

Minutes reviewed on 9/11/17. A Motion (Saxton/Konesko) was made to accept them as corrected. Motion passed.

Alstead Planning Board Public Hearing August 27, 2017 at Orchard Hill Pavilion, 121 Old Settlers Road, East Alstead.

Regarding a decision to incorporate the Watershed Management Plan for Lake Warren into the Town of Alstead Master Plan

Attendance: Planning Board members Peter Rhoades, chair and members Ellen Chase, Joyce Curll, David Konesko and Matt Saxton

Peter Rhoades opened the hearing at 11:30 am, introduced the members of the Planning Board and explained the Purpose of the hearing, which was to determine whether to incorporate the Watershed Management Plan for Lake Warren into the Town of Alstead Master Plan. He also explained that the Plan is a document that guides the work of individuals and public actors who undertake to mitigate and solve problems that have been noted in the plan. The Plan does not commit anyone to do anything, but to provide a "roadmap" for those who wish to. The document looks at many things, including the problems and how to handle them. The Planning Board as a whole has not yet had to do a lot of heavy lifting to create this plan because of the work done by the steering committee, but this is something that will benefit the town, since it will make the town eligible to receive grant money to address problems that affect the lake.

John Mann noted that how we run this project is with adaptive management, which involves monitoring results of any targeted activity and moving ahead step by step.

Sarah Webb read a statement supporting adoption of the plan, and submitted that statement.

Tom Dowling noted that we need to get more involvement from new people around the lake, who were not in attendance at the hearing, so that they can learn what they can do to help with implementation of the plan.

Rock Wilson, Selectman asked that the hearing be continued to a later date so that more people can read and comment on it.

Discussion of the timing ensued with some attendees urging that the Planning Board proceed to pass it and permit changes, omissions, suggestion and comments to be added later and others urging a short delay to allow more people to read it and submit comments.

Juanita Wilson suggested that a flyer should be sent out to the whole town. Peter Rhoades noted that the notice of the meeting had been done legally and in a timely fashion and that the Planning Board does not have a budget to send out a flyer to the whole town. The Board of Selectmen is able to do it. Notice of the meeting was submitted to the Town website as well as to local newspaper. The text of the plan was submitted for posting on the Town website. A copy has been available in the Town offices and at the Library. Announcements of the Hearing were posted around the lake and in the watershed.

In answer to a question from Chris Reitmann about implementation of the Plan, Peter Rhoades noted that no ordinances or regulations that are suggested by the Plan can be adopted without approval by the Town legislative body. The Plan is a guiding document, indicating a way forward to ameliorate problems identified by research and analysis of facts. Individuals can use that guide to improve their own property to benefit the lake.

Bob Hanninen read and submitted his comments, noting health and safety as an important concern. The dust that is raised by vehicles on the gravel road is a problem. Use of calcium chloride on the road only works for a time, but it also increases salinity of the water as it runs off during a rain event. It is a potent corrosive agent for vehicles and the environment. He recommends that Pine Cliff Road be paved to a minimum width and that the 25 mph be maintained. His complete comments were submitted.

Dan Curll noted that this hearing is a celebration of the roadmap which is the result of 7 years work of the steering committee, which has included a Comprehensive Lake Inventory and Lake Management Plan, incorporated into the Town Master Plan in 2012, a Nutrient Loading study and now this Watershed Management Plan. He noted that before the work began, many thought that the entire problem in the lake was the waste of waterfowl, and the fact that some septic systems might not be up to date or working properly. Now we know that approximately 77% of the problem is stormwater runoff, with septic systems a distant second at 14% and that waterfowl is 2%, the same as direct atmospheric and natural landscape. He noted that the roadmap has some imperfections, as do all roadmaps, but it points the way to go to save the Lake for future generations. He noted that another reason to celebrate is the number of people at the hearing and involved in the Plan in general is larger than in the past. Peter Rhoades noted that this is the most heavily attended in his memory and that the Town's Master Plan is an important document that enables us to apply for grants to correct problems.

Phil Sanford noted his 80 years of involvement with the lake, and that it is still one of the most unspoiled places he has ever known. He and his late wife Romie have worked hard to prevent invasive weeds from coming into the lake, and rigorous inspections to identify any possible infestations. His fondest wish is to leave the lake as good as or better than he found it, for future generations.

Rock Wilson noted that the Plan is a great Plan, with just some little changes needed, and repeated his request to continue the hearing so that more people can read it and comment.

John Mann submitted a letter from David Deen, the former River Steward of the Connecticut River for Vermont and New Hampshire, also the former owner of Eel Rock and the former Vice President of the Lake Warren Association. In his letter, David noted that the Lake is a source lake for the Connecticut River and that the entire watershed is contained within the town.

Bruce Montgomery, who served on the steering committee, noted three basic things about the plan: 1- the Lake is impaired now because of excess phosphorus and chlorophyll-a, 2-we need to reduce Total Phosphorus (TP) by 25% to get back to the condition of the lake when we first started testing, and 3- there is a list in Table IV.1 of projects organized by priority and indicating costs and beneficial impacts.

There was further discussion about whether to ask the Planning Board to continue the hearing to a later date or to ask the Planning Board to deliberate and vote at this hearing. Peter Rhoades noted that the Planning Board and the Zoning Board meet periodically to discuss any changes to zoning that have to be voted on. Planning Board decisions and actions do not have to be voted on. Comments in favor noted that the Plan is not binding, that there is no other plan to compare, that getting on with it will enable us to “follow the roadmap and begin our roadtrip”. Arguments for continuing the hearing were that we need support from the town to implement the plan and accomplish any improvements. Discussion of potential dates for continuation ultimately settled on September 11, the next scheduled Planning Board Meeting. Rock Wilson will send out a mailing to the entire town, noting this. Matt Saxton entered a motion to continue the hearing until September 11 at 7:15 PM in the town hall. Ellen Chase seconded the motion and the Planning voted unanimously for the motion. The PB will continue to accept written comments to the record in the meantime.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Curll, Planning Board member