

LMRLAC – January 23, 2020

**LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

January 23, 2020

Members:

- ✓ = present

Current:

- ✓ Nelson Disco (Vice Chair) – Merrimack (current term expires 06/21/21)
- ✓ 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 01/06/23)
- ✓ George Russell – Hudson (current term expires Jan 2023)

Pending Renewal:

- ✓ Gene Porter (Chair) – Nashua (current term expired Dec 2019)
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) – Nashua (current term expired 08/12/17)

Also in attendance:

Conor Madison, GZA Environmental
Scott Poitras, Eversource
Tracy Tarr, GZA Environmental

Meeting called to order at 7:01pm by Chairman Gene Porter in the Meeting Room at the Nashua Public Library. It was noted that a quorum was present for the meeting.

Minutes

The minutes of the December 11, 2019 LMRLAC meeting were approved with updates as circulated prior to the meeting.

Introductions

Chairman Porter introduced Mr. Russell, newly appointed to LMRLAC representing Hudson. Mr. Russell described himself as a boater and a long-time advocate for improving the Greeley Park boat ramp.

New Business

Region: Eversource ROW Inspection and Maintenance Statutory Permit by Notification (SPN)

Chairman Porter reminded members that they had approved a procedure at the December 2019 meeting by which the chair and vice chair had authority to sign off Statutory Permit by Notification, Routine Road Maintenance Registration, Wetlands Permit by Notification, and Expedited Minimum Impact Permit applications coming before the LAC. The New Hampshire Legislature had passed updated wetlands rules in December 2019, now requiring LAC review and signature for such applications. The Eversource application is the first of its kind to come before LMRLAC under the new rules; therefore, Chairman Porter wanted to review it with the full committee.

Chairman Porter turned over the floor to Ms. Tarr, who summarized the project. She explained that Eversource performs brush maintenance every 3-4 years under its power lines, to maintain sufficient separation between the power lines and vegetation for safety reasons. She passed around copies of a map showing the transmission lines and the quarter-mile corridor. She indicated that there is a separate application for each of the four member municipalities. The maintenance under review by LMRLAC is the portion within the quarter-mile corridor.

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Ms. Tarr briefly discussed the process. Maintenance will follow best practices, which includes involving New Hampshire Fish and Game and the Natural Heritage Bureau to provide guidance including, for example, seasonal restrictions on the work, the location of a rare plant or animal, and the like.

Ms. Tarr explained that DES requires a separate application for each affected municipality. Mr. May asked if there was a requirement for any review by town boards. Ms. Tarr replied that there is not.

Chairman Porter explained that his primary concern is that the river banks are not degraded by the maintenance activities.

Ms. Tarr indicated that the plan set shows the identified areas of upland access. Mr. Poitras, a transmission arborist, stated that any bank cutting will be performed by hand and pulled out. He indicated that a chipper or dicer will be used to break down the vegetation.

Ms. Archambault asked whether the debris would be left in place or hauled off site. Mr. Poitras replied that the smaller brush and debris will be cut up and left on site to decay. He also explained that the underlying landowner owns the wood which is cut down. He indicated that there are designated upland areas for stockpiling the wood for the landowner.

The project also includes a visual inspection of structures. If that inspection identifies any needed repair work, that will require a separate application submittal.

Mr. May asked if any chemical spraying would occur in conjunction with the project. Mr. Poitras responded there would not be.

Mr. May pointed out a power line in Merrimack that was not highlighted on the map, which led to a brief discussion about it and the class VI road under it.

Mr. Russell pointed out that there are eagles along the Merrimack River near the border with Tyngsborough.

Chairman Porter signed the applications on behalf of LMRLAC. Members thanked Mr. Madison, Mr. Poitras, and Ms. Tarr for coming in to discuss the applications.

Legislative Activity

Chairman Porter stated that DES issues a weekly legislative update. He highlighted several pieces of proposed legislation in the current session, including several which might be of interest to LACs. He encouraged members to review status of the legislation over the course of the session. The tracking matrix is available at:

<https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/legal/testimony/documents/bill-matrix.pdf>

New Nashua Master Plan and LMRLAC Corridor Management Plan

Chairman Porter reminded members that the current Corridor Management Plan (CMP) dates to 2008. He mentioned that he met recently with Jay Minkarah, NRPC's Executive Director, and that NRPC will work with LMRLAC to seek out grant funds for updating the CMP.

Chairman Porter mentioned that the CMP is useful, not just as a document in and of itself, but that the process of updating it will lead to interaction and exchanges with boards and committees in each of the four member municipalities.

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Chairman Porter also stated that Nashua has an RFP out for its Master Plan update. Mr. May asked whether LMRLAC's CMP update could happen in time to feed into the Nashua Master Plan update. Chairman Porter responded that he intends for the CMP update process to get underway so that it could inform the Nashua Master Plan update.

Old Business

Nashua: Greeley Park Boat Ramp

Chairman Porter passed around a photograph, showing the progress the City is making on constructing the new road to the boat ramp area. Chairman Porter indicated that there have been several trees removed, but the road width does not exceed what was permitted.

Membership and Officers

Chairman Porter reminded members that the position of Secretary needs to be filled. He also stated that he plans to step aside as Chair.

Items from the Floor

Chairman Porter mentioned that LMRLAC's bylaws have not been reviewed or updated since 2003. Secretary Archambault took the action to verify whether the bylaws are available on the NRPC Web site. (*Secretary's note: the Bylaws are not currently posted on the NRPC Web site.*)

Secretary Archambault indicated she needs a new e-mail for distributing minutes to Merrimack. Mr. Disco took the action to get the correct e-mail address.

Meeting adjourned 7:55pm.

Next LMRLAC Meeting

The next LMRLAC meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, February 27, 2020, at 7:00pm at the Nashua Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
Secretary
LMRLAC