

LMRLAC – June 28, 2007

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

June 28, 2007

Members:

✓ = present

- Bob Robbins (Chair) – Hudson
- Kathryn Nelson (Vice Chair) -- Nashua
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) -- Nashua
- Glenn McKibben (Treasurer) – Litchfield
- ✓ Cynthia Ruonala (Public Relations) – Nashua
- ✓ George May - Merrimack
- ✓ Jim Barnes – Hudson
- Ray Peeples – Litchfield
- Stan Kazlouskas – Hudson

Also in attendance:

- ✓ Minda Henderson, NRPC
- ✓ Millie Mugica, corridor resident

The meeting informally began at 7:15pm in the east wing downstairs in the Nashua Public Library. Kath and Bob had indicated prior to the meeting that they would not be able to attend. Members present determined that there was not a quorum for a formal meeting.

The meeting started with Cynthia briefing other members on the status of the Greeley Park boat ramp in Nashua. She indicated she had called Nick Caggiano of Nashua Park and Recreation and Nick indicated that the Legal Department was researching the issue of whether the railroad crossing was public or private. Cynthia called the Legal Department and was told that the status had not changed. Cynthia reminded members that the railroad crossing had to be resolved before NH Fish and Game would pursue leasing the boat ramp. Cynthia said she would continue to follow up on this issue and that she wanted the Nashua ramp to be on a waiting list for the state when NH Fish and Game has funding to work on it. George reminded members that the LAC has tried twice to put up an information kiosk at the boat ramp but the kiosk had been vandalized. George recommends the LAC not do anything further at the site until improvements can be made to the area. He suggested it be considered as a park and not just as a boat ramp. Minda suggested also getting a Fish and Game contact and working the issue from that side. Members mentioned Rich Tichko's name as the F&G representative for this issue.

Litchfield Dock Permit

Members briefly discussed the permit and possible comments to submit to DES. Karen read from Kath's e-mail that suggested the LAC request that the guidelines developed by the CSPA Study Commission be used for this dock permit. Another comment suggested was to request that the owner remove the complete structure if it's to be no longer used.

Karen had attended the site walk (on May 18) and briefed the rest of the members present on the site. She indicated that the walkway, deck, and dock were being situated in such a way to minimize cutting. George asked if the dock would be removed seasonally and Karen indicated that it would. George also asked if the dock would be anchored in some way to avoid being washed away in a flood and Karen replied that she understood it would be. Without a quorum present, members indicated that a formal letter could not be sent. Karen will send an e-mail to Chris Brison at DES with these comments taken from LAC members, explaining that the

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comments give a sense of the committee's feelings but is not a formal submission of comments. Minda suggested the LAC request another extension to provide comment.

George briefed the committee on the most recent water testing. He sent out *e. coli* information in an e-mail earlier today. He indicated that Millie's test site near the Sagamore Bridge was "too low to count". Millie indicated that she had seen a dead fish at her test site. George will add Minda and Millie to his water test results distribution list. George indicated that the Souhegan Watershed Association is still seeking contributions from the area towns to assist in funding the Merrimack River portion of the testing.

Millie mentioned a trail race in Mine Falls Park in November that will likely be a fundraiser for the Nashua River Watershed Association. She suggested LMRLAC may want to put out literature at the event and members agreed. Millie will let the committee know further details when she gets them.

Corridor Management Plan Update

Minda handed out hard copies of her draft of Chapter 3, titled Natural Resources. She indicated an updated Chapter 5 and a draft of Chapter 3 had been e-mailed earlier in the afternoon. Minda also brought one set of 11x17 maps for the plan. She will try to get a copy of the maps posted on the NRPC Web site and will e-mail the link to members. Minda gave the hard copy of the maps to Cynthia so she could refer to them as she reviews plan chapters.

Minda pointed out some incomplete sections in Chapter 3. She mentioned under Historic Resources that the sections on dams and water withdrawals are not filled in yet. She wondered what else the committee would like to say about dams since there is already a section on hydropower. Jim indicated there should be an inventory of dams in the corridor. George mentioned that there should be information about the area being influenced by two dams: the Amoskeag in Manchester upstream, and the Pawtucket Dam in Lowell downstream. George indicated he believes the minimum flow for the Amoskeag Dam is 1500 cfs (cubic feet per second). Members pointed out that the Pawtucket Dam was lowered this week for flashboard repairs. When Jim asked about whether there was also work last year, George indicated that there is work annually. It was pointed out that the prior notification of the dam being lowered is more widespread now than it had previously been.

Regarding the water withdrawals, Minda indicated that she wanted to put the topic in context: minimum instream flow, drinking water, water quality. She also wondered how much detail we wanted outside the corridor. Jim suggested the plan identify the major water users and mentioned Green Meadow Golf Course as an example. Minda mentioned Anheuser-Busch as a location that takes water out but puts it back in. George mentioned we should have information on the rules/laws and history for water withdrawal. He mentioned riparian rights, and also mentioned that withdrawals of 20,000 gallons per day have to be registered with the State. It was also mentioned to consider breaking up the withdrawals into categories such as agriculture, public/private. It was pointed out that Pennichuck's withdrawals vary. George suggested the plan mention Pennichuck's potential for withdrawal – what they are permitted for.

Minda also pointed out missing details on the last page of Chapter 3. She indicated she will be filling in details of existing legislation in each of the communities for the areas of Erosion and Sediment Control, Wetlands, Shoreland Protection, and Water Quality Protection.

Minda indicated that Chapter 4 will get into the implications of the current regulations: are they adequate, what might be missing, or problems with the regulations.

George asked whether chapter 3 referred to salmon restoration anywhere. Minda said the Fisheries section made reference to it. Minda will try to include more recent data. George

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pointed out that the salmon restoration data gives the LAC information to refer to when looking for river protection. Minda indicated she would highlight it.

Minda passed around the maps for members to look at during the meeting and asked for feedback on such things as references and color scheme. The maps available for review were:

- Wetlands
- Aquifer
- Floodplain
- 2 land use maps (south/north)
- 2 zoning maps (south/north)
- Conserved lands
- Outfalls and water quality monitoring sites
- Watershed
- Wildlife habitat
- Base map

Minda gave some background on a few of the maps. She said the wildlife habitat information came out of Fish and Game's Wildlife Action Plan. The outfalls and water quality monitoring sites map shows outfalls and potential contaminant sites. She suggested the LAC could be particularly helpful in reviewing and providing information for the conserved lands map to identify scenic areas or anecdotal references that are not widely known or well documented. Minda pointed out that she had hoped to include a vegetation map and a soils/geology map but that neither turned out to be practical – they were either too busy or too vague.

Jim asked whether the maps would be 11x17 in the final report. Minda said that they would.

Members commented in general that the maps were well done.

George asked whether the plan should discuss flooding and its effects. Minda said it talks about floodplains, but not directly about flooding's effects. George asked whether it could discuss what areas were endangered for certain flood heights. Minda mentioned the hazard mitigation plans at NRPC and said she could pull information from that plan on current structures that would be lost in the floodplain. George indicated that the corridor plan could also refer to the hazard mitigation plan.

George also mentioned that the Merrimack Village Dam (on the Souhegan) is still within the corridor but is scheduled to be removed, and suggested its removal be mentioned in the Fisheries section. He indicated Milford is talking about possibly removing dams as well. He indicated the dam is currently scheduled to be removed in 2008.

Millie asked about the conserved lands map and how the trails on that map were determined. Minda said they were trails already documented. She said there's a plan to map "social trails"; Millie replied there's a trail near where she lives that she can provide GPS information for.

Millie also asked about how the habitat rankings were developed on the habitat map. Minda replied that species and habitats were inventoried and a ranking system was developed. Fish and Game then came up with the most critical areas broken up by watershed.

Karen asked about the criteria for the mapped Drinking Water Protection Areas in Merrimack, Litchfield, and Hudson, and whether it would be applicable for Nashua's Water Supply Protection District. Minda said she would look into it.

Jim noted a rectangular floodplain area in Litchfield that seemed to partly be on a ridge. It also appeared to correspond roughly to the Litchfield State Forest.

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Jim asked about a blank reference to stormwater management on page 9 of chapter 3. Minda replied that she will pull out the regulations for the corridor towns and plug it in there.

Discussion turned to chapter 5 and prioritizing action items. Minda indicated she had focused on writing chapter 3 so far and had not yet worked on that. She indicated she planned to prioritize action items under each subheading if there is a committee-identified priority. There was some discussion about ordering the action items by priority and whether that could both help or hinder the committee in selecting items to focus on in a given year. George also pointed out that items could be grouped as short term and long term priorities. George also recommended looking back at prior chapters and making sure there were recommendations corresponding to whatever the plan indicated was significant.

Cynthia pointed out the item in chapter 5 (item 10.7) referring to identifying a process for reporting violations. She emphasized that this is a significant point for her, and feels that more needs to be done to address this. She cited examples of seeing a person pouring paint or motor oil down a storm drain. George suggested the LAC could form a subcommittee to take care of violations. He mentioned a protocol would have to be developed for how to handle such situations. He also suggested a hotline could be put into place. Education would be involved: the hotline number would have to be made available to such organizations as the police, conservation commissions, and City Hall, so calls there could be referred to the hotline number.

Members started to brainstorm about ways to get the word out about what should not go in a storm drain and why. George suggested the LAC schedule someone to come in to another meeting to discuss setting up a hotline in conjunction with NPDES (Non Pointsource Discharge Elimination System) Phase 2. Cynthia suggested perhaps arranging for a speaker in schools would be a good idea as well.

George pointed out that the towns have a mandate and some funds to perform these things so they are looking for ideas and are looking to partner. It was mentioned that the Department of Public Works in each community is working on education and awareness to manage stormwater discharge to help meet NPDES Phase 2 requirements. It was also mentioned that DPWs are responsible for EPA compliance and the State is responsible for policing the municipalities.

Millie brought up Nashua's program of labeling several storm drains to raise awareness of the issue. George asked whether the decals were holding up and Minda indicated that they were so far and had been through at least two seasons.

George suggested that the restoration section on page 6 of chapter 5 not only mention 'no riprap' but also mention no physical debris or contaminants. George also brought up the issue of deicing solution from the airport getting into the Merrimack River.

Cynthia pointed out that water quality has improved over the past 30 years. George agreed but also indicated that there are additional substances that could or should be tested for and are not. He suggested VOCs (volatile organic compounds) and heavy metals as examples and indicated that testing for such substances is expensive. He stated that mercury was tested for once in the past. Minda said she'd included additional testing as a recommended action. George also mentioned that biological testing would be useful to study such things as the age of fish, whether they're growing properly, etc.

Miscellaneous Business

George brought up the issue of Protected River signs. He had sent an e-mail earlier in the day suggesting the LAC consider having Protected River signs for the two Merrimack River crossings in the corridor: at the Taylors Falls Bridge and the Sagamore Bridge in Nashua. He said the LAC would have to arrange to get the river identification signs and that DES provides

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the Protected River signs. Four signs would be needed: one for each bridge in each direction. He suggested perhaps Hudson and Nashua's conservation commissions could pay for the river ID signs if they were needed. He made a quick estimate that the costs required could be about \$100, perhaps less, from each town. George volunteered to follow up on the project. This includes filling out an application and putting together a map marking sign location, working with DOT to get permission to put the signs up and coordinating with each town's highway departments to get the signs installed. Millie volunteered to check the Sagamore Bridge to see whether there is already a sign on it identifying the Merrimack River. Minda will check the Taylors Falls Bridge.

George indicated there has been good feedback on the Souhegan River Protected River signs that have been installed.

Karen took the mail to give to either Bob or to Kath.

Minda will be attending the next meeting. She plans to have Chapter 4 for the next meeting.

George mentioned this Sunday (July 1) there is a MRWC canoe trip from Manchester to Reeds Ferry. He mentioned that LMRLAC 'co-sponsors' a canoe trip in August from Reeds Ferry to Greeley Park.

Members wished Minda well on her upcoming wedding.

Meeting concluded at 9pm. Next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 26 at 7pm at the Nashua Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
secretary