is some excitement about this, as this would be the first State Park on the CT River. She stated, "This seems like a good place to connect 2 States together."

She further reported that she, and Edwin Smith, Hinsdale Representative, would be meeting with Commissioner Stewart, of the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources, after this meeting to have further discussion.

On behalf of the board, Chairman Quarles thanked Kathy for her presentation.

7. Connor Pond, Ossipee – access site problem and video – Garret G.

Chairman Quarles reported that the Connor Pond Access Site was a small, scenic pond that was gifted to the Fish & Game Department. Garret reported that over the last 12 months, an individual has been pursuing the issue of allowing swimming at public boat ramps, and subsequently wrote a letter to Senator

Bradley, who, in fact, has submitted a bill to allow swimming at non-motorized boat access sites. Garret showed a clip from the Northwoods Law Series, of Fish & Game Conservation Officers addressing a woman insisting that she has the right to swim at a public boat launch, as her body is her "personal watercraft". Chairman Quarles reported that boat ramps are built with federal monies and cannot permit swimming.

Director Normandeau responded with a letter to Senator Bradley indicating why this was a safety issue and not permissible. He reported "Everyone wants to swim for free if possible, especially if you do not have a Town sticker or proper authorization." Director Normandeau reported that the department maintains boat access sites with federal monies and swimming is not allowed. Garret commented that the best & most efficient way to ensure safety at sites is to not allow swimming. Chairman Quarles requested that Garret provide copies of HB-276, to the board, when the language is out and available.

Rebecca Martin suggested possibly supplying some signage to inform folks of alternate swimming sites. She stated, "Maybe it's an education & awareness issue and people just don't know where to go to swim."

Chairman Quarles recommended putting a sheet of paper at department kioks, indicating legal, local places to swim. He stated, "This may help alleviate the number of swimming issues Conservation Officers have to deal with."

8. 2017 State Agency Reports – Board review and votes

***DOT**– Chairman Quarles reported that everyone had the DOT report to review. Rebecca Martin reported that she would be providing an attachment to go with the report for the next meeting.

Chairman Quarles reported that the board would hold off voting until the next meeting, when everyone has had an opportunity to view the attachment.

***DES** – Chairman Quarles reported that everyone had the DES report to review. Chairman Quarles reported that the report is thorough and quite lengthy.

Jim Gallagher made a motion to approve the 2017 DES report and Ken Gallager seconded. The board unanimously approved.

9. Pending Legislation

HB-1810 – Study Commission – Next meeting is Friday, January 11, 2019. At the last meeting there was no quorum, and the next meeting is to be announced.

* **Proposed legislation for 2019 – including Great Bay, Hilton Park, Dover** – Director Normandeau reported that Senator Watters was the prime sponsor of LSR-274, requiring the department of Transportation and the Fish & Game Department to develop a plan for the construction of a ramp, dock, and parking area at Great Bay Waters at Hilton Park in Dover, NH. Director Normandeau reported that the exact language was not known yet and that he would keep the board updated as things transpire.

Emery Farm – Town of Greenland

Director Normandeau informed the board that the department has recently acquired property on Great Bay, known as the Emery Farm. He reported that there was a life estate on the property, however, the individual has passed away and the property is now under the management of the Fish & Game Department. He reported that the property consists of 7,000 feet of beautiful waterfront property on Great Bay.

10. Lake Sunapee – Wild Goose, Governor’s Commission and CORD – T. Quarles and Dir. Normandeau

Jim Gallagher reported that Representative Wolf was the prime sponsor of LSR-270, relative to boat and parking improvement at Mount-Sunapee State Park beach.

Director Normandeau reported that the Sunapee Boat Access subject was not on the upcoming CORD (Commission on Resources & Development) agenda. He reported that Representative Wolf has sponsored a bill to add parking and ramps at the Mount Sunapee State Park Beach. He further reported that nothing was moving forward at this point and that he would keep the board updated as things move forward.

11. Roads to Public Waters – orphaned sites project

Chairman Quarles reported that Ken Gallagher and Garret Graaskamp have spent time trying to further refine the spreadsheet. He reported that the general status is that the board has reviewed the 35 largest lakes and have not discovered any new sites.

Further research needs to be done to identify whether the Great Bay site, on Bayside Road, near the Great Bay Discovery Center, exists & is accessible from the ground.

Chairman Quarles reported that there would be a new version of the spreadsheet distributed at the March PWAAB meeting.

12. Fish and Game Project Update and Matrix – Garret Graaskamp

Downing's Landing - Garret Graaskamp reported that there was a 30 day comment period requirement prior to the wetland permit being issued. He further reported that bids were out for the coffer dam to be put in early this year. He stated, "We are moving on it ASAP!"

New Business

None at this time.

Old Business

These items were not discussed due to time constraints and are deferred until next meeting.

- River access review and prioritization
- DES Beach Inventory and OEP Database

Public Comment

No comments heard.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m. Motion to adjourn was made by Gary Clark and seconded by Garret Graaskamp. The Board unanimously approved.

Next Meeting

Chairman Quarles thanked everyone for coming and reported that the next meeting was set for March 18, 2019, at 9:00 a.m., at Fish & Game HQ, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH