

LMRLAC – February 26, 2015

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

February 26, 2015

Members:

- ✓ = present

Current:

- ✓ Gene Porter (Chair) – Nashua
- ✓ Nelson Disco (Vice Chair) – Merrimack
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) – Nashua
Michael Croteau (Treasurer) – Litchfield
- ✓ Christine Dupree – Hudson
Richard LeBourdais – Hudson
- ✓ George May – Merrimack
Michael Redding – Merrimack

Associate Members:

Mildred Mugica – Nashua

Also in attendance:

Kate Basso, Keach-Nordstrom Associates
Brent Cole, Keach-Nordstrom Associates

Meeting called to order at 7:15pm by Chairman Gene Porter without a quorum present. Chairman Porter began a discussion on Designated River signs and Mr. May arrived, making a quorum (greater than 50% of members present).

Old Business

Designated River Signs

Chairman Porter mentioned that he had taken pictures at the Sagamore and Veterans Memorial bridges with suggested locations for the Designated River signs and had sent those to a contact in the Engineering Department in Nashua. He has not yet received a response.

Nashua Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Screening and Disinfection Facility Status

Chairman Porter stated he had contacted the City regarding the amount of clearcut he noted at the levee to install the new outfall near the David Deane Skateboard Park. He received a response indicating that some of the area is actually brush and had not been cleared for the project. Chairman Porter indicated he was satisfied with the response.

Pawtucket Dam (Boott Hydropower in Lowell) Proposed Crest Gate Project

Chairman Porter indicated there is currently no decision or change in status on this project.

EPA Response to LMRLAC Comments on Manchester Waste Treatment Plant, NPDES Permit #NH0100447

Chairman Porter reminded the committee that it had submitted 3 comments to EPA in response to the proposed project as discussed at the October 23, 2014 LMRLAC meeting. LMRLAC received a response to the comments, as follows:

- Sampling. In response to LMRLAC's comment expressing concern at the apparent once-annual sampling, it was explained that regular sampling does take place. E. coli sampling is only once per year.
- Public access to sampling data. In response to LMRLAC's comment requesting posting of results on a publicly accessible Web site, EPA added a requirement to the permit that Pennichuck Water receive telephone notification of results which would affect its use of

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the Merrimack River as a drinking water source. The EPA also indicated that the results are available on the EPA Web site.

- Phase 2 Abatement. In response to LMRLAC's comment requesting information on the relationship of the project to CSO Abatement Phase 2, the response indicated that phase 2 is not yet implemented.

Mr. May added that the seasonal water sampling activity can tell if e. coli is present in the Merrimack River. Mr. May also suggested the committee keep in mind what the best solution is for CSOs; he recommended Nashua's storage approach as the preferred method, rather than piping the overflows to another stream.

Mr. Disco commented that Merrimack has no CSOs and reminded the committee that the Pennichuck withdrawal is in Merrimack. Other members commented that there are additional communities downstream in Massachusetts which use the Merrimack River for drinking water withdrawal.

Mr. Porter took the action to contact the Merrimack River Watershed Association to ask whether an upstream CSO notification process exists.

Mr. May asked whether information on CSO releases or release history is available to the public; no one present could answer the question.

New Business

Merrimack: 35 Railroad Avenue Site Plan, Temporary Material Storage

Ms. Basso from Keach-Nordstrom Associates, representing the owner, introduced herself and the project while Chairman Porter displayed an aerial photograph of the site area.

Ms. Basso explained the site is slightly smaller than 2 acres, with a 3,300 square foot building, paved access off Railroad Avenue, and a largely gravel site. In 2013 the applicant had received approval to construct a 20,000 square foot industrial building. Economic conditions have delayed those plans, so the site is being leased to a landscaper for storage, primarily for vehicles but occasionally for landscaping materials. Fertilizer is not stored on the site, and neither salt nor deicing compounds are used on the site. There are no proposed physical changes to the site. The Merrimack Planning Board approved the site use change, on the condition that LMRLAC have the opportunity to review and provide comments on the plan.

Mr. Porter asked if the original plan would require re-approval. Ms. Basso replied that it might be administrative-only if there were no changes.

Ms. Basso provided a copy of the minutes from the March 28, 2013 LMRLAC meeting at which the project was discussed. Mr. May read from the minutes to summarize the discussion that had taken place at that time.

Mr. Porter asked whether any site changes – such as stormwater treatment improvements – had been implemented on the site. Ms. Basso indicated they had not. Members expressed concern that the previously submitted comments would still be considered when the project gets underway.

The committee agreed that no further comments were necessary on the temporary use. Chairman Porter will submit a 'no comment' comment.

The committee thanked Ms. Basso and Mr. Cole for coming in to present the project

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Merrimack: Pennichuck Water Raw Water Pipe Rerouting

Chairman Porter displayed an aerial photograph on which was overlaid a proposed 36" raw water pipe for Merrimack River water withdrawals. The new pipe would connect to the existing 30" raw water pipe near the northern end of Manchester Street in Merrimack, and then run down Manchester Street to Pennichuck property, cutting across the property to connect to the treatment plant. The existing 30" pipe runs from the Merrimack River, just upstream of the Merrimack Waste Water Treatment Plant, and connects to the pond system. The new pipe would connect directly to the treatment plant to avoid comingling with the Pennichuck Brook and ponds system. The stated rationale is that it keeps the two water supplies separate in case of contamination.

Mr. Porter stated the project is scheduled to begin in the spring, with a projected June completion.

The committee briefly discussed the project and decided it had no comment.

Litchfield: Proposed Hayride Trail at Mel's Fun Park

Mr. Porter summarized a proposed project at the Mel's Fun Park site in Litchfield, forwarded to LMRLAC in response to its request to the member towns to notify LMRLAC of proposed projects within the corridor.

The proposed project would develop a hayride trail through the woods, and a re-designation of the site use from agricultural to recreational. Mr. Porter had suggested to Mr. Croteau that the Litchfield Planning Board consider requesting a proposed cartop boat access on the site as part of the project; however, Mr. Croteau got no traction when he brought up the suggestion.

Mr. May asked whether LMRLAC can comment on the project. Chairman Porter replied that LMRLAC should plan to do so when the applicant seeks DES approval for the project. Mr. May recommended that LMRLAC submit a comment on cartop boat access at that time, and suggested LMRLAC consider a comment on a trail easement as well.

Developing Relationships with Local Boards and Officials

Mr. Porter asked the members present what success they had had thus far reaching out to the Planning Boards, Conservation Commissions and planning officials in their towns about earlier notification of proposed projects. He cited the Mel's Fun Park Litchfield project as an example. Mr. Porter mentioned that he has been in contact with officials in Nashua about several topics.

Ms. Dupree indicated she had not reached out to Hudson yet, but would try to over the next month.

Mr. Disco pointed out that he is a member of both LMRLAC and the Merrimack Planning Board. Similarly, Mr. Croteau provides direct contact between LMRLAC and the Litchfield Planning Board.

Mr. Disco explained that proposed projects all go through the Community Development Department in Merrimack and he believes they are receptive to the idea of earlier contact with LMRLAC on projects within the corridor.

Upcoming Workshops/Training

NEAEB and NH Water and Watershed Conference

Chairman Porter reminded members of the upcoming New England Association of Environmental Biologists (NEAEB) and the NH Water and Watershed Conference, scheduled for March 18-20 at Attitash. Chairman Porter encouraged members to consider attending if they could.

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NH Rivers Council Film Festival

Chairman Porter passed around a flyer for the upcoming film festival, now in its fifth year. This year's festival is scheduled for Friday, March 27, at Red River Theatres in Concord.

Proposed Kinder Morgan Gas Pipeline Project

Members briefly discussed the open house meetings being conducted throughout the area about the proposed gas pipeline project. The proposed project includes five Souhegan River crossings and one Merrimack River crossing. Mr. May explained that he had been in contact with representatives of Kinder Morgan about the possibility of a public meeting to discuss river crossings. He is in the early stages of putting together such a meeting, at which river crossing stakeholders such as the Souhegan River LAC, LMRLAC, the NH Rivers Council, the Merrimack River Watershed Association, and others, as well as the general public, would be able to hear about what measures are proposed to protect the rivers. He estimated that the meeting would most likely be scheduled for late spring or early summer.

Chairman Porter commented on the need for remote-controlled shutoff valves on either side of a river crossing in the event of a leak. He also pointed out that the river moves over time, that its banks change and the project must take that into account.

Chairman Porter asked if information is available on existing gas or electric pipes crossing under the rivers in the area. Mr. May suggested he might be able to find something.

Minutes

The minutes from the December 11, 2014 meeting were approved with no changes.

Other Business

Chairman Porter gave a hard copy of the DES biennial report form to Secretary Archambault to look over, and will forward her an electronic copy to fill out.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Next LMRLAC Meeting

The next LMRLAC meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2015, at 7:00 pm in the Music/Art/Media room at the Nashua Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
secretary