



Town of Whitingham

NORTH RIVER CORRIDOR PLAN PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING NOVEMBER 29, 2017

These Minutes will be accepted into the public record (with any corrections noted) at a future meeting of the Whitingham Planning Commission.

Attendees:

Whitingham Planning Commission members: Brad Lackey, Kristen Breeden and Peter Barus.

Whitingham Selectboard members: Robin Kingsley and Allan Twitchell.

Whitingham employees: Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner and Gig Zboray, Zoning & Floodplain Administrator.

Windham Regional Commission employees: John Bennett and Emily Davis.

Residents/interested persons: Jenepher Burnell, Christopher Crafts, Charles Rinaldi and Brian Sullivan.

River Professionals: Evan Fitzgerald and Joe Bartlett of FEA (consulting firm); Marie Caduto of VT DEC

Summary:

John Bennett of the Windham Regional Commission opened the meeting with a brief description of what this meeting is about. Introductions were made around the room.

The purpose of the River Corridor Plan is to better understand the East Branch of the North River watershed and flood resiliency opportunities and to engage in discussion and ask questions.

John Bennett noted that the draft plan is available for review and comment; comments should be provided relatively soon as the Plan must be finalized by the end of December 2017.

Evan Fitzgerald and Joe Bartlett, the river engineers presented a slideshow of The River Corridor Study, explaining different features and scientific aspects. The Study resulted in 29 plan projects with 10-15 of these projects in Whitingham. The engineers had to pick five priority projects for the plan, four of which are in Whitingham.

The Whitingham priority projects are:

- Remove the too small cement bridge in front of the Municipal Center.
- Enlarge the culvert entrance to the Municipal Center lot and replace with a 16' wide culvert.
- Remove the back of a house neighboring the Fire House and widen the riverbed and lower the bank to allow high waters to enter the floodplain.
- VTrans to replace undersized culvert under the intersection at Routes 100 & 112.
- Lower a berm on the Sullivan's land to allow flood waters to enter the floodplain.

The engineers also gave serious consideration to adding a by-pass to divert flood waters to go to the backside of the Municipal Center and into the floodplain. They did not feel this was a viable option due to the cost and other problems.

Mr. Sullivan had questions about removing or lowering the berm on his land. He fears that doing this would direct more waters to the neighbor's house. He did state he would not be against giving up a bit of his property for the benefit of the community. Stanley Janovsky expressed some reservations about this option.

There may be FEMA grant funding for pre-disaster hazard mitigation available to do these projects. There are also state grant funds but they are more specifically directed toward addressing water quality, rather than flood resilience.