

LMRLAC – February 22, 2007

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

February 22, 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:

- ✓ Millie Mugica, corridor resident

Chairman Bob Robbins called the meeting to order at 7:24 pm in the meeting area in the east wing downstairs in the Nashua public library. Kath indicated that Glenn would be unable to attend the meeting. Karen mentioned that she would miss the March meeting.

Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the December 14, 2006 meeting were approved without changes. The minutes of the January 25, 2007 meeting were approved with one minor change.

Membership

Kath reminded members whose terms have expired to re-submit their appointment form to their town offices for signature. Bob indicated he has submitted his form to the town offices; Jim indicated he will submit his soon. Kath mentioned that she plans to bring copies of the form to the March meeting.

Members briefly discussed methods of getting new members for the LAC. Kath volunteered to write a press release to newspapers in the member towns to summarize what the LAC is and does, mention some recent activities (like the corridor management plan update), mention our role in reviewing proposed development (e.g. Riverplace) in the corridor, and suggesting people contact Bob if they are interest in joining or in learning more about LMRLAC. Kath continued that she could follow up with a letter to the editor if the press releases don't get sufficient notice.

Miscellaneous Business

Kath volunteered to put agendas together for each meeting to remind members of pending business. Kath also volunteered to put together an article for Meanderings, the state's Rivers Management and Protection Program annual newsletter, for the March 1 deadline. Members who were present at the previous meeting briefed members who were not present on the discussion about the annual report submission and format.

Corridor Management Plan Update

Members reviewed the process and schedule for the corridor management plan update, as documented in the January minutes. Minda did not have a chapter ready for review for the February meeting. Kath volunteered to contact Minda that LMRLAC will be looking for a draft chapter to begin reviewing on March 8 (two weeks prior to the March 22 meeting).

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Bob volunteered to send the survey results to Minda in case she did not receive a copy from Danielle.

Members then began a review of the management plan update Table of Contents and made several comments that Kath will send to Minda. The comments were:

- Some items were not logically arranged (example: “Superfund site” should not be a subsection under “Hydropower and Water-dependent uses”).
- “Hiking and Nature Study” may be appropriate to cover together, but “Fishing” and probably “Picnicking” should be separate subsections. (Picnicking was often mentioned in the survey results as an important activity in the corridor.)
- “Agricultural” and “Conservation Lands” should be separate subsections
- “Wildlife and Fisheries” doesn’t belong under “Soils and Geology”
- There should be a section on Parks and Trails
- There was some discussion about the possible contents of the Measuring Success section. It was pointed out that continued monitoring of the corridor management plan should be a recommended action. It was also pointed out that “Priority Management Issues” in section 1 may have some overlap with the Measuring Success section.

Other comments relating more to plan content than just the Table of Contents were:

- Include the results of the community survey in the Goals and Objectives section, and include relevant survey results in applicable sections (for example, Picnicking as mentioned above).
- We are assuming the Beazer site will be described in a Superfund or hazardous waste section.
- Include assessment of better use/upgrade of existing parks; Merrill Park was specifically mentioned.
- The term Public Access (in the context of access to the river, such as for a boat ramp) may be more limited than what the term may imply generally.

Members also wondered how much information Minda might have received from Danielle on the river tours conducted in each town last summer. It was suggested that Minda may want to go view some of the sites on her own.

Local Updates

Hudson Riverplace: Bob brought a copy of the state Dredge and Fill and application package that Gove Environmental had sent to him at his request. Kath pointed out that we had received an e-mail that the Dredge and Fill permit request had been received at DES, but members wondered whether the LAC had received formal notification of the submittal. Kath offered to follow up on this with Steve Couture at DES.

Bob summarized his impressions of the plan based on his initial review of it. The plan is nearly 2 inches thick, with several 11x17 maps throughout. Bob expressed concern that the stormwater management plan mentions “best practices” without any specific mention of low-impact development methods. Bob mentioned that the project has a phased development approach, and that most of the proposed shoreland impacts are in phase 2. Bob added that phase 2 is not well defined. Bob indicated his concern about stormwater runoff being the most significant impact to the river.

Water bodies affected include the golf course’s water hazards, a natural stream, wetland areas, and the river. Bob indicated many wetland impacts are due to proposed roads. The plan mentions 6.76 acres of wetland impact on-site, with 35 acres to be undisturbed. The plan also calls out 8.2 acres of on-site mitigation.

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Karen and Bob will plan to attend the Hudson Conservation Commission meeting at which the Riverplace plan is discussed, and may make a statement at the meeting to go on the record. Kath will contact the Hudson Conservation Commission chair again to request notification when Riverplace gets on the HCC agenda. Members also hoped to find out when the Hudson Conservation Commission holds a site walk so that LMRLAC members might also attend.

Members will take turns reviewing the plan over the next several weeks. Karen took the plan initially, and will submit written comments for consideration at the next meeting.

Jim summarized the plan review process for Hudson. The Hudson Zoning Board will rule on the wetlands special exception with recommendations submitted from the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board.

Members briefly discussed some concerns that the LAC would like to raise in the letter to be submitted to DES. Among the comments discussed were to propose a no-disturb area within 50 feet of the river, limited disturbance (walkways/bike path permitted, but no buildings or parking lots) in the next 100 feet. Restricted pesticide use and slow release fertilizer within 150 feet of the river. Another comment to consider would be referring to low impact development methods, including permeable parking lots. Other items mentioned were limited access for viewing the river, consideration for a boat ramp. Kath will start a draft letter.

Meeting adjourned at 9pm. Next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 22 in the town offices in Litchfield.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
secretary