

**BUCKSPORT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE
MEETING
6:00 P.M., OCTOBER 19, 2015
JEWETT SCHOOL CONFERENCE ROOM**

MINUTES

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Chairman Jef Fitzgerald
2. Members Present: Mary Jane Bush, Valorie Shaffner, Hans Krichels, Larry Wahl, Brian MacDonald, George McLeod, Jef Fitzgerald, Kathy Downes and Diane O'Connell.

Also present were Linda Plourde from the Economic Development Committee and Don Houghton from *The Bucksport Enterprise*

Additional Staff Present: Jeff Hammond

3. Minutes of September meeting were accepted.
4. Introductory Discussion

Jef informed the Committee that the Town Council had voted to appoint everyone that had applied to be a member. Jef will produce an updated member list and have it posted online.

Jef indicated that Susan Lessard, because of her interim status, would probably not be attending many of the Comprehensive Plan Committee meetings because she will be focused on shorter term issues more than long term planning.

Tom Martin was not in attendance because most of the water resources chapter details have been worked out already and the budget would not cover his attendance to every meeting.

Mary Jane suggested that for future meetings it would be helpful if some preview would be done by staff on key issues so that the discussion could focus on the specific issues.

5. Discussion of Contents of Attached Documents -- *Silver Lake and Watershed Capacities* and *Excerpts from Rick Knowlton report to Town Council*

Jef presented the attached for the committee's review (a) the Silver Lake Watershed Capacities, and (b) excerpts from the draft minutes prepared by Chris Johnson from the presentation by Rick Knowlton of the Maine Water Company to the Town Council at the meeting on September 10, 2015, with additional notes from Mr. Knowlton's recorded discussion by Jef Fitzgerald.

The following issues were discussed:

AIM indicated it is drawing between 1 and 9 million gallons per day. Mr. Knowlton estimates that a sustained draw above 2 million gallons per day cannot likely be supported by the natural watershed of Silver Lake and the pumps would eventually need to be turned on to draw water from the extended watershed. Questions that need answering are: Who decides when to turn on the pumps? Who maintains the aqueduct? Are the pipes in good shape?

The current agreement with the water company is that lowering the water level by 8 feet is the maximum allowed by current agreements -- is that too much? Who monitors it? How does the lowering of the lake to that level affect the quality of the water? What happens to the water quality when there is not a regular flow of water from the extended watershed? Who is responsible for testing?

It is in the best interests of the water company to maintain the quality, but ultimately the parties most affected by the water quality are the Town and its citizens. AIM may not have as keen an interest as did its predecessors in maintaining the pipelines, dam and water quality long range. AIM's representatives do not seem to have the historic knowledge about the system with respect to how much water they need, what the capacity is and when to operate the and maintaining the pipeline. Their estimate of 1 to 9 million gallons per day is a very broad range of usage. How would they they sustaining the higher levels?

The town needs to make sure the water supply is protected. If the town is going to try to include the water volume as an attraction to new businesses, how do we handle the fact that we have no control?

Linda Plourde asked who checks the water level - is AIM doing that?

Don Houghton indicated the pipeline is in really bad shape in some places. Jef said that a section of the pipeline near Mast Head road is covered with steel patches implying a lot of needed maintenance over time. Who is keeping track of these needs? Don also raised the issue of the dam -- how long has it been on the list as a "High Hazard" dam? There is a hydrologic study from USGS and FEMA about what would happen to the Town and where the water would go if the dam fails. However, there is no indication that there is anything wrong with the dam but because of the land configuration there is a need to be aware of repercussions should the dam be breached.

It was suggested that someone do an independent calculation and not rely on the figures from Verso/AIM and the water company.

Linda indicated that the State would not step in to protect the water. It is part of the Town's assets and it will be up to the town to protect it.

A lake association should be created for Silver Lake and should include discussions with the lake associations of Alamoosook and Toddy to study the issue.

George emphasized that the recreational uses of Alamoosook and Toddy are vital to the economy of the area.

Verso left the Town of Orland with the expense of taking care of the Orland River dam, which they are considering tearing down.

If the recent 500-year historic rain could not re-fill Silver Lake, what could?

Mary Jane indicated we need to find out what the town can do and negotiate with the water company and AIM moving forward and have a plan of action.

What are the legal rights of the people of Bucksport? Need to ensure that the usage by AIM does not put aesthetic, environmental or recreational uses in jeopardy. AIM holds the rights to the lion's share of the water. Maine Water also has rights to draw for its customers. The Town is a customer of the water company as well as the owner of much land abutting the lake. The newest water tower was built with funds from the Town's general budget and federal grant money.

Because Silver Lake is a manmade lake, it does not have as much silt because there are no major streams coming into it. With the draw down the maximum of 8 feet, rain could cause erosion of the banks and result in silt in the water. If the mill draws down too much, with no clear strategy to trigger pumping how does that work for the town? The Town needs to partner with AIM. What would the price tag be if we purchased the water rights from AIM?

There is a significant and immediate need for creation of a subcommittee to look into the entire issue. Suggest that Chris Johnson head the subcommittee. Linda Plourde indicated she wants to be a member. George suggested the study should be a regional one to include other lakes in the watershed. Mary Jane wondered if this would be something the Great Pond Mountain Trust would work on in coordination with the University of Maine and suggested we could consult Steve Norton, a geologist. There are many interested parties who would want to be part of the discussion such as Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and the Rod & Gun Club. The Subcommittee will need to get together with the people from the Alamoosook and Toddy Pond Associations and come up with recommendations to the Town Council. Alamoosook is a 5013(C) organization that perhaps could encompass Silver Lake as well. Jef will talk to town manager to make the creation of the subcommittee a priority of the Town Council.

Don said the Governor has made it clear that he would be happy to engage AIM in discussions about any issues. The Town needs to maintain good relations with AIM if possible and work with them as a development partner.

6. Review of Comprehensive Plan Section VIII - Water Resources

Jef said that Duane Nadeau had responded to Tom's question on page 3 saying that yes, the Department of Public Works uses best management practices as required by MDOT/MDEP and when they are within budget as otherwise recommended.

Maine Water has verbal commitment to doing more testing for water clarity as well as PH and phosphorus levels. Jef said that Dave Michaud recommended keeping tabs on this to make sure the program is set up to meet the town's needs. Also on page 3, rewrite to say that the aqueduct to Silver Lake is fed from the Narramissic River just below the dam at Alamoosook Lake which also collects water from the Toddy Pond(s), Craig Pond and Phillips Lake watersheds.

Bucksport has sand & gravel aquifers along Route 46 and needs to coordinate with other towns to protect the aquifers which can be sensitive. Some towns have extensive protection. The ramifications of the 20-acre quarry which was proposed on Route 46 should be discussed under the land use ordinance. It is considered in zoning ordinance. Protect the aquifers, for example from impact of arsenic. Do we feel we have info we need or do we need more study to see if there are adequate provisions?

7. Presentation by George McLeod re: Bucksport Next On-Line Community Forum

George furnished the attached two documents explaining how the on-line forum which has been prepared by George and Bob Daigle would work and the benefits of such a forum. He also furnished a quick demonstration. George indicated that the forum presented is not in final form and they are playing with a couple of other programs.

The Outreach Committee identified 12-15 community leaders who would be invited to attend a workshop to present the forum. George explained that the forum would work by getting the leaders involved who would in turn encourage others to become involved. He said currently there exists a silo effect with groups splintered throughout the community working on various ways for Bucksport to move forward, and this would be a way to bring everyone together under one umbrella. Val will email the existing list of the community leaders to the committee members for their input and suggestions of who else should be included on the list. Linda Plourde furnished a few suggestions and those will be included in the email.

Jef indicated there have been only 20 responses to survey #3. It was suggested that we could try to elicit more responses by putting the surveys around town, perhaps at the Town Office and Book Stacks, or even having volunteers go out in groups and stopping people in the street.

The next Outreach meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 5.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Jef Fitzgerald at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Valorie Shaffner
Recording Secretary, *Pro Tem*