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**Environmental Review Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**

*Tuesday, August 18, 2020, 4:00 p.m.*

*Via Zoom*

Committee Members Present: Roger Bolton (Chair), Jacky Hickey (by phone), Mark Smith, Edward Holub, Eleanor Tillinghast, Kate Fletcher, Malcolm Fick, and Kyle Hanlon

Others Present: Thomas Matuszko (BRPC), and Melissa Provencher (BRPC)

**I. Call to Order**

ERC Chairman Bolton called the meeting to order at 4:03pm and began roll call.

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 13, 2020**

K. Hanlon made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by M. Smith. ERC Chairman Bolton conducted a roll call vote.

R. Bolton: Aye

E. Tillinghast: Aye

E. Holub: Aye

M. Smith: Aye

K. Hanlon: Aye

K. Fletcher: Abstained

M. Fick: Abstained

The motion was passed with two abstentions.

**III. Watson Pond Dam Removal EENF, Hinsdale**

M. Provencher provided a brief description of the project. The proposed project includes partial removal of an existing privately owned dam which will result in reduction of the existing impoundment. The dam crest elevation will be lowered by approximately two feet and the spillway elevation will be lowered by approximately three feet. As a result, the normal pond surface area will be reduced from 13.17 acres to 5.03 acres. This will result in a conversion of approximately eight acres of land under water to bordering vegetated wetland. The project proponent has conducted an alternatives analysis, in which the no action alternative was dismissed and the alternatives of dam repair and both partial and full dam removal were considered.

The proposed project has meet or exceeded MEPA review thresholds for a Mandatory Environmental Impact Report (EIR) due to alteration of a dam that causes a decrease of impoundment capacity. The proponent has requested a waiver from the Mandatory EIR.

State agency actions include the following required permits:

- MassDCR Chapter 253 Dam Safety Permit
- Hinsdale Conservation Commission/MassDEP Order of Conditions

M. Provencher explained that, in addition to the requirements of an ENF, an Expanded ENF (EENF) must include more extensive and detailed information that describes and analyzes a proposed project and its alternatives and assesses its potential environmental impacts and environmental mitigation measures.

M. Provencher explained that, in staff's opinion, an EIR is not necessary and the proponents request for a waiver from a mandatory EIR due to several factors. The project requires several environmental permits, under which the potential impacts to the natural environment will be reviewed in detail and the partial removal of the dam does not require new or improved infrastructure facilities to support the project. There are no rare and endangered species impacts and the project is not located in an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Additionally, the project has been designed to comply with a Dam Safety Order, and there are no state funds being used toward this project. This Intermediate size, Significant Hazard Potential dam is currently in poor condition due to several noted deficiencies.

K. Hanlon moved to approve the comments to include a clarification that the "no action" alternative was dismissed and to add the absence of state funding as an additional reason why an EIR is not warranted.

M. Fick seconded the motion. ERC Chairman Bolton conducted a roll call vote.

R. Bolton: Aye

E. Holub: Aye

K. Hanlon: Aye

M. Fick: Aye

E. Tillinghast: Aye

K. Fletcher: Aye

M. Smith: Aye

Jack Hickey: Present, but in listen only mode.

The motion was passed unanimously.

#### **IV. Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

#### **V. Adjournment**

K. Hanlon made a motion to adjourn at 4:31pm. The motion was seconded by E. Tillinghast. ERC Chairman Bolton conducted a roll call vote.

R. Bolton: Aye

K. Hanlon: Aye

E. Tillinghast: Aye

E. Holub: Aye

M. Fick: Aye

K. Fletcher: Aye

M. Smith: Aye

Jack Hickey: Present, but in listen only mode.

The motion was passed unanimously.