

**MEETING MINUTES
NEW HAMPSHIRE WATER SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
March 20, 2012**

**New Hampshire Fish and Game Department
Concord, NH**

Commissioners in attendance:

Dave Allen
Virginia Battles-Raffa
Kris Blomback
Robert Beaurivage
John Gilbert, Chair
Denise Hart
Marcy Lyman, Vice Chair
Glenn Normandeau
Amy Manzelli
Cliff Sinnott
Chuck Souther
Alison Watts

Commissioners not in attendance:

Thomas Burack
Michael Licata

Public in attendance:

John Boisvert, Pennichuck Water Works
Bill Hounsell, CDM Smith
Sarah Pillsbury, NHDES
Gil Rogers, PE Consultant
Kenneth Pelletier, Water Depot of NH
Jennifer Rowden, NHDES
Jim Ryan, NH Fish and Game Commission
Paul Susca, NHD

Chairman John Gilbert called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m.

I. February 14th Meeting Minutes

A motion to accept the February 14th meeting minutes was made by Cliff Sinnott and seconded by Glenn Normandeau. The motion passed unanimously with Dave Allen abstaining.

II. Updates

Public Engagement Subcommittee: On May 8th, the public engagement sessions the subcommittee has been working with New Hampshire Listens on will occur at five locations around the state simultaneously from 5:30 to 8:30. The simultaneous session will help to maximize the publicity of the sessions. Registration will be required for participants prior to the sessions and New Hampshire Listens will be providing the session facilitators. The subcommittee would like at least one Commission member at each of the session locations. The flyer advertising the sessions will be sent to the Commission members once finalized. A press release is scheduled to go out March 30th and then again in April.

The following Commissioners are planning to attend at the various locations:

- Concord: Virginia and Chuck
- Greenland: Glenn, Dave and John
- Manchester: Bob and Amy (tentative)
- Keene: Alison
- Berlin: Marcy

New Hampshire Listens expects to have a report back to the Commission about a month after the sessions summarizing the results.

Outreach: On Friday, March 23rd, John will be speaking during the plenary session of the New Hampshire Water and Watershed Conference at Plymouth State University. Denise will be presenting during an afternoon session with Molly Donovan (NH Listens) about the Commission's work and about gaining public input on water sustainability. Governor Lynch will be the keynote speaker at noon and will be speaking about the Commission. Alison will also be speaking about the integrated watershed work occurring on the Seacoast.

Additional out reach efforts coming up include a gubernatorial proclamation either for World Water Day or for Earth Day about the Commission. We will also begin posting water events round the state on the Commission's website.

III. Implementation Process

As a follow-up to the Commission's discussion at the February meeting, the Implementation Subcommittee took another look at how to design an implementation plan and recommendations that reflects the Commission's mandate around sustainability. At the subcommittee meeting, the group brainstormed an approach that would design a "campaign" or initiative. The Commission would create a slogan that could present a unifying message as a step in building a constituency for water in the state. Virginia explained that the subcommittee gravitated towards the slogan "New Hampshire lives on water – planning for today and tomorrow" because of its simplicity and the second half of the slogan could be changed out to address more specific issues or audiences.

The subcommittee also revamped the matrix and decided to use a series of questions as a way to introduce each of the general issues the Commission has identified. The following visions for the Commission's general issues/ topic areas and with questions related to the subcommittee discussion were drafted by Tom:

Visions:

1. Integrated watershed management and planning is occurring at appropriate levels (e.g. state or sub-watershed).
2. People have an in-depth understanding of water issues and placing great value on water and water services.
3. Stormwater and nonpoint source pollution is effectively treated.
4. Drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and dams are adequately maintained and improved as necessary to protect human health and the environment, and water services are affordable.
5. There is effective adaptation to address changing climate trends, specifically more frequent flooding and droughts and changing water occurrences and quality with increase temperatures.
6. There is an adequate quantity of water to support human and other ecological needs.

Questions:

- Is water very valuable to you?
- Will I be safe from flooding?
- Will it be clean?
- Will it be available?
- Will it be affordable?
- Will it be accessible?
- Will it be safe?
- Will it support out (future) economy?
- Will it be enough?
- Can it support fish and wildlife?
- Can it support families?
- Can it support businesses?
- Can it support recreation?
- Can it support food production?

Commission members' feedback on this approach included:

- Yes is the automatic answer to all of them. However, the real issues are actually in found in the detail of these topics.
- The questions help to highlight the threats so that we can describe what will be lost if nothing is done to help back up the recommendations.
- This framework almost needs to be three dimensional.
- The questions are the entry point for stakeholders to dig deeper into the sustainability framework.
- Yes to the questions is the purpose of the questions because it can lead people to look at what the issues are, what needs to be done and how they affect them individually.
- The questions are rhetorical, to get the reader to think about what if the answer is no?

- There does need to be the negativity included in the report to answer the question if nothing is done what will water in the state look like in 25 years.
- The message that the Commission sends out needs to be able to be framed differently for different audiences.
- In order to get the public on board with water issues, or any issue, you need to tell them about the problem, show them how it can be solved and provide them with an action they can do to help solve the problem. The questions start to frame the case for an initiative to build a constituency for water.

The Commission discussed the need to highlight what action is being taken around the state to address these topics, including examples of what the other water-related Commissions have accomplished. The Commission's time is limited due to the September deadline, so in order for the work to continue into the future the recommendation process needs to include a mechanism to implement the recommendations. Part of the Commission's purpose is the further the recommendations of the other water-related commissions that overlap with one another or to make recommendations that help ensure. This could be in the form of a permanent legislative commission, establishing a non-profit, working with existing institutions to form a "campaign" etc.

There was general consensus that the six visions outlined above were well defined, but the second one related to education and outreach may need to be pulled out and broadened. There was discussion about the need to emphasize the importance educating the public, legislatures, and decision-makers about water if there is going to be a paradigm shift. It was suggested that, at some point, there be joint meetings of the working groups – specifically the Implementation Working Group and the Public Engagement Working Group,

IV. Other Business

John and Marcy met with Steve Norton, Director of the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies, to update them of the work of the Commission and to learn about the Center's interest and work in water. The Center plans to submit a proposal to the McIninch Foundation to support their work related to water. The proposal is due before the next Commission meeting in April. The exact nature of their work and proposal has not been finalized. John and Marcy were seeking the Commission member's thoughts as to whether this was something that the Center could do to inform/support the work of the Commission and to seek approval to provide a letter of support or interest in the work they would be doing should the center request it. No Commissioner expressed any reservations with John and Marcy continuing to discuss a possible partnership with the Center.

V. Public Comments

Kenneth Pelletier: Ken indicated he hoped the Commission would include consideration of water use and reuse as one of its strategies to help reduce the costs related to pumping and treating water. For example, it does not make sense to use drinking water for irrigation; water reuse can be part of the solution. There is also an economic aspect in that there are several small-businesses in New Hampshire, including his own, are also positive for job creation in the state.

Bill Hounsell: A big question regarding the discussion of water sustainability for the towns is whether the state has a responsibility to be a partner in funding some of this infrastructure. There are examples of where the state has taken the lead in the infrastructure needs with the Lake Winnepesaukee Basin Program and others where the towns have aligned themselves regarding the infrastructure with the current work around Great Bay and nitrogen. The need for funding will always be more than is available. Having something like a watershed implementation plan to help address the funding needs across a watershed may help and would be a good way for the state to partner with communities.

Gil Rogers: Emphasized that in order to make sustainability happen there is a need to get the "movers and shakers" on board. This includes the legislators, but there needs to be a hook to get them to focus on the issue.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 PM.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 17, 2012 from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH.