

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

October 26, 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 Peeples – Litchfield
Stan Kazlouskas – Hudson
- ✓ Will Jewett – Litchfield

Also in attendance:

None

Chair Bob Robbins called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm in the meeting room in the East Wing at the Nashua Public Library. It was determined that a quorum was present. Kath said that Cynthia and George had told her they would not be able to attend, and that Millie would either be late or not make it to the meeting.

Elections

Kath made a motion to elect the following slate of officers for the coming year:

Chair	Bob Robbins
Vice Chair	Kath Nelson
Secretary	Karen Archambault
Treasurer	Glenn McKibben
Public Relations	Cynthia Ruonala

Bob seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Minutes

Bob and Kath summarized the September meeting while reviewing the minutes. Kath mentioned that she had spoken with Eileen Pannetier of Comprehensive Environmental Inc. about the possibility of treating glycols at the airport. Jim asked whether there might be grant money available for a pilot project. Kath said she would contact Robert Roseen and Tom Ballestero of the UNH Stormwater Center about whether a pilot project at the airport might be a possibility. Kath made a motion to approve the September minutes, Jim seconded, and the motion passed.

Minutes from May's regular meeting, and notes from river tours held on meeting dates in June, July, and August were briefly discussed for approval. Kath made a motion to approve the minutes from May, June, July and August; Will seconded; the motion passed.

Corridor Plan

Danielle will be meeting with Steve Couture of DES and Kath, representing the LMRLAC corridor subcommittee, within the next few weeks.

NRPC has applied for and received a 604b grant for its Lower Merrimack River Corridor Recreational Trails and Access Inventory Proposal. NRPC is receiving about \$15,000 to do this

LMRLAC – October 26, 2006

effort, and it will start in January 2007. The effort will research and document trails within the quarter-mile corridor. The effort can also be used as a recruitment tool for LMRLAC, as NRPC will need help from the communities to show where the trails are.

The effort has 5 phases to it:

- 1 – Stakeholder Survey – contact local recreation groups and recreation-oriented businesses for information on trails, perform a ‘gap analysis’ of known trails
- 2 – Inventory Activities – use GPS to map existing trail resources
- 3 – Landowner Input and Verifications – includes confirming ownership of parcels containing active trails
- 4 – Trail Network Mapping and Report
- 5 – Trail Network Brochure – showing trails, including river access. Brochure production will be a one-time effort but will be copyable

Jim indicated that the outcome of this would encourage more people to use the trails along the river. This increased access might in turn cause some owners (of land with existing trails) to be concerned about more people using the trails.

This led to a brief discussion about the traditional role of Park/Recreation departments in caring for city parks and how those departments are more geared toward caring for ‘traditional’ parks (e.g. tot lots or playing fields), as opposed to conservation land per se.

Kath indicated that Cynthia could publicize this grant to generate some interest in the project. It was also mentioned that George could publicize this in the electronic newsletter.

Hudson River Place Project

Jim gave some background on the project. The developer has not yet submitted an application to the Hudson Planning Board. He continued that several meetings have been taking place at the State level between the developer and NH DOT and DES. NRPC has also been involved as has Nashua’s traffic engineer. Jim indicated that traffic will be the largest issue for the project.

Kath suggested that perhaps LMRLAC should be in contact with the Hudson Conservation Commission. One or more LMRLAC members should attend Hudson Cons. Comm. meetings at which the River Place project is presented or discussed to gather information and to provide comment. Jim indicated that he believes the Hudson Cons. Comm. has not yet received an application either. Jim will provide Kath with e-mail contact information for Tim Quinn, the Hudson Cons. Comm. chair, and for Tom Sommers, the town engineer. Jim indicated that Hudson Cons. Comm. meets once per month.

This led to a discussion of Hudson’s wetlands ordinance. Jim explained that Hudson has a 50 foot wetlands buffer. Hudson uses soils and vegetation for its wetland definition. As such, the Merrimack River itself does not receive a buffer under Hudson’s ordinance.

Members agreed that the Hudson Conservation Commission would have a better focus on issues that LMRLAC is interested in. The Planning Board will probably be focused on traffic.

Several features of the proposed concept plan were discussed. Currently, the concept shows the buildings away from the river, with a greenway. A pedestrian walkway across the river could potentially be considered but was not included in the concept plan.

Members expressed concerns that, although the concept plan looks sensitive to environmental issues and to the river, it remains to be seen what the actual plan will do – whether it might end up pushing buildings toward the river under pressure from traffic or other concerns.

LMRLAC – October 26, 2006

Jim indicated that the developer has indicated an interest in having the project on sewer, but that capacity is limited. Not all of Hudson is sewer; the part of Hudson that does have sewer goes to the Nashua treatment facility.

Jim had the following recommendations and comments about the project:

- 1 – LMRLAC should work with the Hudson Conservation Commission with issues or concerns about the project
- 2 – Once an application for the project is received by the Hudson Planning Board, it will be declared a project of regional impact, which will then involve NRPC

Kath will e-mail Tom Sommers to establish contact so LMRLAC could be contacted when the River Place project appears on the Hudson Conservation Commission agenda.

Plan Outline

Kath reviewed the Corridor Management Plan outline and upcoming LMRLAC actions. One item is to set the LAC goals. Members agreed that this had taken place back in the spring and should be documented in the minutes (note: it's in the March minutes). Kath will let Danielle know that this is in the minutes.

Another item for which LMRLAC has the action is to get feedback from local groups.

Karen will review the survey with the Nashua Conservation Commission

Bob will contact Hudson boards

Litchfield – members agreed to ask Glenn if he can do it

Merrimack – members agreed to check with George to see if he can do it

Bob will re-send the survey results to members. It was agreed that the meetings can consist of reviewing the survey results with the committees.

Bob suggested that LMRLAC publish the survey results.

Members then discussed how current river protection and recommendations should be documented in the corridor management plan. Bob suggested that the plan include the recommendation that all the towns consider having the same protection for the river.

Other members suggested that the plan include a side-by-side comparison of current river protection in the towns, suggestions of what other area communities have for protection, and make some recommendations for protection.

Members then discussed item 3c in the workplan, to “Review existing master plans, rec. plans, land use regs. & old management plan” and indicated this item should be with a focus on river protection in these documents.

Kath will e-mail this information to Danielle as feedback from the LAC for the plan.

NH Watershed Conference

The NH watershed conference is Saturday November 18 at DES. Kath said she would be presenting about the Shoreland Protection Act modifications.

Local Updates

Will indicated that construction is already underway at the airport for the redirection of runoff into the Merrimack River.

Karen indicated that the City of Nashua will be coming back before the Nashua Conservation Commission about the Farmington Road CSO project. They have changed plans on how to have the equipment access the site, which will cause more buffer impact.

LMRLAC – October 26, 2006

Bob indicated that there is a swampy area on the outlet side of Robinson Pond, and the owner of this area may want to donate it or to grant an easement to Hudson.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 7 or 14 (or, in a pinch, November 30) at a location in Litchfield to be determined. Will will line up a date and a place and let Kath know.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
secretary