

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

**TOWN OF LUDLOW
BOARD OF SELECTMEN/TRUSTEES**

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2024
6:00PM**

HEALD AUDITORIUM

Select Board & Village Trustees Joint Special Meeting- Zoom Link

Meeting ID: 437 305 4865

Passcode: 255344

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Justin Hyjek, Vice Chair	Scott Baitz
Noah Schmidt	George Tucker, Jr.

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Brett Sanderson

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Bob Brandt, Chairman	Justin Hyjek	Julie Nicoll
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STAFF PRESENT:

Brendan McNamara

OTHERS PRESENT:

Eric Alden	Peter Lazorchak	Kelly Stetner
Meghan Arpino	Melissa Rockhill	Chris Yurek

I. Call to Order

1. Justin Hyjek called the meeting of the Select Board to order at 6:00. Bob Brandt called the meeting of the Trustees open at 6:00 p.m.
2. Justin Hyjek asked for a moment of silence in memory of 9/11/2001.
3. Justin Hyjek led with the Pledge of Allegiance

II. Review of Projects for RIVER Program (Mount Ascutney Regional Planning)

1. Chris Yurek said that he and Meghan Arpino had met with the town a couple of months ago and looked at possible sites. The potential projects have been vetted with the State Project Management Office.

2. Meghan Arpino said that from prior meetings, they had received 30 ideas for projects. The big picture is which projects met the requirements for funding. The State prioritized by biology and natural resources. The recommended project to advance through RIVER Program is:

This project concept has four main components combined into one HMGP application:

1. Floodplain reconnection (i.e., benching, lowering, berm removal, or flood chute) at the Little League Field, former Timber Inn property, and Brookhaven Condominiums open field (pending landowner approval). The possibility to include walking trails, parking, and other floodplain compatible recreation at the former Little League Field will be explored. Potential benefits include reduced flooding at upstream parcels along Route 103 and increased flood storage upstream of Ludlow's Wastewater Treatment Facility.
 2. Floodplain reconnection at 108 Pleasant Street to mitigate flooding at the Black River Mobile Home Park and other adjacent properties. Pending landowner approval.
 3. Floodplain reconnection at 18 Mill Street, including the portion of the property between the north bank of the Black River and parcels on Meadow Street, with the goal of reducing flood levels upstream along Main Street and Meadow Street, as well as reducing flood velocities. Removal of the small weir/dam at the Mill St bridge will be explored. This could include 5 Meadow Street and 98 Main Street, pending landowner approval, as well as riparian plantings and other restoration components.
 4. Floodplain bench with retaining wall along Smith Street to provide more space for floodwaters and alleviate flooding along Main Street. This concept involves multiple private landowners, increasing the complexity and potentially limiting feasibility given the current HMGP application deadline.
3. Meghan Arpino said that the benching in limited space – smaller area – gives gentler slopes, reducing flood levels. It is a cost- effective way.
 4. Justin Hyjek asked about the Waste Water Treatment Plant
 5. Brendan McNamara said that a final draft of the flood study has not been submitted to FEMA yet. Moving the plant is not favorable - \$25,000,000.00. Ideally the plant will stay in the same place and we will see what can be done above the pant.
 6. Justin Hyjek asked if this project would make it so we wouldn't have to raise the plant.
 7. Brendan McNamara said that he is not comfortable answering that. If we move the control building to the section of land to the right and raise it a little, it may work in conjunction with these projects. He said added to FEMA, the cost of moving.
 8. Meghan Arpino said it would be a broad reconnection project.
 9. Scott Baitz asked if it would help the properties.
 10. Bob Brandt asked if you can bench behind the properties.
 11. Meghan Arpino said yes, also on Smith Street.
 12. Justin Hyjek asked about the Black River from Lake Pauline to Smith Street and up the Jewel Brook. Would that save more of the town?
 13. Meghan Arpino said they had thought about the Jewel Brook, but didn't consider reconnection. Maybe the stream cross is not properly mapped. It's an open channel stream.
 14. George Tucker, Jr. asked about Dug Road.

15. Meghan Arpino said that location is already in the flood plain.
16. George Tucker, Jr. noted that 1 – 3 are Pleasant and Mill Street.
17. Meghan Arpino said Smith Street may be considered. The conceptual design goes to 98 Main Street.
18. Justin Hyjek asked about the dam on Lake Pauline – saying it was put in 15 to 20 years ago.
19. Meghan Arpino asked if it was designed for flood control.
20. Scott Baitz said it has panels to release water flood situations. He added that Mill Street is not really a dam
21. Meghan Arpino said they can look at it.
22. Noah Schmidt said this all sounds good, but is all downstream. The more we can do for the downtown, the better.
23. Justin Hyjek said Jewel Brook and the Black River.
24. Scott Baitz said it will make a big difference for the plant.
25. Meghan Arpino said you will see a reduction downstream.
26. Noah Schmidt asked if they could do a model for the board.
27. Meghan Arpino said yes.
28. Justin Hyjek asked about the reference to Smith Street – the property line down to the river?
29. Meghan Arpino said yes.
30. Justin Hyjek said it is already steep. Will that be in the engineering study?
31. Meghan Arpino said no, it's an alternate. We need to consider traffic.
32. George Tucker, Jr. asked about a time line.
33. Chris Yurek said – construction is 2 to 4 years, but they keep pushing back the deadline. Now, it is November, but may be pushed back.
34. Justin Hyjek asked if 108 Pleasant Flooded in 2023?
35. George Tucker, Jr. said it is along the river.
36. Brendan McNamara said it is across from the mobile home.
37. Meghan Arpino said the property owner has to be asked if they are open to a project on their property, without purchasing it.
38. Justin Hyjek asked about an easement.
39. Chris Yurek we can usually just get a letter of support.
40. Scott Baitz said that with adding the Sam's buyout – they applied about the same time as Mill Street. Can these be made into separate projects?
41. Meghan Arpino said yes. The next step is conceptual design.
42. Scott Baitz said is it 2 years for the property we own.
43. Eric Alden said that the Mill is a major property owner and is willing to participate. He asked about where flood storage is up and down stream.
44. Meghan Arpino said down – it is the plant and up to the extent of Shaw's. And Jewel up.
45. Noah Schmidt said we have discussed different uses for the Timber Inn property, including tree planting. What is the potential to combine this project with other funding or do they have to be stand alone?
46. Meghan Arpino said this includes a trail and plantings for re-vegetation. She is not sure about a nursery.

47. George Tucker, Jr. said that the grant that the Tree Warden was discussing ends before this project would start.
48. Kelly Stetner said she will connect with Chris Yurek. She said that Melissa (Rockhill) and Phil Carter will talk to the neighbors, especially on Meadow Street. She said that the Lake Pauline dam was originally built for hydrolic power. She added that this Friday, there will be a caravan to see the Brattleboro flood plan and be a guided tour.
49. Chris Yurek said if the town is interested in rehabbing that dam, he can look into it.
50. Scott Baitz if you remove that dam, you will remove Lake Pauline.
51. Melissa Rockhill asked if any of these projects will do anything to alleviate the flooding downtown.
52. Meghan Arpino said hopefully, it will benefit the upstream parcels by slowing down and reduce flood waters.
53. Noah Schmidt said these 4 projects are the most feasible and highest degree. Are you asking this board to say yes to proceed.
54. Meghan Arpino said ye.
55. George Tucker, Jr. asked if on these proposed projects, will we have an overall reduction or will it be broken down by project. We own the bulk of the land.
56. Meghan Arpino said we will look at them separately, and then combine.
57. Justin Hyjek asked for direction from the board.
58. Brendan McNamara said they are asking for a direction to continue with the study.
59. Justin Hyjek said there is no doubt that we should pursue. The parcels will be pick and choose.
60. Meghan Arpino said they can do it now or later
61. George Tucker, Jr. said we could make that call then, for now, proceed with all then see where it goes.
62. Chris Yurek said we may have a better idea of the individual projects' feasibility.
63. Brendan McNamara said if all 4 are feasible, who is on board with the data from the engineering study.
64. Melissa Rockhill said do you have a variance if the land owners say no.
65. Meghan Arpino said we may have to for the Smith Street and 108 Pleasant Street properties.
66. Scott Baitz said that could be an issue.
67. Meghan Arpino said that 18 Mill may have a buyout.
68. Noah Schmidt asked about the property from the Fire Department to Shaw's. That was a wetland area and asked if it still functions as a wetland or will it need restoration.
69. Meghan Arpino said we looked at it and don't know the areas of fill that could be removed. It acts as a wetland now.
70. Eric Alden said that Shaw's is all fill and asked if there is a simple formula for calculating areas that can lower the river.
71. Meghan Arpino said there is a volume calculation, but to get it we use nuances in the hydrolic model.
72. Eric Alden said if there are not enough acres, is it worth going through this process.
73. Scott Baitz said there are 12 acres at the Brattleboro project and it made a difference.
74. Justin Hyjek said with Sam's we have 17+ acres.
75. Scott Baitz said to move forward.

76. Justin Hyjek said to move forward.
77. Bob Brandt said to move forward
78. Chris Yurek said he will keep in contact with Brendan McNamara.
79. Brendan McNamara said that Kelly Stetner is a great reference
80. Noah Schmidt said that Brendan McNamara may know the landowners
81. Justin Hyjek asked Brendan McNamara to place the pages from the study on the web.
82. Brendan McNamara said yes.
83. Chris Yurek said he will look at the other grant. He said that this grant has not matching funds for the town.

III. Adjournment

1. **MOTION by Scott Baitz and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. for the Select Board to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
2. **MOTION by Julie Nicoll and seconded by Justin Hyjek for the Trustees to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
3. Meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

Brett Sanderson, Chairman

Noah Schmidt

Scott Baitz

George Tucker, Jr.

Justin Hyjek

TRUSTEES:

Bob Brandt, Chairman

Justin Hyjek

Julie Nicoll

Resilience Initiative for Vermont Empowerment and
Recovery (RIVER): Ludlow Project Recommendations for
Conceptual Design Phase



Recommended Project to Advance Through RIVER Program

Project Name: Black River Floodplain Reconnection for Flood Mitigation in Ludlow

This project concept has four main components combined into one HMGP application:

1. Floodplain reconnection (i.e., benching, lowering, berm removal, or flood chute) at the Little League Field, former Timber Inn property, and Brookhaven Condominiums open field (pending landowner approval). The possibility to include walking trails, parking, and other floodplain compatible recreation at the former Little League Field will be explored. Potential benefits include reduced flooding at upstream parcels along Route 103 and increased flood storage upstream of Ludlow's Wastewater Treatment Facility.
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Next steps for evaluating the costs and benefits of this project include:

1. Outreach to private landowners
2. Fieldwork to collect topographic and stream geomorphic survey data
3. Hydraulic modeling extending from upstream of Depot St to downstream of the Ludlow WWTF to assess existing conditions and the feasibility of components 1-4 above. The Depot St, Main St, and Mill St bridges will be evaluated in this model.
4. Preliminary FEMA Benefit-Cost Analysis (benefits must be greater than costs)
5. Conceptual drawings of effective project(s) for Selectboard, Trustees, and stakeholder review

**Potentially Viable Projects
 Not Immediately Prioritized for RIVER Program HMGP Funding Applications**

Project Name	Description
Commonwealth Ave Culvert Replacement and Upsizing	The most recent designs for this project completed by Weston and Sampson did not pass the FEMA Benefit-Cost Analysis. While damage costs have increased with the July 2023 flood, it is also likely that project costs have increased. Revisiting the designs to develop a cost-effective solution may not be feasible on the current HMGP timeline. Since the project must pass a BCA for FEMA HMGP funding, we recommend putting this project in the RIVER "non-FEMA" project bucket and pursuing alternate funding, possibly through VTrans.
Relocate Select WWTF Structures	The idea of relocating select WWTF buildings to a higher portion of the existing WWTF parcel was discussed during a site visit. This may be possible under HMGP but might not pass a BCA as a standalone project.
Buttermilk Falls Road Culvert	Idea from public brainstorm, recommend pursuing alternate funding for replacing and upsizing.
Ghai Farm Road Culvert	Idea from public brainstorm, recommend pursuing alternate funding for replacing and upsizing.

Other Project Ideas Reviewed for RIVER

The following project ideas were discussed during initial site visits or the public brainstorming forum and are included here to document the ideas reviewed in earlier phases. For various reasons the projects are not included in the recommendations above. These reasons include feasibility concerns, cost-effectiveness concerns, ineligibility for HMGP, availability of more appropriate funding source, needing more time to develop than available under the current HMGP application deadline, and/or uncertainty around landowner support.

- Jewell Brook bank armoring at Dorsey Park
- Reservoir Pond Dam spillway retrofit to reduce flooding on Rt 100 and E Lake Road
- Floodproofing of commercial buildings
- Stormwater infrastructure assessment
- Relocating Ludlow Fire Station
- Amherst Lake Dam condition
- H&H study or LOMR to remap Jewell Brook, currently mapped as "BFE contained within structure" in FIRM.
- Address runoff from railroad tress and culvert on tributary along Mountain Road
- Floodplain and/or channel restoration along Fox Run Golf Course
- Floodplain reconnection upstream of Shaws and car dealership
- Drainage improvements and erosion mitigation along East Lake Road