

Town of Londonderry, Vermont
Williams Dam Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 18, 2023
Twitchell Building - 100 Old School Street, South Londonderry, VT

DRAFT

Committee Members Present: Robert Forbes, Rachel Febbie, Richard Phelan, Paul Hendler

Committee Member Absent: Jim Ameden

Selectboard Member Present: None

Town Administrator: Shane O'Keefe

Planning Board Member: Heather Stephenson

Community Members: Marcia Camp, Anna Stoddard, Chris Laselle

1.The meeting was called to order at 4:30 Pm by Phelan.

2.Additions or Deletions to Agenda (1 VSA 312(d)(3)9A)): None

3. Roy Schiff and Ethan Ely, Water Resources Engineers & Scientists from SLR Consulting, presented their collections of data and results from the study they conducted for the town of Londonderry that studied "what would happen in a significant flood event if the Williams Dam was removed". Schiff and Ely presented multiple slides with charts, graphs, and photos, and there was a plethora of information presented on the river assessment, orientation of the river, the bridge, the dam, the channel profile, river volume measurements, sediment levels, ledge, increased velocity, flow, water evaluations, etc. Schiff and Ely spoke in depth on how material was gathered from boring samples, probing, to ripples in the water, and they explained the modeling that they used. Their findings were that if the Williams Dam was removed, and there was a significant flood event flooding would be the same downstream, and upstream the only significant change would be to the fields that are off of Otter Creek Road off of Derry Woods Roads.

There were many questions and conversations that took place by committee members as well as community members.

Febbie asked for further clarification on the changes upstream with the removal of the dam, referencing a map presented on a slide, saying the only apparent change she was seeing was to the fields off Otter Creek Road. Ely answered with one simple word, "true". Febbie stated she had wanted to confirm because people in the community will be asking. Later in the meeting, Stoddard asked the same question, and received the same answer.

Hendler asked if during "oddball storms" where Rt 11 is inundated with water would the removal of the dam alleviate that, Ely said, "yes", but it has not been modeled.

Laselle asked about opposing flow (tumbling of the water) below the dam along Edge Hill Road, and with removal would it be different, Ey said, "yes, that section would have more velocity". Ely spoke to the fact that you would see more velocity from where the dam is now to approximately the corner where the river bends. Febbie expressed concerns for the houses on Edge Hill Road that would see this new impact if the dam was removed. Later Laselle asked another question regarding velocity with dam removal upstream. Schiff said, "if you have removal of the dam the contraption upstream could keep water off the road, but because velocity is higher you would have to consider erosion along the road

and in general, and all those kinds of things would need to be considered with a dam removal design.” Laselle lastly added, “he would like to keep what little of the village we have left”.

Phelan asked with the removal of the dam would there be enough water for a fire safety. Schiff and Ely responded that you would not know until you remove the dam if there would be enough water there or not. There were conversations throughout the meeting regarding the Mill Pond being the town's water source to fight fires. Stoddard expressed great concern with taking away the town's main water source, and asked how they planned on putting out a fire at her house if ever there were one. Hendler spoke of a conversion he had with a notable dry hydrant designer who was confident he could make something work if the dam was removed, but it seemed there was doubt with some of the committee members and community members, and it was stated that the same designer designed the dry hydrant in South Londonderry that is no longer working. Febbie said her aunt died in a fire, and making sure you have fire protection and a viable water source is not something you should be guessing on.

Stephenson asked if the FEMA flood maps were different from their calibration? Schiff replied they have not compared them yet to the FEMA maps. Stephenson asked if they measured normal flow, what would it look like in 5 or 10 years from now, etc.? Would the flow change downstream? It was not looked at.

Stoddard, who lives close to the Mill Pond asked what they thought would happen to her aquifers and her well. Schiff answered he had only ever had one well issue with dam removal, but would need to know the depth of her well. Schiff said you would have to navigate wells in the area as part of the design of removal.

Forbes asked Schiff his thoughts on making the gate operational. Conversation regarding the flood gate took place. Ely said it would not help in a significant flood, and then there were mixed conversations and views on whether it would help for smaller storms or not. Phelan concluded the meeting by saying the committee cannot “keep kicking the can”, and the Williams Dam Advisory Board will bring the selectboard a recommendation soon.

Phelan moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Forbes, passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rachel Febbie

Approved

Williams Dam Advisory Committee

Rich Phelan, Chair