

POTTER HILL DAM INFORMATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 5, 2021

Ashaway Fire Station, 213 Main Street – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Ashaway, RI 02804

6:00 P.M. Call to Order.

1. Attendance and meeting protocol – 5 minutes
  - a. Jim, Roger, Carl, Bob, Marie, Howie
  - b. Jared Rose
  - c. Dan Malone
  - d. Scott Bill
  - e. Sen Elaine Morgan [elaineforsenate@aol.com](mailto:elaineforsenate@aol.com) 744-0505
  - f. Ashaway Fire Department Chief Ronny Sposato
  - g. Jen Brinton - [Jennifer@greysailbrewing.com](mailto:Jennifer@greysailbrewing.com)  
63 + 65 Canal Street  
Send Decker Report to her tonight
2. Review and accept the prior meeting minutes – 5 minutes  
Accepted
3. **Old business**
  - a. Surveys - Sharon worked on the list from 9/28
    - i. 225-24 empty lot =201 houses
    - ii. 111 responses
    - iii. 90 no responses
    - iv. Lisa Pellegrini has offered to keep the survey open until November 1
    - v. We noticed some missing data and will need an updated list. Jim will reach out to Sharon for the data from Gina
4. **New business**
  - a. Interview with Ashaway Fire Department Chief Ronny Sposato
    - i. French village is where the department has drafted water from the river.
    - ii. Per Ronnie there is a Westerly city water hydrant that is used on the Westerly side of the over potter hill bridge
    - iii. If the river level was to drop tankers would need to fill at the Westerly city water hydrant at the Potter Hill Bridge. This will add time to support a fire in the Lucky house, and the commercial sites in that area. Each tanker holds 3000 gallons.
    - iv. How much depth is needed? Minimum of 2 feet running water not standing, regular river flow of August

- v. Ron is concerned especially about rescues on the river. Reducing the river level will impact a rescue on this part of the river. Use of the rescue boat will not be possible. The only option would be to walk to rescue. This will change response time from minutes to hours.
  - vi. Per Howie, Westerly Police chief is aware of the situation with the river and rescues
  - vii. There were 4-5 deaths more than 30 years ago in the area of the dam. Westerly will be putting a sign up on the river to say “dam ahead” or similar
  - viii. Per Fire Chief: Biggest concern- Dean Warehousing- fire suppression- rely on wells to fight fire-Dean Warehousing -if gravel packed wells are dried up because of this, they have to figure out a way to fight fires. Ron will send the contact info to Jim
- b. Dan Malone- will be speaking to a contact in NOAA, Joe Gilbert, concern about clam beds in Little Narragansett Bay (?) with the 1.2 Cubic Feet of sediment that will be released with the dam removal.
- c. Jen Brinton - [Jennifer@greysailbrewing.com](mailto:Jennifer@greysailbrewing.com)
- i. Owner of Grey Sail Brewing 63 + 65 Canal Street
  - ii. Jim will send Decker Report to her tonight
  - iii. Jen indicated that there will be a **January 14 change in DEM rules on buffering zone.**
  - iv. There is no director of DEM right now, who is acting in this role? (Post meeting follow up - Terrence Gray became the Acting Director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) on June 21. Governor Dan McKee announced Gray’s appointment June 8.)
  - v. It was questioned how can federal funding be used to benefit a private property owner, if the mill and dam are remediated will mastership end and ownership return to Carrapezza? Can he can develop how he chooses?
  - vi. What is the cost associated with maintaining a nature like Fishway?
  - vii. Westerly Land Trust has not taken a stand per Jen Brinton
- d. Interview with Senator Elaine Morgan: questions that she will ask:
- i. What is the cost to maintain the Bradford dam?
  - ii. Who owns the Bradford dam?
  - iii. Elaine would like to know what are the parties involved and to get them all together with the towns: NOAA, DEM, Southern RI Conservation District, Town Councils, Fuss and O’Neil, URI, Dam Committee, Nature Conservancy, RI DEM Fish and Wildlife, Westerly Land Trust,
  - iv. What will the smell from the river be if the dam is removed-add question to our list
  - v. Were the Westerly info meetings documented by a stenographer? Public record laws?

- e. The Westerly Town Council Meeting on October 18 Studies will be presented, along with options. The Potter Hill Dam Committee would like Hopkinton Town Council to attend.
- f. Scott spoke to Sharon Ahern Westerly town council has not approved the current plan and is asking to review all options for the October 18<sup>th</sup> Westerly Town Council meeting. Jim confirmed this after attending Westerly Town Council meeting on October 4<sup>th</sup>.
- g. Scott spoke to Governor Dan McKee and Richard Delfino, chief of Municipal Affairs to make them aware. Scott will forward his contact info. Senator's concern-upset the delicate ecosystem

5. **Discuss next steps** – 5 minutes

- a. Westerly Town Council Meeting on October 18, Hopkinton Town Council should attend and move their Hopkinton Town Council Meeting. Jim will request.
- b. Studies are due to the Westerly Town Council on October 12. Hopkinton Town Council to request the studies be released to them on October 12. Jim will request.
- c. Request Well Survey updates.

6. Set date of next meeting – October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

7. Adjournment.