

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

TOWN & VILLAGE OF LUDLOW

August 3, 2020

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bruce Schmidt, Chairman Brett Sanderson Heather Tucker
Scott Baitz

STAFF PRESENT:

Scott Murphy Chuck Craig

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jacqui Antonivich Alice Nitka Herb Van Guilder
Bob Brandt Jean Strong Patrick Cody- Okemo Valley TV
Charles Johnsten Robert Thompson Rick Davis – Okemo Valley TV
Emily Lewis Jeffrey Tucker Scott Stearns –Okemo Valley TV

FIRST PUBLIC MEETING

**JEWEL BROOK WATERSHED – SITES #1, #2, #3 AND #5
REHABILITATION PLAN AND SUPPLEMENTAL WATERSHED PLAN AND
ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT (PLAN-EA)**

I. Introduction & Roles

- A. Town of Ludlow, Owner & Sponsor
 - 1. Robert Thompson explained that NRCS (National Resources Conservation Service) provided financial and technical support in the late 1960s to early 1970s for the building of the 4 dams in Ludlow. The dams are about 50 years old.
- B. NRCS, Lead Federal Agency
 - 1. In 2015, the NRCS completed an assessment of the dams. Ludlow requested assistance from NRCS regarding the state of the dams.
 - 2. The NRCS received funding for the planning stage of the dam rehabilitation plan. DDK Engineering was hired to develop the plan.
- C. DDK Engineering
 - 1. In 2019, DDK started the process to develop a plan for the dams. The dams were evaluated and alternatives are explored.
 - 2. The plan is expected to be complete in October 2021. At that time, if the Town of Ludlow chooses, it may request further funding from the NRCS. The design phase will be approximately 2 years.
 - 3. Up to this point, the process has been fully funded. If the town wishes to proceed with the rehabilitation, the town share will be 35% of the construction costs, along with any land rights issues.
- D. Attendees Sign-up sheet
 - 1. Attendees listed above.

II. Objectives of the Meeting

- A. Familiarize the general public, including local private groups and government agencies at local and state levels with the proposed Jewell Brook Watershed Sites #1, #2, #3, and #5 rehabilitation project and the Supplemental Watershed Plan and Environmental Document (Plan-EA)
- B. Discuss the overall process of developing a Plan-EA (Environmental Assessment)
 - 1. Jeff Tucker explained that the objective is to advance the rehabilitation process of the dams and to develop alternatives. He said that last October DDK began gathering information regarding the current state of the dams. They will be doing a detailed engineering assessment. They will prepare a report of what needs to be done to make the dams safe for the next 50+ years. The report will include costs and benefits. There will be another public hearing in August 2021. There will be a 45 day comment period on that draft. The final plan will be complete in October 2021. The plan will evaluate all options. The preferred plan will be the plan that makes the most sense.
- C. Present the purpose and need of the Plan-EA
 - 1. Jeff Tucker said that the dams are sound and well maintained. There was damage from Irene. The dams do not meet current safety and performance standards. Three of the dams

- experienced erosion during Irene. Action is needed to reduce the risk of loss of life due to breach of the dams and to reduce the risk of flood damage within the downstream flood zones to homes, businesses, infrastructure and agriculture. The dams were designed for sediment storage, but if the sediment gets too high, it can cause of breach of the dam. They will camera all of the spillways. They are currently testing the filters in the dams. Site #5 has a lot of sediment. They process will consider and economic, environmental and social factors of the dams.
2. Jeff Tucker requested input and comments from the public and town officials. The draft of Plan-EA will be complete in July 2021. They will hold another public meeting in August 2021 and the final plan will be completed in October 2021.
 3. Scott Murphy asked what the time line for this project is and what the town share will be. He said that initially, the town was told 10 years.
 4. Bob Thompson said that currently, there are less towns applying for funds, so that may accelerate the process. He said that some of the other towns can't maintain their dams. He is thinking it may be less than 10 years. The town share is still 35%, but there is a possibility for change.
 5. Bruce Schmidt asked how the decision is made. Dam #3 needs to have silt removed.
 6. Jeff Tucker said that generally, when designed, the dams are designed to handle sediment. They will look at what is there and how much more can come in. He said that Site #5 may need dredging. He said that for Site #3, if the silt continues to come in at the current rate, there may not be need to dredge it.
 7. Bruce Schmidt said that Site #3, the town would like to create more public recreation areas to swim. Can that work be done at the same time as work on the dam?
 8. Bob Thompson said yes. He added that there was recreation built in when the dam was originally built. He does not know about costs.
 9. Bob Brandt asked if the new standards include larger bases and what are the differences in the new standards.
 10. Jeff Tucker said he doesn't know, yet, about the bases. The new standards address earthquakes or seismic stability, slopes, environmental conditions and social conditions. He added that hydraulic requirements have also changed.
 11. Scott Baitz asked if the dams are safe.
 12. Jeff Tucker said yes, they are solid and sound.
- D. Clarify or describe the potential effects of the alternatives under consideration for the Plan-EA
1. Jeff Tucker said that the alternatives are No Action, Decommissioning, Rehabilitate the current dams to meet current safety and performance criteria, replacement. He said that possible steps for rehabilitation include: overtopping, raising the crests, lowering recreation pools, increasing the spillway hydraulic capacity, structural reinforcement/ armoring auxiliary spillway and embankment modifications. He added that current standards require a minimum life of 50 years up and up to 100 years.
- E. Invite attendees to provide resource data regarding the Jewell Brook Watershed

III. Information Generally Obtained from Public and Resource Agencies

- A. Watershed natural resource problems that may need to be addressed with the Plan-EA
1. Jeff Tucker noted that the contact person for this is Bob Thompson at Bob.Thompson@usda.gov. He invited people to send comments or observations to Mr. Thompson.

IV. NRCS Dam Rehabilitation Program Outline

- A. Familiarize the general public, including local private groups and government agencies at local and state levels with the proposed Jewell Brook Watershed Sites #1, #2, #3, and #5 rehabilitation project and the Supplemental Watershed Plan and Environmental Document (Plan-EA)

V. Planning Steps.

- A. Interagency Early Scoping Meeting: Hold Interagency Early Scoping Meeting with Group 1 Stakeholders
- B. First Public Participation Meeting: Hold First Public Participation Meeting with All stakeholder groups (Groups 1, 2 and 3) to provide information and discuss overall process to develop the Plan-EA. During this meeting, the objectives and purpose and need for the rehabilitation plan will be presented. This meeting can also be used to seek input on watershed problems and opportunities as well as hear and record initial concerns
- C. Sponsors decide on Preferred Alternative
1. Jeff Tucker said that after the final draft, the town will decide on its preferred alternative.
- D. NRCS National Water Management Center (NWMC) conducts independent review. A draft Plan-EA is prepared following resolution of NWMC review comments

- E. Public Review of Draft Plan and after second Public Participation Meeting: Send Draft Plan-EA to Agencies, and Stakeholders for 45 Day Public Comment Period. Hold Public Meeting to Describe and Discuss Rehabilitation Plan and Solicit Comments. This second public meeting will be in August 2021.
- F. Completion of Supplemental Watershed Plan and Environmental Document
 - 1. At this time, if it decides to proceed with the rehabilitation of the dams, the town will request further assistance from the NRCS for the design and construction phases of the project.

Public Meeting Ended at 5:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber