

LMRLAC – March 22, 2018

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

March 22, 2018

Members:

- ✓ = present

Current:

- ✓ Gene Porter (Chair) – Nashua (current term expires Dec 2019)
- ✓ Nelson Disco (Vice Chair) – Merrimack (current term expired 08/28/17)
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) – Nashua (current term expired 08/12/17)
- Christine Dupree (Treasurer) – Hudson (current term expired 11/25/17)
- Chris Barrett – Nashua (current term expires 08/22/20)
- ✓ Michael Croteau – Litchfield (current term expires 11/08/20)
- ✓ George May – Merrimack (current term expires 06/14/20)
- ✓ Francis Murphy – Nashua (current term expires 02/18/19)

Also in attendance:

Geoff Daly, Nashua, corridor resident

Meeting called to order at 7pm by Chairman Gene Porter in the Meeting Room at the Nashua Public Library, with a quorum present.

Minutes

Minutes of the February 22, 2018 meeting were approved with one correction circulated prior to the meeting.

New Business

None

Old Business

Recent Projects

Litchfield: 476 Charles Bancroft Highway Shoreland Application (File #2018-00403), Alteration of Terrain Application (File #180214-026), Wetland Application (File #TBD)

Chairman Porter reminded members that the wetland application was not available when the project was reviewed at the February meeting. He mentioned that he had received the wetland application and replied to DES that LMRLAC has no further comments to submit.

Local Updates - Litchfield

Mr. Croteau commented that there is further work planned at Mel's Funway, at 454 Charles Bancroft Highway. The changes do not require either Alteration of Terrain or Shoreland permits.

Chairman Porter asked about the status of the cartop boat launch. Mr. Croteau replied that construction will occur sometime this year. Mr. May asked about the location. Mr. Croteau explained that it's on Litchfield conservation land on route 3A, north of the library.

Chairman Porter reminded Mr. Croteau that LMRLAC is very interested in expanding trails along the river. Mr. Daly mentioned that there is a walking trail on Litchfield conservation land.

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DES Actions on Recent Applications

25 Sagamore Park Road (Shoreland Permit #2017-02663)

Chairman Porter explained the application (reviewed by LMRLAC in August 2017), to install two loading docks and associated improvements, had been revised for a single loading dock and associated improvements. Chairman Porter stated that DES ruled that a re-review of the revised plan was not necessary.

Nashua: Eversource Utility Pole work near the Merrimack River

Chairman Porter explained that the project (discussed at the October 2017 LMRLAC meeting) consists of replacing wooden poles with steel ones and stated that one pole is within LMRLAC's jurisdiction. Mr. Daly explained that a pole near Thoreau's Landing had been replaced with a steel pole sometime in the past as well.

Hudson: Sparkling River

Chairman Porter explained he had received a letter about the project, which is a multi-phase development in north Hudson, approximately across from Greeley Park. Its permit had expired two years ago, but work had continued on the site. DES issued a stop work order, requiring restoration of the altered terrain. A new permit is required for further work on the site. (LMRLAC reviewed phase IV of the project, DES file number 20140626-111, at its June 2014 meeting.)

Merrimack: Fuel Storage Tank Refurbishment

Chairman Porter highlighted this project (located at the confluence of the Souhegan and the Merrimack Rivers) as a recent example of where Designated Rivers intersect, and their LACs intersect as well. He stated that LMRLAC had deferred to the Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee (SoRLAC) to comment on this project. Work is scheduled to begin in April.

Other Topics

Pawtucket (a.k.a Boott Hydropower) Dam

Chairman Porter stated LMRLAC had recently been invited to be a stakeholder in the FERC license renewal for the dam. Chairman Porter pointed out that maintaining the level of the river is important to riverfront owners, as well as to recreational users. Chairman Porter mentioned that the City of Nashua will be involved as well.

Contact from New England Waterworks Association Young Professionals Committee

Chairman Porter explained he had received an e-mail today (Thursday) from a member of this organization. The committee is seeking sponsors for a Pennichuck Watershed cleanup event they are planning for early May. Chairman Porter replied, informing the writer of the meeting and inviting him to attend. Chairman Porter asked members how they felt about LMRLAC signing on as a sponsor of the event. Mr. Disco commented that he would like more information on the organization and its objectives. Mr. May suggested that it be at the chair's discretion, based on learning more about the organization. Chairman Porter agreed to follow up with the contact and to sign LMRLAC on as a sponsor if he feels it is appropriate.

Water Quality

Chairman Porter brought up that he continues to look for data on nutrient load in the Merrimack River. He stated he is attending an event in Plymouth Friday about water sampling. He stated the current data is not sufficiently reliable to characterize water quality of the Merrimack River regarding nutrients (nitrates and phosphates).

Mr. May suggested purchasing an electronic monitor to measure conductivity and pH. Mr. Daly suggested HOBO meters.

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Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs)

Chairman Porter mentioned that Nashua reports CSO events within 24 hours, leaving that data available for 48 hours, after which it is removed and later made available as part of its monthly report. Chairman Porter commented that Nashua has not had any CSO events in several months.

Membership

Chairman Porter mentioned that Millie Mugica, currently listed as an Associate Member, has not been involved with the committee in quite some time. He asked whether members wished to vote to keep Ms. Mugica in that capacity. Members voted to remove Ms. Mugica as an Associate Member.

Mr. LeBourdais, having not attended a LMRLAC meeting since his membership expired in November 2017, is removed as well.

Bylaws Review

Chairman Porter recommended keeping the bylaws review on the table for a future meeting.

Docks

Chairman Porter stated he had received two Permit By Notification (PBN) applications for two docks in Hudson. He explained that the rules differ for docks in rivers, compared to docks on ponds and lakes. He highlighted two specific features of river docks:

- 1- The pad has to be above the high water mark
- 2- The dock has to be parallel, not perpendicular, to the river bank

Chairman Porter explained there are several examples of perpendicular docks on the Merrimack River. He stated his view that there are river conditions – for example, a wide, slow moving river – where perpendicular docks do not pose a hazard. Chairman Porter plans to submit comments to the state detailing this.

Mr. Daly asked about a situation in Hudson where a retaining wall was constructed to shore up a collapsing bank. Chairman Porter replied that he had researched several erosion areas along the shoreline, some of which had alterations which predated the permitting process. He explained there were also some locations where the owner was required to restore the bank.

Items from the Floor

Mr. Daly asked about the status of the river crossing for the new Pennichuck water pipe. Chairman Porter replied that the work has received its permits. Mr. Daly expressed his concerns about the pipe, given river scouring in the region. Mr. May mentioned that LMRLAC did bring up concerns about the pipe's location being subject to erosion during application review.

Chairman Porter commented that he took a training class on ARC GIS on Wednesday.

Chairman Porter mentioned a Web site called TrailFinder (trailfinder.info) on which one can search for trails. He mentioned it does not show any trails in Merrimack or Nashua. He encouraged members and municipalities to add trails into the TrailFinder system. Mr. Disco mentioned that NRPC has a map layer with trails documented in it.

Chairman Porter encouraged members to join such organizations as American Rivers, MRWC, NRWA, Rails-to-Trails, to attend events and to spread the word about LMRLAC and the Merrimack River.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

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Next LMRLAC Meeting

The next LMRLAC meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, April 26, 2018, at 7:00 pm at the Nashua Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
Secretary

DRAFT