

-Approved-

**MEETING MINUTES
NEW HAMPSHIRE WATER SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
July 21, 2011**

Commissioners in Attendance:

Cliff Sinnott Marcy Lyman
Denise Hart Chuck Souther
Kris Blomback Tom Burack
Glenn Normandeau Robert Beaurivage
Amy Manzelli John Gilbert
Alison Watts
WSC

Public in attendance:

John Boisvert
David Bernier
Bill Hounsell
Sarah Pillsbury
Virginia Battles-Raffer
Paul Basiliere

The meeting of the Commission was convened at 2:15pm. The minutes of the June 7 meeting were presented for approval as amended. Tom Burack made a motion to approve, seconded by Amy Manzelli and the minutes were approved unanimously. The minutes for the June 21 meeting as amended were offered for approval. Glenn Normandeau made a motion to approve seconded by Amy Manzelli and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Other issues that came before the Commission included:

Budget: John Gilbert discussed the status of the budget, announced a meeting with the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, requested Commission members to look through the budget for opportunities to donate in-kind services and to identify potential source of funding. Comments from Commission member raised concern that budget called for greater expenses than may be necessary. The Commission Chair and Vice-chair to review the budget with attention to the cost.

Commission members: The Commission is short one Commission member and needs representation from North Country. Chairman Gilbert indicated he was in discussion with Governor's office to fill the slot.

Commission meetings: When a question was raised about who was at the table and how to distinguish between Commission members and members of the public, name cards for the Commissioners were recommended and Cliff Sinnott offered to have them made for the next meeting.

Chairman Gilbert offered a review of the previous months' meetings suggesting that the facilitated meeting with Judy Stokes resulted in some good outcomes by identifying some principles, issues and draft language for a vision and suggested that we let the information and work from previous meetings settle as we start to think about where to go from here. He introduced Maureen Hart who gave a presentation on sustainability (see attached power point) and facilitated an exercise for Commission members that was offered as a potential model to use for outreach/public engagement for the 5 Commission sessions in the Council Districts.

Summary of Maureen Hart's presentation (see attached power point):

1) Points made during the presentation included the following:

-Need to develop common language of sustainability: "maintain what we have but still improve, change".

-Need to get people to a table and make decisions about what they mean when they say sustainability. In terms of the work of the Commission one of the questions is "what matters to you about NH's waters?"

-Need to develop a collective sense of accountability for a resource so that people comprehend that sustainability can only be achieved with all working together.

2) Concepts that Maureen introduced:

Measuring: using the example of companies that work on responsibly production they ask the question of how do companies measure so they can manage what they measure? (Energy use, carbon output, benefits to communities)

Trying to figure out what sustainability is: asked question do we want to live off interest or principle of our community capital? Noted that Oregon had spent years figuring out how to implement sustainability and now exporting experiences to China in consulting services.

We can look at green infrastructure: watersheds, farms, forests, aquifers, lakes, parks, etc. What are those systems that we need to have in place to make sure our water infrastructure is sustained? Example: If 20% or more of a watershed has impervious water surfaces there will be a decline in water quality.

Concepts:

Precautionary principle

Adaptive management

Green infrastructure

Resilience

Discussion:

We are water rich state – can/how do we apply precautionary principle?

How do we build a sense of collective responsibility? For example, we have talked a lot about watersheds, but in order for there to be a collective response people need to understand what a watershed is, what their relationship to a watershed is (watershed address) and relationships between watersheds. What if my watershed is in your town and you local zoning allows uses that impact my water? How do we address watersheds across local/state/federal boundaries?

How do we address time-frames: short versus long – floods vs storage, when does water get there – flow and relationship of contaminants to flow? How do we accommodate storage and release – incremental change? Do we need more reservoir capacity or do we need to manage reservoirs within a watershed more effectively, expand capacity at local level to increase capture locally through better management of forests/wetlands?

How do we address carrying capacity of watersheds? This question led to a discussion about water consumption and how we measure capacity/demand (Daily water use/person).

- 1) What do we want to use water for?
- 2) How do we want to use it?
- 3) Do we want any left over to sell outside the state?

4) What is the demand going to look like 50 years from now?

Final issue related to capacity is that it is not just about green infrastructure but also about water systems, replacement costs of existing systems, cost allocation and cost structure.

Final question related to how we organize ourselves to manage and make connections – the example of regional planning commissions was offered – the boundaries of these institutions are not relevant to the economy, society or the environment. The question was asked do we organize ourselves around a single purpose or around complex systems>?

Maureen prepared Commission members for an exercise. Commission members were broken up into four groups and stationed at a flip chart. Each group would work for 15 minutes to:

- 1) Identify a problem
- 2) Identify who needs to be at the table – key actors
- 3) Describe barriers to solving the problem
- 4) Identify who should know about the problem

The groups then would rotate to all the other flip charts and add their thoughts to the responses.

[See attached summary]

After the exercise there were several general comments and then some suggestions for moving forward:

1. Need to view water as a whole entity rather than whether it comes from a public system or private well.
2. Need a bigger picture accounting of water systems: capital and operating budgets
3. Need to think differently about accounting – what do people currently measure – how could they measure? Need for indicators.

NEXT STEPS:

There was a consensus that we need some “synthesizing time” – to sit with what we have learned and discussed around vision/drivers of change exercise, sustainability and to come up with a list of questions to ask of people to be invited in to present to the Commission.

A suggestion was made that we need to develop a model of what we think the water resource is. The USGS mapping with an overlay with demographic information was suggested, similar to what was done in Seacoast Groundwater study – offers a methodology for forecasting demand. Ask for a summary of the method they developed.

Following were suggestions on what needed to be done:

- 1) Next meeting: process for synthesizing/refining vision, developing model, identifying questions we want asked of others coming to present to
Denise Hart, Tom Burack, Sarah Pillsbury and Marcy Lyman offered to design agenda for next meeting.
- 2) Public sessions: Cliff Sinnott, Alison Watts and Bob Beurivage offered to begin the design of public session: identifying other groups with which to partner.

Public Comments:

Comments from the public included the need to look at how we currently manage our water supply and look at the stress factors, how to address individual landowner withdrawals, look at SB60 and issues related to capital reserves for reconstruction/investment/expansion of infrastructure, and finally to address tipping points (impervious surfaces – incentives to look at incremental problems).

The next meeting was scheduled for August 16 at the Higher Education Foundation conference room.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm

Respectfully submitted,
Martha West Lyman

**New Hampshire Water Sustainability Commission
July 12, 2011**

Summary of Issues exercise:

Issue #1: Carrying Capacity

Is there enough groundwater to support current and future uses in Rockingham County and Seacoast communities?

- *We don't know enough about the relationship between groundwater and surface water in other parts of the state*
- *Uncertainty about future: human needs/wants uses*
- *Uncertainty about resilience – where is tipping point?*

1. Who needs to be at the table(key actors):

- Users
- Technical data providers (USGS, State DES, hydrologists)
- Elected officials
- Service providers
- Planners (regional and municipal)
- local people
- GIS mappers
- Geographers
- decision-makers about influencing allocation of uses (is there a defined role?)
- regulators (state)
- scientists/academics

2. What are the barriers to solving the problem?

- Politics – entrenched interests
- Resistance to change
- Geology
- Urgency
- \$\$\$ and education
- Water rights – public trust doctrine
- Knowing where the water comes from not well-understood in communities

3. Who should know about the problem?

- Citizens
- media
- Educators
- civic groups
- students
- planning boards
- legislators
- judges

Issue #2: Cost allocation versus regulatory control

Cost of water does not properly account for the value of green infrastructure that supports water. How to ensure affordable rate structures (private wells are too cheap, municipal water systems are too expensive – nobody can afford it)

1. Who needs to be at the table (key actors)?
 - municipalities and governing bodies in charge of water rates
 - key actors for private wells (developers, DES?) (comment about cost of installing and assigning fee up front)
 - town conservation commissions
 - community water systems
 - well drillers
 - planning/zoning boards
 - land trusts
 - conservation groups
 - private landowners
2. What are the barriers to solving the problem?
 - politics of \$
 - sprawl
 - lack of appreciation that whether “private” water comes from well or “public” water comes from municipal system, all comes from the same or nearby watershed
 - combination of water and sewer rates
 - creating market rates for a resource perceived as plentiful
3. Who should know about the problem?
 - all water users
 - press
 - elected officials

Issue #3: Time Frame

Imperfect knowledge – need to think like water. Short-term thinking and unwillingness to sacrifice for poorly defined long term.

- *Decision-making regulator systems are not adaptive and don't capture/incorporate how water moves or how things affect water over time and space.*
 - *Variability masks trends or makes it difficult to assess*
 - *Incrementalism- containment flows/ water capture and release*
1. Who needs to be at the table (key actors)
 - local boards (all)
 - scientists
 - engineers
 - residents with long-term, local knowledge
 - regulators
 - water servers
 - users (farmers, loggers, commercial, manufacturers, developers)

2. What are the barriers to solving the problem?
 - Effects of time-frame issues are not being accounted for
 - short-time frame of human thinking (time line for humans) different from water's
 - cause/effect not adequate
 - don't know what time frames are
 - constituents find it difficult to deal with/understand complex systems

Issue #4: Watershed/Local boundaries

Political and hydrologic boundaries are different

1. Who needs to be at the table (key actors)
 - local political authorities
 - state- has authority to create broader political entity
 - volunteer watershed groups (knowledge and organization)
 - state regulators
 - watershed partnerships
 - large public/private property owners
2. What are the barriers to solving the problem?
 - lack of socio-political agency structured around/for watersheds
 - lack of understanding of watersheds (how they work, where people live within watersheds)
 - strong traditional focus/loyalty to local system
 - adequate data on each watershed to make decisions
 - watershed too large – too many people unwilling to share
 - absence of constituency with power to effect change (historically had watershed-focused non-profits that organized around clean water issues)
 - regional planning across boundaries different from watersheds
3. Who should know about the problem:
 - local electorate/citizens
 - legislators (educated and buy-in)

Notes and comments:

Collective accountability in citizenry – people get it

Enough water/high enough quality/wide range of uses

Watershed – local boundaries

Time-frame – contamination flow, capture & release, incremental change

Carrying capacity

Cost allocation – regulatory control