



## WARNER RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

<https://www.wrlac.com/>

**MINUTES - Approved**

Wednesday, 28 February 2024

7:00 p.m.

Pillsbury Free Library, Warner, NH

### 2024 Meetings

|             |                      |
|-------------|----------------------|
| February 28 | August 28            |
| April 24    | October 23           |
| June 26     | December: <b>TBD</b> |

**Appointed WRLAC Representatives** present in **bold** (term ends):

**George Embley**, Webster (07-08-2024)

**Marlene Freyler**, Bradford (08-16-2024)

**Rebecca Herman**, Bradford (10- -2026)

**Mike Howley**, Bradford (06-22-2024)

**Dan Morrissey**, Hopkinton (02-09-2025)

**Laura Russell**, Warner (11-26-2024)

**Peter Savickas**, Sutton (08-19-2025)

**Christopher Spannweitz**, Warner (11-26-2024)

**Members of the Public:** Tim Blagden, David Carroll, Barbara Marty, Bob MacGowan, Kristen Riley

#### *New Business*

1. Meeting minutes for December 6, 2023 were unanimously approved.
2. Treasurer's Report – Pete, Dan, and Laura will go to the bank to update the permission for who can sign checks.
3. New permit applications – Only one application NHDOT Rt 114, #44749 – Marlene and Dan will find out more information.

4. Other New Business

a. WRLAC and [Concord Lake Sunapee Rail Trail](#)

- i. The Chair shared the Committee's [mission](#) with the group.
- ii. The Chair then invited members of the public in attendance to speak about their perspective on the development of the CLSRT as the project moves into Warner.
- iii. Perspectives and observations included the following:
  1. concerns about human impact and development pressure on the fragile and sensitive environment, particularly along the Warner River; should the river be considered an amenity?
  2. The riverine/riparian area is a unique and exemplary ecosystem in Warner. Building through there will cause severe downgrading of the ecosystem. Some small sections that are already there are fine.
  3. the benefits of addressing human health and wellbeing when designing and accessing a recreational area for foot travel and non-motorized conveyances
  4. benefits of reducing vehicle emissions
  5. the degree to which the project can be developed taking into account the needs of the current ecosystem, which continues to experience changes in climate and weather
  6. the costs or benefits to future generations
  7. the history of the disruption of the river with the building of roads and highways with little oversight through the 1960s compared to today's many considerations, surveys, and restrictions that must be made in order to proceed with a project
- iv. Questions and observations included the following:
  1. When this Committee had the opportunity to comment/advise on the building of the new Dunkin Donuts and the proposed building project behind the current Dunkin Donuts, in our communication with the permittee and DES, we highlighted the project's potential impact on the ecosystem. While the Dunkin project did go ahead, our comments did have an impact on how the project should unfold. Our comments also had an impact on the process for the housing project behind the Dunkins.
  2. What happens if the CLSRT does not get all of the contiguous land it needs to be a complete trail?
    - a. The CLSRT must secure easements from private owners; it's possible, but not desirable, that there will be isolated segments; people still do use the current unlinked segments.
  3. There are plenty of trails already, and they are great. We need to make sure we understand all of the positive and negative implications.
  4. Human movement and voices in the riparian zone may disrupt bird nesting and cause birds and other species to flee. Hopefully, in the permitting process, WRLAC will make recommendations on buffers. But that is only going to address a tiny part of this project.
  5. Permitting process: Permits have not been applied for yet. There is a complex and thorough process that moves in stages: consultants to design and engineering stages; another consulting firm will manage the construction process. This Committee should begin to see permits come in the engineering study phase, possibly late 2024 or early 2025. The

process mandates a number of public meetings for public input. A member of this Committee should read up on the Local Public Agency process. There are powerpoint slideshows that explain LPAs. It's a very gated process. CLSRT will work with this Committee to be an outstanding neighbor.

6. ATVs are very destructive; would a rail trail help discourage damage from ATVs?
  - a. Motorized vehicles, except Category 1 or 2 e-bikes, are prohibited as per the CLSRT's easement language for the entire trail. There will be standard trail gates to prevent vehicle misuse and promote safety. There will be enforcement via volunteer monitors and/or trail cameras in potential problem areas.
7. Is it easier to police ATV misuse with a rail trail?
  - a. Yes
8. CLSRT wants to work with scientists to learn where we should go, what we should avoid, and how to do that in the best possible way. This is what we have done with all the landowners.

#### *Continuing Business.*

1. Continuing permit applications (Chair):
  - a. Breezy Hill Road AoT Application (Bradford). Application was revised and resubmitted to DES (10/12/2023). Applicant responded to DES's and our concerns by performing field testing that indicated the soils are too impermeable to allow for stormwater infiltration, which resulted in them revising their design to better treat and remove sediment in sedimentation basins before it would be released to the river. (Has part of the property been sold to another owner?)
  - b. 107 Toms Pond Lane. Request for Shoreland Permit to allow the homeowners to rebuild stairs, a patio, and repair an eroding slope (letter attached). Today, the permit was approved with conditions.
  - c. 60 Blaisdell Lake Road, Bradford. A complaint was lodged for possible violations of wetlands rules (potential filling wetlands w/o the required permit(s)) at a residential property. DES's letter is dated 24 October (DES File 2023-02826). It continues to be worked on!
2. [Website](#) update – With the help of the Wix consultant, Laura made some additions and revisions. Work on it continues!
3. Instream Flow project – Dan talked with Wayne Ives of DES. He doesn't think the management plan will be complete until 2025; they are still collecting data. They may do retesting during a low-flow period. There might be temperature gauges upstream of the USGS gauge in Hopkinton that could capture the flow up there. There will be a review process, time for public comment, and eventually the report should be made public.
4. Public Events
  - a. Maybe a table for Spring Into Warner? Laura will contact Nancy Ladd.
  - b. Could we have a traveling explainer for area schools? A story map? Who could spearhead this?

- c. Bradford Library?
  - d. Pete attended the Ausbon Sargent’s Outreach Committee meeting in Jan 2024. Twelve towns were represented. He shared the mission of WRLAC and also talked about the watershed. This is a good example of what we could be doing in connecting with other community organizations. Thanks, Pete!
5. Future short- and long-term topics for discussion and/or possible projects, possibly spearheaded by subcommittees who would keep tabs on one or more of these topics
- a. Intent-to-cut notifications: \_\_\_?
  - b. Town representative contacts with local select boards, con coms, land trusts like Ausbon Sargent, etc.: All WRLAC members
  - c. VRAP data presentation: Rebecca, \_\_\_?
  - d. Warner Village Water District: Dan, \_\_\_?
    - i. [DES has determined](#) that it is not able to approve a groundwater discharge permit for the disposal of treated wastewater via the ground at the Rapid Infiltration Basin site located across the river from the wastewater treatment facility due to *nitrate* levels that exceed standards. This is new information, as earlier problems identified were related to an excess of *copper* in the water.
    - ii. Could we work with the District to support their work and possibly help with securing any available grants for upcoming work. There’s a federal earmark whose application to Sen. Shaheen is due around **March 22...**
    - iii. Perhaps convene a meeting with the Water Village District manager, Horizon Engineering, and a WRLAC member to discuss ways to work together?
  - e. Instream flow management plans: Dan, Chris
  - f. Concord Lake Sunapee Rail Trail activities: \_\_\_?
  - g. Website development: Laura, Mike
  - h. Public outreach: Laura , \_\_\_?
  - i. Permits: Dan, Pete, Chris
  - j. TU/NHF&G Watershed water quality monitoring project: George, Laura, \_\_\_?
6. Chair Dan thanked George Embley for TU’s work and partnership with the state on the Warner River.
- a. Warner & Bradford have monitoring teams to keep an eye on the river. Their surveys focus on macroinvertebrates and small streams. The surveys include water quality testing, but they are not the same as VRAP. The hope is that the monitoring teams will catch any changes that might indicate problems in the ecosystem. It’s up to the towns (often publicized through the towns’ conservation commissions) as to how much they want to do, and TU/NH F&G are happy to support them. Training for Warner will occur in June for approximately 15 people. It’s an exciting experience to participate and learn about the aquatic life in the river.
  - b. There are plans to do electrofishing along Ballard Brook to gather data before the culvert replacements. Looking for volunteers!

Meeting adjourned 9:02 PM

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 7:00 PM**