

LMRLAC – September 27, 2012

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

September 27, 2012

Members:

- ✓ = present

Current:

- ✓ Kathryn Nelson (Chair) -- Nashua
- Michael Redding (Vice Chair) – Merrimack
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) – Nashua
- ✓ Michael Croteau - Litchfield
- ✓ Nelson Disco - Merrimack
- ✓ George May – Merrimack
- Bob Robbins – Hudson
- ✓ David Scaer – Hudson

Pending Renewal:

- ✓ Jim Barnes (Treasurer) – Hudson
- Glenn McKibben – Litchfield

Associate Members:

Mildred Mugica – Nashua

Also in attendance:

- James Vayo, Assistant Project Manager, Renaissance Downtowns

The meeting was called to order at 7pm in the Music/Art/Media room of the Nashua Public Library by Chair Kath Nelson.

Minutes

The minutes from the meeting of August 23 were approved. Nelson abstained since he had not attended the August meeting.

Renaissance Downtowns – Bridge St. Project, Nashua

James Vayo introduced himself and summarized the current status of the project. He explained that the previous concept had focused on developing the former Johns Manville site. The current concept focuses on the City property along the river's edge. Mr. Vayo explained that among the reasons for the change was because Nashua is proceeding with a CSO project in the area and this offered an opportunity to coordinate the plan with that.

The plan includes three multi-story apartment buildings, one building intended to house a restaurant with views of the river, and a public space in which existing mature trees are spared. A fourth apartment building is proposed on the plan on a portion of the adjacent parcel. The plan also includes a pool with adjacent clubhouse, which would include space for the City to store chlorine needed for the CSO project. The plan also shows a path or trail along the existing levee, and a dock or small marina on the river.

Mr. Vayo explained that there is a levee or dike which runs 2000 feet from the Johns Manville property to Bridge Street, and extends beyond that to the rowing club. He explained that he has met with the Army Corps of Engineers about the levee, and has a verbal commitment so far that the levee could be used for pedestrian access. He explained that the Army Corps stated that the levee must not be punctured. Mr. Vayo explained that the 100-year flood line runs just below the base of the levee elevation. He further stated that overtopping the levee would be a 500-year flood event.

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Mr. Vayo briefly explained that the levee system also includes a pump and that the system must be re-certified every two years. The pump and levee system was built in the 1950s and handles everything from the railroad track to the river. He explained that the City is doing due diligence with the levee system and has it tested annually.

Mr. Vayo explained that the biggest challenge is to deal with the stormwater on-site. He explained the plan includes pervious pavers and an underground cistern to accomplish this and is designed to handle the 2-year storm. Mr. Vayo also explained that the soil is currently being tested for infiltration and that the results of the testing may affect the design of the project.

Kath asked about phasing of the project and whether the path and riverfront were included. Mr. Vayo replied that they are included and integral to the plan. He further explained that walking trails on levees are being tried in other urban settings and the intent is to put a gravel or stone dust type of surface on the top of the levee for walking or bicycling. The top of the levee is about 12 feet wide.

Mr. Vayo also explained the plan includes the potential for low level lighting along the path and stated he understood that that would be part of what DES would need to review.

A brief discussion followed on the proposed dock. Mr. Vayo explained that there have been several conversations about what can and cannot be done on the waterfront. Mr. Vayo stated he understood that dredge and fill is not allowed in navigable waters. Mr. Vayo also stated that he is having conversations with DES about a possible dock structure.

Kath asked what was being considered for vegetation and grading on the site. Mr. Vayo explained that the berm is 80 to 85 feet from the river and thus outside Nashua's defined wetland buffer for the Merrimack River. He explained they are looking at the tree inventory to develop the baseline point total for the site and hope to avoid the need for a Shoreland permit for clearing vegetation. The intent is to provide view corridors without removing the canopy.

A brief discussion followed about likely invasives on site and how to deal with them. George suggested that UNH Cooperative Extension could help with the identification of invasive species on the site.

David asked about the portion of the plan which showed structures on an adjacent parcel and asked whether that was separate from the rest of the development. Mr. Vayo replied that any development on that parcel, or on the Johns Manville parcel, would require a separate plan.

Jim asked how many residential units were included in the plan. Mr. Vayo replied that the plan has 304 total units, with 25% studio apartments, 50% 1 bedroom, and 25% 2 bedroom. The intended demographics are young professionals and older downsizers.

Kath asked about the status of asbestos on site. Mr. Vayo explained that the phase 1 assessment has been performed and the phase 2 assessment is underway. He explained that the City parcel had received asbestos mitigation and includes a 4-foot soil cap. Members expressed some concern about infiltration on site and the asbestos under the cap. Mr. Vayo explained that the borings done for the CSO project have indicated mostly glacial till, so there is expectation that there is good drainage on the site.

Nelson commented that porous pavers do require periodic maintenance.

Kath asked when plans might be submitted. Mr. Vayo explained that he is looking to submit plans by the end of 2012. Kath asked about state permits and Mr. Vayo replied that there will

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be a Shoreland application for the buildings within 250' of the shoreline, and an Alteration of Terrain permit for the cistern.

A brief discussion followed on the proposed cistern and what it would connect to. Mr. Vayo explained it would tie in to the City CSO system. George commented that LMRLAC will be looking closely at the stormwater plans for the site. Mr. Vayo explained that the building roofs will be tied to the cistern while the pavers will handle the street runoff. Kath asked whether the cistern will be perforated; Mr. Vayo replied that he was not clear on the specifics but believes it will be perforated on the bottom and lined with fabric sheeting.

Nelson asked who the engineers were for the project. Mr. Vayo explained that Renaissance is using McFarland Johnson and the City is using Hazen and Sawyer.

Kath commented that the current plan is an improvement over the previous plan in how the river frontage is treated, that it's well integrated into the plan. She also expressed mixed feelings about the boat access. She stated that boat access would need a sturdy structure so it won't be swept away. George commented that he felt a dock was feasible, that this part of the river is essentially an impoundment. He mentioned that motorboats can move pretty freely south of the site but that there are more rocks north of the site. George offered his services to Renaissance as a consultant for a way to implement boat access.

Mr. Vayo mentioned that Renaissance has a weekly newsletter and a meeting next week. He also commented that there was a recent design charrette for the waterfront.

Members thanked Mr. Vayo for coming in and updating them on the project.

Shoreland Permit Application – 76 Island Drive, Merrimack

The project is to construct a new house adjacent to an existing structure on the property, which is adjacent to Horseshoe Pond. Kath indicated that Michael R. had not yet responded to her with any comments on the application.

Members briefly discussed the application, which includes a small percentage increase in impervious area, from 4191 square feet to 4229 square feet. George stated he has no objections to the application unless Michael R. has specific comments. George also suggested that the Merrimack Planning Board would have an opportunity to review the application, but Nelson replied that the project would not require Planning Board approval since there is no land use change involved.

Members recommended that Kath respond that LMRLAC has no comments regarding the application, contingent on Michael R.'s review.

604(b) Grant for River Continuity Assessment

Kath mentioned that Jill's latest status indicated two Nashua culverts have been assessed and two culverts remain in the project. Members agreed to have Jill come in to discuss the project once it's complete.

Bank Account/Treasurer's Report

Jim stated he has forms to fill out for a Citizens Bank account. Both Jim and Karen had checked credit unions, which require an account in a person's name and thus are not feasible in this case. Jim also mentioned that Bob Robbins had offered a no-fee, no minimum account and members decided to pursue that. Jim will get the forms and collect the needed signatures over the next couple of weeks. Members agreed to have all officers able to sign for the account, with a requirement of two signatures for withdrawals.

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Members briefly discussed options for spending the money, including water sampling or monitoring equipment, a brochure, as matching grant money, or to continue the culvert assessment project. George commented that he had started a list but had not finished compiling the costs. Kath mentioned that LMRLAC needs to consider maintenance or other recurring costs if equipment is purchased with some of the funds.

Upcoming Meetings

Members discussed cancelling the October meeting if there are no agenda items. After a brief discussion, members set a tentative date for the combined November/December meeting for Thursday, November 29.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Next LMRLAC Meeting

The next LMRLAC meetings are currently scheduled for Thursday, October 25, and Thursday, November 29, at 7:00 pm at the Nashua Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
secretary