

LMRLAC – August 25, 2016

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

August 25, 2016

Members:

✓ = present

Current:

- ✓ Gene Porter (Chair) – Nashua (current term expires 12/18/16)
- ✓ Nelson Disco (Vice Chair) – Merrimack (current term expires 08/28/17)
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) – Nashua (current term expires 08/12/17)
- Christine Dupree (Treasurer) – Hudson (current term expires 11/25/17)
- Michael Croteau – Litchfield (current term expires 08/12/17)
- Richard LeBourdais – Hudson (current term expires 11/06/17)
- Francis Murphy – Nashua (current term expires 02/18/19)

Pending Renewal:

- ✓ George May – Merrimack (current term expired 01/07/14)

Associate Members:

Mildred Mugica – Nashua

Also in attendance:

None

Meeting called to order at 7:08pm by Chairman Gene Porter in the Hunt Room of the Nashua Public Library, without a quorum present. Chairman Porter stated that Mr. Murphy is out of town, Mr. LeBourdais has a personal commitment, and that he was expecting Ms. Dupree.

Minutes

There being no quorum, the April minutes were not approved.

Old Business

Memo from Nashua Waterways Manager

Chairman Porter mentioned that he had received a memo from Madeleine Mineau, the Nashua Waterways Manager. The memo provided information on several of the agenda items for tonight's meeting.

Chairman Porter also explained that he attended an Infrastructure Committee meeting on August 24 (Wednesday) at which the Millyard boat ramp was discussed with a positive recommendation to the full Board of Alderman.

Nashua: Beazer East Alteration of Terrain Application (File #20151231-200), Shoreland Application (File #2015-03425), Dredge and Fill Application (File #2015-03105);

Application for Special Exception to Work in Merrimack River and Prime Wetland Buffer

Chairman Porter displayed a photograph showing that construction is underway on the site. He further stated there was a site walk the week of August 15 but that he was out of town and did not learn of it in time to pass along that information to the rest of the members. He will inform members when another site walk is scheduled.

Nashua: Greeley Park Boat Ramp

Nashua's Waterways Manager has requested the city attorney submit a formal request to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to declare the railroad crossing a public crossing.

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The hearing will be sometime in September. Chairman Porter plans to attend if the hearing is public.

Chairman Porter displayed a photograph showing further deterioration of the ramp. He stated it is now difficult to launch even a car-top boat from the area.

Chairman Porter explained that New Hampshire Fish and Game has stated it has no funding to improve the ramp, but that the Public Water Access Advisory Board sees access on the Lower Merrimack River as its highest priority. He further explained that Nashua is pursuing grant money for the project.

Nashua: Residences at Riverfront Landing Shoreland Application (File #2016-00330), Alteration of Terrain Application (File #20160125-007)

Chairman Porter stated that he recently gave a briefing to the Nashua Rotary Club, which included a rendition of the layout of the site. He received feedback from an attendee that the layout, dated January 2016, was not current. Chairman Porter learned that one of the buildings in Phase 1 has been removed due to interference with the City's wastewater infrastructure in the area. Chairman Porter plans to attend the Planning Board meeting at which this change is discussed, and will again make the case for a trail along the river.

Merrimack/Litchfield: PFOA Contamination

Chairman Porter indicated Litchfield is seeking to extend their public water system for some of the Litchfield residents in the current perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) contamination radius who are currently on private wells.

Members briefly discussed the investigation and progress to date.

Chairman Porter asked whether sediment in the Merrimack River should be tested, and members agreed that Chairman Porter should send such a request to NH Department of Environmental Services (DES).

Hudson: Private Boat Ramp

Chairman Porter displayed copies of photographs he had taken of the site back in April and earlier this week. He explained that he had been in contact with the Hudson Town Planner initially, who suggested approaching DES about the matter. DES had sent an investigator, who spoke to the landowner, who replied he would clean up the site. The DES investigator is scheduled to return the week of August 29 to confirm the cleanup.

The August photograph appeared to show the vegetation had significantly grown in along the shoreline with what appears to be a riverfront beach area, but members were concerned that the photograph, taken from a different angle, did not sufficiently provide a comparison to the April photograph. Chairman Porter indicated he would take another photograph at his next opportunity.

American Rivers Report on Ten Most Endangered Rivers

Chairman Porter reminded members that American Rivers had included the Merrimack River on its top ten endangered rivers list for 2016, citing the threat of development in the watershed. Chairman Porter explained that a Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests study provided a basis for the report, and that the study was based on incomplete statistics (how it categorized development, how it used only a subset of the watershed). Chairman Porter is continuing to express concerns about how he feels the report sets back public understanding of the state of the Merrimack River, by exaggerating or misrepresenting conditions.

Mr. May pointed out that American Rivers puts out a report annually that focuses on ten rivers.

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Chairman Porter encouraged members to read the American Rivers report if they have not already done so.

New Business

Planning Board Outreach/Master Plan Status

Chairman Porter stated he has ongoing contact with the Nashua Planning Board.

Chairman Porter asked Mr. Disco about the Merrimack Planning Board and its level of focus on the Merrimack River. Mr. Disco replied that Merrimack's position appears to be that the challenge of the railroad tracks is an obstacle to a practical pursuit of a trail along the river. He said Merrimack is currently focusing on pedestrian and bicycle trail work throughout the town.

Chairman Porter will check with Hudson and Litchfield.

Members discussed the fact that the rail line along the Merrimack River was originally a two-track line, with one line since abandoned. Chairman Porter mentioned Rails-with-Trails, a subsidiary of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and suggested a bicycle trail could be laid along the abandoned line, with a fence in between it and the active rail line. Chairman Porter will contact the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy for information.

Chairman Porter stated that he gave a briefing recently to the Nashua Rotary Club, and asked members about giving briefings to other organizations. Mr. May suggested the Merrimack or Manchester Rotary Clubs. Chairman Porter will also reach out to the Nashua Chamber of Commerce. Chairman Porter encouraged other members to give the briefing as well.

Treasurer's Report

There is no Treasurer's Report for this month.

Bank Account

Chairman Porter stated he has researched bank account options, and has found an account at Nashua Bank with non-profit status and no fee. He plans to pursue moving the LMRLAC account from Robbins Farley to Nashua Bank.

Membership

Mr. Disco will look into lining up another member from Merrimack. Mr. May plans to seek appointment renewal.

Chairman Porter recommended all members think about succession planning for LMRLAC officers.

Members also briefly discussed meeting attendance and whether improving meeting regularity (i.e. cancelling fewer monthly meetings) would also improve attendance. Chairman Porter plans to take that approach.

Corridor Management Plan Update Planning

Chairman Porter pointed out that the Corridor Management Plan is several years old and requested members think about the process of updating it. An action item for all members is to review the current Corridor Management Plan (available on the NRPC Web site: http://www.nashuarpc.org/files/1513/9455/5637/LMR_CorridorManagementPlan_ch1-5.pdf) and make note of what should be improved.

Other Business

- The Independence Rowing Club in Nashua has a new boat storage facility on their site.

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The facility is built on a pre-existing pad, covered by a prior permit and thus did not require review.

- The City of Nashua has purchased a property on Burke Street, with plans to move the Department of Public Works to the site. Chairman Porter attended the recent public tour of the site. Mr. May pointed out that this site is near Salmon Brook and that this should be kept in mind for any development in that area.
- Chairman Porter brought up the topic of Heritage Trail extension and handed out a draft map suggesting extensions along the north bank of the Nashua River and along the west bank of the Merrimack River both north and south of the confluence.
- Chairman Porter suggested there should be a bicycle trail from the Residences at Riverfront Landing to downtown Nashua, and suggested LMRLAC plan a field trip to the area. Chairman Porter will also perform outreach advocating such a trail.
- Mr. May has contacted the Nashua Garden Club about decorating the Bridge Street bridge and has not so far received a response.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.

Next LMRLAC Meeting

The next LMRLAC meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, September 22, 2016, at 7:00 pm at the Nashua Public Library. Chairman Porter will be out of town; Vice Chairman Disco will chair that meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
Secretary