

**Stakeholder Meeting regarding Hydroelectric Licensing &  
Kinnickinnic River Corridor Planning Strategy**

*River Falls Hydroelectric Project | P-10489*

*June 25, 2015*

**Attendees:** Tim Thum, Utility Advisory Board  
Wayne Beebe, Utility Advisory Board  
Diane Odeen, City Council/Utility Advisory Board  
Patricia La Rue, Resident/Park & Recreation Advisory Board  
Dan Wilcox, Trout Unlimited  
Michael Page, Friends of the Kinni  
Peter Dahm, Kinnickinnic River Land Trust  
Dave Fodroczi, Kinnickinnic River Land Trust  
David Babcock, Resident  
Todd Johnson, UW-Extension/UWRF  
Jim Fossum, Wi River Alliance (phone)  
Denny Caneff, Wi River Alliance (phone)  
Dan Helsel, WiDNR (phone)  
Cheryl Latsch, WiDNR (phone)  
Reid Wronski, City of River Falls  
Kevin Westhuis, City of River Falls  
Mike Noreen, City of River Falls  
Ray French, City of River Falls

**Introductions**

Ray began the meeting reminding the group of the goal for these meetings: information sharing among stakeholders for activities surrounding the Kinnickinnic River and the hydroelectric relicensing. He also reminded the group that the City is still in the very early stages of corridor planning and that study will continue into the planning process, which is slated to begin in earnest in 2016. Next were introductions of all attendees, in person and by phone.

**Update on Draft License Amendment Application and Sediment Analysis RFP**

Ray continued with an update for the group on the draft application for amendment of the current hydroelectric license and the upcoming request for proposals (RFP) for sediment analysis.

The group of stakeholders and interested parties were sent an e-mail on June 12 that included links to the draft application and appendices on the City's website. Ray described the contents and summarized the arguments contained in the draft application and asked for comments from stakeholders by the end of week. The goal is have to the draft application submitted by the end of the month of June.

Once the application is submitted, FERC will let us know whether the application is complete and then open a 30 day public comment period on the license amendment. That is when stakeholders and individuals can submit formal comments on the application to FERC for their consideration. Following that period FERC will issue their decision.

A small group of stakeholders with expertise in the area were also sent a copy of the RFP for a sediment analysis with a request for comments on that as well. The RFP outlines the goal of the study, which is to determine the potential costs for sediment management in the case of dam removal. The deadline for submissions will be after the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, with review by a stakeholder group, and a formal recommendation for approval by the Utility Advisory Board at their July 20 meeting.

The proposal review group tentatively includes each of the following: (a) UW-River Falls faculty member; (b) representative of Kinnickinnic River Land Trust; (c) representative of Trout Unlimited Kiap-Tu-Wish; (d) representative of Friends of the Kinni; (e) River Falls City Engineer; and (f) Ray/project coordinator. Following any comments received today, the RFP will be published by the end of the day.

Following the updates, Patricia asked whether there will be time for other studies to consider alternatives. Ray indicated that there will more studies planned for evaluating dam removal and upgrades to the facilities, especially considering possible future license requirements if the City were to be issued a new license. Michael asked and clarified the timelines associated with the submitting the application and the RFP.

Peter suggested that the RFP was weak on specifics and needed more substance in order to be more effective. Ray indicated it was based on an RFP from another City with similar questions, and was written with the goal of giving the proposing firm flexibility on how to best answer the primary question. Reid agreed that the proposal was sufficient for that purpose. There was additional discussion on the process for reviewing and whether that group should meet to write the RFP.

Jim added that the RFP doesn't discuss any specific chemical or environmental testing of the sediment. Dan continued that the RFP should state the products of environmental data the City needs to receive as part of the study. The RFP should identify specific bathymetric, elevation, and survey data. Diane thought that the RFP clearly outlines that the City is looking for a partner who can work with the City on more than just the science. Dan agreed that the City needs a partner organization with experience, and maybe a complete dam removal feasibility study.

Reid and Peter continued the discussion on the balance in the process and RFP between sediment and future planning. Reid identified that right now we need answers to the sediment management question, and the RFP also seeks to ensure the firm has Wisconsin experience. Peter suggested the RFP needs to be expanded. Michael and Kevin agreed that the RFP is a component of a larger process. Ray reminded the group that he will accept any suggestions or comments on the RFP and application. Reid and Dan agreed that the 2006 bathymetric survey should be sufficient for the long term.

Denny added that the generally, the River Alliance endorses this process and the ideas for moving forward. He advised that the City should continue to take advantage of the expertise of the stakeholder groups. He also foresees that the River Alliance is likely to concur with the license amendment application.

## **Miscellaneous Topics**

Discussion continued on other issues, including the recreation survey. Dan advised that the recreation survey should have an experimental design to ensure a representative sample can be taken, and more than just a collection of observations. Michael and Ray discussed some of the recreation survey compliance needs of the City, particularly Form 80. Ray continued that the summer recreation survey is largely to get some baseline information and that a broader recreation survey on future recreation options will be part of the corridor planning process.

Peter advised that there is a line in the license amendment application that gives some members of the Land Trust pause, specifically, “provide for the continued financial sustainability...” of the hydros. Ray said that could likely be reworded and that it was intended to convey that additional oversight by the UAB as outlined in the Council resolution should help keep costs down and allow the City to retain more income for future projects related to the facilities.

Kevin and Diane added that nothing is predetermined in this process, so the continued financial sustainability of the hydros does not mean that we already know the hydros are staying. The intent is for this plan to reflect community values.

Denny thinks there is good communication to FERC on the purpose and vision of application and corridor planning process.

Dave asked about the missing Appendix D that will be a formal response to stakeholders on studies. Ray advised that this will be a formal response conveying information already available on the sediment and recreation studies. The additional studies will continue to be worked out as the planning process gets underway and the study requests will continue to be used as guide. Ray also acknowledged again that this is a slow process and that the City appreciates the patience of stakeholders.

Dan continued that it would be helpful to get the technical advisory group in place soon to help guide what those studies will be. Todd also provided input on the license amendment application and expressed interest in helping design the recreation survey with experts from UWRP.

## **Closing**

Ray thanked everyone for coming and indicated that the next meeting will likely be in early August and also during the FERC notice and comment period on the license amendment application.