

**MEETING MINUTES
NEW HAMPSHIRE WATER SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION
November 28, 2012**

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

Commissioners in attendance:

Virginia Battles-Raffa
Kris Blomback
John Boisvert
Thomas Burack
John Gilbert, Chair
Glenn Normandeau
Cliff Sinnott
Chuck Souther
Alison Watts

Commissioners not in attendance:

Dave Allen
Denise Hart
Michael Licata
Marcy Lyman, Vice Chair
Amy Manzelli

Public in attendance:

Robert Goodrich
Bill Hounsell
Sarah Pillsbury
Jennifer Rowden
Paul Susca

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m.

I. November 7th Meeting Minutes

A motion to accept the November 7th, 2012 meeting minutes was made by Virginia and seconded by Alison. The motion to accept the minutes passed unanimously.

II. Report Rollout Discussion

John G. indicated that a draft press release, Commission hand-out, and presentation were distributed to be used as part of the Commission's report rollout. Given the heavy focus on the report in the last few weeks, the Commission members suggested holding an optional meeting to discuss rollout items at a later date. The Commission members discussed working on the following items, and will bring updates and confirmations to a December 5th meeting:

- Glenn offered to have Fish and Game public relations staff help get the press release out and to work with media contacts, including WMUR and other local cable outlets. Virginia will also work with her media contacts, including the Union Leader and NH Public Radio Exchange program.
- Virginia will also contact some of the state universities regarding interest in a presentation on the Commission's work as part of their environmental curricula.
- John will reach out to NH Public TV, suggesting possible collaboration with WMUR.
- Tom indicated the Governor's Office has proposed having a rollout event on December 17th at 2:30 at the State House with Governor Lynch. John will work with others to try to tie in media coverage. This date will be the tentative rollout date; Commission members should attend if possible.
- Copies of the report will be sent to the chairs of the New Hampshire House Resources, Recreation and Development Committee and the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee. Glenn (Senator Odell) and John G. (Representative Spang) will contact the chairs to discuss other opportunities to present the Commission's work.
- Alison requested that at the rollout meeting there should be discussion about working with the UNH Sustainability Program, or another group, about helping to push the recommendation forward and/or to organize the technical water and public engagement task forces described in the report.
- Tom and Sarah mentioned that DES's water education coordinator is organizing a State-wide Water Education Summit on December 14th; this would be a good opportunity to discuss some of the public education recommendations.
- Speaking engagement opportunities:

- o Conservation New Hampshire Green Eggs and Ham Legislative Breakfast (January 2013)
- o New Hampshire Water and Watershed Conference (March 2013, abstracts due December 10).
- o Spring Office of Energy and Planning Workshop

A meeting to finalize the rollout of the report for will be held on Wednesday, December 5th from 5:00 to 6:30 at DES.

III. Final Report Discussion

John G. explained that the marked up version of the final report the Commission received reflected the changes discussed at the November 7th meeting, contains the minor, non-substantive changes offered by Commissioners, and has the substantive changes requiring discussion marked. John indicated that he only received substantive comments from a few Commission members. Some of these Commission members have requested that a vote not be taken on the report today and that another meeting be scheduled in order to address additional changes to the report. However, other members expressed the need to be finished due to scheduling conflicts, the amount of time the Commission has been extended, and their belief that the report will not greatly benefit from additional work. Those present discussed that there have been many opportunities for comments and concerns regarding the report to be addressed and, assuming no major conflicts from this meeting's discussion, a vote should be taken today given the unlikelihood of having all Commission members at a meeting in the near future.

Each of the substantive changes marked in the draft report were discussed by the Commission and resulted in the following decisions:

- Executive summary, 4th bullet: There was concern about characterizing all existing water laws as inadequate and request to include the term economic realities. The agreed upon language is as follows, "Some of the state's water management laws, policies and regulations should be reviewed and updated, as necessary, to ensure that they reflect current scientific understanding and economic realities
- Executive summary, education bullet: There is a need to emphasize respecting private property rights and balancing responsibility. The agreed upon language for the last two bullet sentences is as follows, "These sectors must all be willing to take responsibility for and commit to action to ensure the quality and availability of water. We must respect private property rights while balancing a shared responsibility to ensure the quality and availability of water for future generations."
- Executive summary, infrastructure bullet: Use the original language to focus this section on why the investment is important. The agreed upon language is as follows, "The natural and built systems that provide recreational opportunities, support ecosystems, deliver our drinking water, manage our storm water, and clean our wastewater help provide New Hampshire with a competitive advantage over other states in terms of water availability and affordable water services. Without sustained investment in our water infrastructure, we may lose this edge. We need to renew, and perhaps reinvent, partnerships between and among individuals, communities, state and federal government, and the private sector to provide the necessary levels of investment.
- Executive summary, management bullet: Use the original bullet title of future focused management.
- Why water: Place questions under each statement.
- Why water: Change the statement "water is a finite resource" to "clean water is a limited resource".
- Why water, third bullet: Change the last sentence to read as follows, "These realities indicate that we are not on a sustainable path with regard to the availability of enough, clean water where we need it and when we need it in New Hampshire."
- Why water, questions for consideration, fourth bullet: Use original language as follows, "How can I work with others to encourage our state legislators and policy makers to keep good water laws on the books and update others to best serve today's world?"

- Why water, questions for consideration, fifth bullet: Include wastewater and rephrase as follows, "Do I know how much it costs to deliver clean water for me to use and to treat my wastewater? If clean water is a potentially finite resource, what is its value? Is that value and what is required to deliver it reflected in the price that I pay for the water I use?"
- What is water sustainability: Keep the four definitions and add in the tag line "enough for all forever".
- Guiding Principles, fourth bullet: Use original language as follows, "Recognizing that there is often uncertainty, as well as opportunities for innovation, we make decisions that protect the ability of our water systems to support our natural environment, and human communities over the long-term."
- Guiding Principles, fifth bullet: Strike statement.
- Consequences, second bullet: Use the original language, and change places to areas, as follows, "In some areas, there may not be enough clean water available to meet local needs. This condition will have adverse effects on public health, the economy and the environment."
- Consequences, third bullet: Use the original language as follows, "Human and ecological systems may no longer be able to fully tolerate disturbance, restore balance, and adapt to change. Full restoration of such systems is often extremely expensive and difficult, if not impossible."
- Goal 2, recommendation 5: Use the term "many uses" instead of "competing uses" throughout the document as it implies that there is often conflict when that is rarely the case, particularly over the long-term.
- Goal 4, recommendation 4, second action: Replace language with as follows, "Adequately fund existing state programs that assist municipalities in financing water and wastewater improvements." There was discussion about whether this action should be a recommendation itself; however, the majority of Commissioners felt the statement better supported recommendation 4 as an action given that it is only one idea to establish a stable and reliable funding source.
- General question about if the report should be referencing climate change versus changing weather patterns. The Commission chose to use changing weather patterns to avoid the barrier the term climate change can sometimes create.

Following discussion of the comments, John G. again noted the absence of some Commission members that had requested postponement of action, including some that had offered substantive comment. After further discussion of the issues summarized in the first paragraph of this section, a motion to accept the current report draft, with the inclusion of the changes discussed at this meeting, as the Water Sustainability Commission's final report was made by Glenn and seconded by Virginia. The vote was unanimous by all Commission members present.

IV. Public Comments

The public in attendance at the meeting provided the following comments to the Commission:

Bill Hounsell: Indicated that it is important for wastewater treatment to be included in the "Questions for Consideration" section question that focuses on the price and value of water. This is because the majority of the infrastructure cost needs comes from wastewater treatment. For the recommendation related to the state's commitment to fund water infrastructure projects, there is a portion of the state aid grants that the state is legally responsible to pay regardless of the available funding clause. (John G. pointed out that the Commission has not looked deeply into the law regarding funding obligations and would not be including anything that detailed in the report.)

Bob Goodrich: Suggested clarifying the number of lakes and ponds noted in the "Why Water" section to be consistent with the number of lakes cited in the Executive Order.

Meeting adjourned at 10:35a.m. The next Commission meeting is December 5, 2012 from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. at the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and will focus on rollout of the report.