

# LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

February 23, 2006

### 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 Peebles – Litchfield  
Stan Kazlouskas – Hudson
- ✓ Will Jewett – Litchfield

### Also in attendance:

- ✓ Danielle Fillis, NRPC

Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm in the Hunt Room of the Nashua Public Library. It was noted that a quorum was present.

### Minutes

December's minutes were approved with corrections to provide more detail on the survey discussion that took place prior to the start of the meeting.

### Treasurer's Report

Chairman Bob Robbins gave an informal treasurer's report. Current bank balance is \$1250.00, and \$1750.00 in checks have been received - \$1250 from DES, and \$500 from Citigroup.

### Survey Results

The press release and photo for the survey gift certificate presentation ran in the Nashua Telegraph on January 30. A few surveys are still trickling in; Bob has submitted a survey report to DES and will distribute a copy of the report, and the spreadsheet with the raw data, to LMRLAC members. Although the report is complete for DES purposes, Bob expects to refine and expand on it as needed.

Bob indicated that he had received roughly 10 telephone calls from corridor residents, after he had distributed the survey results to them with the "thank you for filling out the survey" followup. He believes this indicates a great deal of interest in, and support for, what the LAC is doing.

### Corridor Management Plan and Outreach

Danielle presented a status on the corridor management plan update. She completed the watershed audit presentations last week, and is now waiting for the audit results so they can go in a matrix. The audit consists of 12 pages, 8 sections. She asked for the results to be submitted within a month, so she is hopeful that information will be available for the next LMRLAC meeting. Merrimack's is complete; for Litchfield, the Planning Board will hold a work session to fill theirs in; for Hudson, John Cashell will fill it out; for Nashua, Angela Vincent will be filling out the audit. Danielle will supply Bob with a copy of the audit form. Danielle will ask Steve Wagner (for Litchfield) and Angie (for Nashua) for electronic format of the audit responses.

Discussion led to whether there should be a subcommittee formed to review chapters of the plan as Danielle puts them together. Danielle will supply the chapters to Bob as they are drafted, and Bob will distribute to the rest of the committee. Members should bring any comments to the following meeting, and comments will be discussed and compiled at the meeting, and sent back to Danielle. For those members without e-mail, Bob will handle mailing a hard copy of the draft chapters to Cynthia and to Will. Bob will mail a copy of the agenda as well, as NRPC will no longer be preparing the monthly LMRLAC agendas.

Discussion turned to the level of involvement for DES in the plan revision – whether they had some approval oversight for the plan. It was resolved that NRPC is producing the plan update for LMRLAC, and that DES would be involved for information only.

Danielle will submit a copy of the revised/updated work plan to LMRLAC members.

The committee discussed the status of the work plan – that LMRLAC had gotten as far as the survey, which is now complete, and that the work plan schedule had gotten as far as the plan to walk areas of focus along the riverbank in each town, which would supply information about current conditions. Danielle indicated she would need information from the towns for conditions. Kath mentioned that there was a Hudson shoreline survey document available in the NRPC library that would at least help with conditions in Hudson.

Danielle indicated she intended to base the LMRLAC plan update on the Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee (SoRLAC) watershed plan, written by Kath last year. She showed a copy of the table of contents and indicated she would send an electronic copy to Bob. A brief discussion followed of the difference in focus between the SoRLAC watershed management plan, and the LMRLAC corridor management plan. For example, SoRLAC's plan had non-point source pollution as one of its focus areas. Kath and Bob indicated that this is one area where LMRLAC's plan may differ in focus.

Discussion followed as to the potential focus of the LMRLAC corridor management plan, and the purpose of the plan. The plan is expected to be a guidance document for LMRLAC and, in turn, for its member towns. It may be adopted, either in whole or in sections, as part of a member town's Master Plan. The format and nature of presentations to member towns of the updated plan was also discussed. Kath also brought up that the work plan must be clear on responsibilities with reference to preparing and giving presentations to the towns. Bob brought up his intern relationship with St. Anselm's College, and that he felt an intern could be available to help with the presentation.

The number and nature of map products in the plan was discussed. LMRLAC must work out what they want for maps – in the plan and for presentation purposes – that we want NRPC to produce, so we can have an idea of the costs that the maps will incur. Kath mentioned that, for SoRLAC, they had two 36x48 inch maps put together for presentations. Such details as the desired map scale, focal points, and layers would need to be decided upon as well. The SoRLAC plan is not yet posted on the Web, but it will be soon. Its maps are being converted to .pdf files for posting.

The discussion turned to the possibility of having interactive map products available for presentations or future planning purposes, and having electronic versions of the plan available on CD-ROM for distribution or via the Web. It was ultimately determined that this would probably not be a viable option; it would require ArcView licensing and dynamic data. Danielle said she will ask about whether any capabilities of this sort can be provided via CD-ROM.

As part of working on the Conditions chapter of the plan, Danielle will give some ideas on what maps would be useful. Jim will bring a copy of the NRPC-produced recent Hudson Master Plan update to the next meeting. March's LMRLAC meeting will include a work session to review the watershed audits and to work on the plan and map requirements. Prior to the meeting, Danielle

will supply a new work plan, a table of contents/outline for the management plan, and a proposed map list.

The format of the old plan was discussed; George asked whether there is/will be a relationship between the old and the new plan. Danielle will look for a copy of the old management plan.

Discussion followed on the plan's due date. The current work plan indicates that the third draft will be submitted to DES in December 2006. It was mentioned that the SoRLAC plan schedule was one chapter per month.

Review of the work plan schedule included that the "state of the watershed" fair could be removed – LMRLAC has already had public input via the corridor survey. Jim indicated that LMLRAC could have a booth at Hudson's Old Home Days, if there was a desire to do so.

Cynthia suggested we go around the table and have each member indicate what their focus and goals were for the plan and for the committee. She gave her goals as

- getting the boat ramp at Greeley Park updated
- making access available for whoever wants access to the river
- preservation of wildlife and vegetation

Kath indicated one of her goals was buffer maintenance. This led to a discussion of the Shoreland Protection Act, and the issue of local vs. DES enforcement of the Act. Kath indicated that local ordinances may provide protections beyond that of the state level. For example, the Merrimack River is a designated prime wetland for Nashua, which gives it special review at the state level.

George indicated his belief that awareness of the Shoreland Protection Act (SPA) is growing, that the towns are aware of it, if individuals may not be.

Education and enforcement were brought up as important issues with SPA. A summary of SPA and the process to report a potential violation were candidates for an article in the electronic newsletter.

Kath indicated that towns have the ability to enforce the SPA and to collect fees associated with it. However, code enforcement officers have many other issues (e.g. building codes) to deal with, and so generally leave SPA enforcement to DES. George indicated that he calls DES with SPA enforcement issues and receives good responses from them.

George indicated that a natural progression of cleaning up the river is that people will build nice houses along the river, and want to open up a view to it – thus, clearing vegetation. Kath indicated that each town should think about what they want for river protection.

Jim gave his area of focus as trail access for the corridor area.

Will stated he thought towns should adopt and follow through on the Shoreland Protection Act.

Bob indicated his goals were

- walking trails and boat (e.g. kayak) access
- controlling runoff

Karen gave hers as achieving a balance between access and maintaining a natural corridor. George gave his as water quality and access, with an emphasis on canoeing. He stated that he felt canoeing should be encouraged, because he felt that canoeists would have an interest in protecting the river.

Kath brought up HB162, which proposes a statewide watercraft limit of 45mph day/25mph night, and that there was a public hearing scheduled for Friday, February 24. After some discussion on the issue it was determined that LMRLAC would take no position on the bill one way or the other.

George brought up the Trail Expo scheduled for Milford Town Hall on Sunday, February 26 from 1-5 pm. He said that the Souhegan Valley Land Trust are among those participating in the expo. George also indicated that the sludge bill, on which LMRLAC had received a detailed presentation at its October 2005 meeting, was dead – that is, the current limit for spreading sludge within 250 feet of a riverbank stands. He also indicated the bill to permit landfills on an oxbow hadn't come up yet.

George asked for ideas for the first electronic newsletter. Kath indicated that she had contacted Boott Mill in Lowell and that they will contact LMRLAC when the river level gets changed. Bob indicated that was an item for the newsletter – that this contact had been made and that the information, when received, would be distributed to the e-mail list. Bob also suggested that the contact list for state legislators for the member towns could go in the newsletter.

### **Local Updates**

Jim gave an update on the proposed work at Green Meadow Golf Course in Hudson. He indicated there is a Planning Board workshop scheduled for Wednesday, March 1, at the Town Recreation Hall (the former Lions Hall) on Lions Avenue in Hudson. It starts at 7pm and will be televised on Hudson cable. After a presentation, the meeting will be open to the public to ask questions. Over the next month, the plan is to meet with abutters individually.

The plan currently includes 2,000,000 square feet of retail space. Another meeting is currently expected to be scheduled for the April/May time frame. It was suggested that interested people could call Hudson Town Hall for directions to the meeting.

Karen brought up a plan submitted to the Nashua Conservation Commission for the Nashua Country Club, reworking all the greens. She was uncertain whether/how much of the proposed work was within the corridor and thus of interest to LMRLAC. Kath brought up the possibility of Audubon certification for golf courses.

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 23, at the town offices on Hillcrest Drive in Litchfield.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Archambault  
secretary