

TOWN OF LONDONDERRY, VT
WILLIAMS DAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, August 7, 2023

Twitchell Building - 100 OLD SCHOOL ST. LONDONDERRY, VT

Board Members Present: Robert Forbes, Jim Ameden, Rachel Febbie, Richard Phelan, Paul Hendler

Board Members Absent: None.

Others in Attendance:

Selectboard Member: Melissa Brown

Planning Board Member: Heather Stephenson

Community Member: Larry Gubb

1. Call Meeting to Order

Phelan called to order the meeting at 4:29 pm

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda [1 VSA 312(d)(3)9A]

Discussion of video and photos of the Williams Dam during the flood of 2023 was added to agenda.

3. Approve of minutes from July 17 2023, meeting

Ameden moved to accept the minutes of July 17, 2023 and it was seconded by Phelan.

4. Discussion about hiring a hydrologist to show what would happen during a significant flood event if the Williams Dam was removed.

The Williams Dam Advisory Committee discussed using the money allocated by the town for here in said committee towards a hydrologist study to help determine the effects that Williams Dam has on flooding upstream and downstream, and whether it helps, hinders, or neither. Stephenson suggested that we look into independent modeling using the evidence we have as a community from the floods (such as assessments of the damage, video and photo evidence, and the historical knowledge of residence). The committee selected Forbes and Hendler to write a proposal outlining the information the board will be looking for. This proposal will be presented to the possible candidates to be hired for the study.

Other topics discussed during this conversation were whether or not if the gate was repaired if it would help flooding. Gubb provided some historical knowledge through observation regarding the use of the gate while it was operable. Gubb stated it would lower the water in the Mill Pond, but also stated that

the Mill Pond is more shallow now because of the silt. It was discussed that a hydrologist study was conducted a few years back regarding the wall before the dam abutting the new park and the bridge. It was said that it was thought that FEMA had wanted the wall removed, but the State of Vermont said it was needed for the bridge itself and prevention of further damage. The wall appears to be wood, but is actually steel. Gubb said it is vertical steel high beams.

5. Set date for Connecticut River Conservancy to give presentation to the committee.

Paul Hendler will schedule a presentation to the committee by the Connecticut River Conservancy.

6. Discuss Video and photos of dam during recent flooding

Febbie provided evidence with video and photo supporting a previous conversation the committee had with Vermont Dam Safety on June 8, 2023. The evidence supported the question asked by Febbie during that meeting "if removing the dam would change the impact to the downtown village during heavy rains, flash flooding, and flooding? The answer was yes. During floods the water diverts over the cement wall on the opposite side of the bridge from the dam, and goes down the center of town, and if the dam is removed the river will be lower, and more water will go down the river channel most likely having greater impact on the buildings along the river (i.e., Jellys, Mike and Tammy's, Garden). "

7. Adjourn

Ameden moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Forbes, passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:27pm.

The next regular meeting of the Williams Dam Advisory is scheduled for August 21, 2023 at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rachel Febbie

Approved on August 21, 2023.

Richard Phelan, Chair

Williams Dam Advisory Committee