

LMRLAC – October 22, 2015

**LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

October 22, 2015

Members:

- ✓ = present

Current:

- ✓ Gene Porter (Chair) – Nashua (current term expires 12/18/16)
- ✓ Nelson Disco (Vice Chair) – Merrimack (current term expires 08/28/17)
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) – Nashua (current term expires 08/12/17)
- Michael Croteau – Litchfield (current term expires 08/12/17)
- ✓ Christine Dupree – Hudson (current term expires 11/25/17)
- Richard LeBourdais – Hudson (current term expires 11/06/17)

Pending Renewal:

- ✓ George May – Merrimack (current term expired 01/07/14)
- Michael Redding – Merrimack (current term expired 01/07/14)

Associate Members:

Mildred Mugica – Nashua

Also in attendance:

Caroly Shumway, Executive Director, Merrimack River Watershed Council (MRWC)
Tracie Sales, DES

Meeting called to order at 7:03pm by Chairman Gene Porter in the Music/Art/Media room at the Nashua Public Library, without a quorum present. (Mr. Disco arrived at 7:30pm to achieve a quorum.) Chairman Porter stated that Mr. Disco had indicated he would be late and that Mr. LeBourdais had indicated that he would attend. He further stated he had heard from Mr. Redding and Mr. Croteau that they would not be able to attend.

Old Business

Designated River Signage

Chairman Porter stated that the signs have been installed on the Taylor Falls and Veterans Memorial Bridges. He stated that the signage on the Sagamore Bridge is awaiting additional paperwork because it is a limited access road. Members thanked Chairman Porter for his persistence in getting the signs purchased, manufactured, and installed.

Lowell: Pawtucket Dam Crest Gate Bladder Project

Chairman Porter stated that Boott Hydropower is actively negotiating the design of the Crest Gate system and that they hope to start construction in the spring of 2016 and finish by year's end.

Chairman Porter requested members encourage their respective communities' boards and committees to keep track of the progress of this project.

**Merrimack: Anheuser-Busch Proposed Brewery Expansion; Alteration of Terrain
Application #20150319-058**

Chairman Porter reminded members of the proposed project, which would add a new packaging process facility, plus an addition to the brewery and warehouse, discussed at the April 2015 meeting. Chairman Porter stated that LMRLAC's request for public access was not granted. He encouraged members to continue to advocate for public access along the river.

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Mr. May commented that easements along the river are useful not only for access to the river, but also to provide protection for the river, as well as to help maintain a natural view when boating on the river. Mr. May also recommended engagement with developers early in the process to advocate for river access and easements.

Hudson: 2 Executive Drive

Chairman Porter mentioned that LMRLAC had been notified of a small expansion project at 2 Executive Drive in Hudson that did not trigger any DES permits. He had responded that LMRLAC had no comment on the project.

Possible Designated River Expansion or Addition

Chairman Porter stated that there are projects outside LMRLAC's current jurisdiction which can affect the corridor. He explained that there is a development project in northern Manchester along the river which proposes significant fill on the site (about 10 feet) to raise the site out of the floodplain. He expressed concern about its impact on the LMRLAC corridor. Ms. Sales stated that the project would be subject to state regulations within 250 feet of the riverbank.

LMRLAC Advocacy with Member Towns

Chairman Porter has met with both Nashua mayoral candidates to advocate for LMRLAC.

Membership

Chairman Porter urged current members to consider adding additional members. Ms. Archambault took the action to review the LMRLAC by-laws to confirm whether LMRLAC currently has a specified upper limit on the number of members per town.

Mr. Disco arrived; making a quorum.

DES Proposed Reorganization

Chairman Porter asked Ms. Sales to brief LMRLAC on the proposed reorganization. Ms. Sales explained that DES is looking into combining the Alteration of Terrain, Subsurface Systems, and Wetlands Bureaus, along with the Shoreland Program, under a Land Resources Management Bureau. The proposed reorganization's goals are to increase efficiency, to combine permitting and compliance, and to improve employee development.

Several public meetings are scheduled for early November. Limited space is available at the public meetings; information on registering for one of the public meetings is available on the DES Web site: <http://des.nh.gov/media/pr/2015/20151016-wetlands.htm>

Proposed Northeast Energy Direct (NED) Pipeline Project

Mr. May reminded members that any New Hampshire pipeline route would include a Merrimack River crossing. Echoing a point in LMRLAC's comment letter to FERC, he suggested that Nashua and Merrimack consider requesting Greeley Park access improvements as part of the mitigation for the pipeline project.

Presentation by Carol Shumway, Executive Director of MRWC

Chairman Porter introduced Dr. Shumway, who has served as the Executive Director of MRWC for the past four years. Dr. Shumway gave a presentation on some of the current issues and projects MRWC currently has as its focus.

Dr. Shumway pointed out that the Merrimack River is the 5th largest watershed in New England. She summarized data showing ecologic degradation in watersheds where impervious surfaces exceed 10 percent. She displayed several maps outlining a protection and restoration project currently underway with 6 sub-watersheds of the Merrimack River. The purpose of the project is

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to preserve or restore chosen sub-watersheds which currently have less than 10 percent impervious surfaces in order to maintain their ecology.

Dr. Shumway summarized several topics she felt were of mutual interest between MRWC and LMRLAC – including regional watershed planning, water quality analysis, water quality improvement, and to celebrate the river. She stated that the Army Corps of Engineers has water sampling data from the Lower Merrimack from 2004 (the report for which is publicly available) and 2014 (the report for which is being compiled and is expected to be available next year sometime).

Chairman Porter asked Dr. Shumway for suggestions on what LMRLAC might learn from MRWC on how to get the public engaged. Dr. Shumway mentioned that MRWC is getting more involved on a variety of social media platforms.

Dr. Shumway commented that MRWC's 40th anniversary is coming next year, and she also stated that MRWC plans a "State of the Waters" conference.

Dr. Shumway stated that MRWC is looking for board members, and suggested a liaison between LMRLAC and MRWC might be useful.

Members thanked Dr. Shumway for coming to the meeting and speaking with them.

Minutes

The minutes from the July 23, 2015 meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer's Report

Chairman Porter stated that Mr. Croteau has resigned his position as Treasurer. Ms. Dupree volunteered to take over the position.

Corridor Management Plan

Chairman Porter asked members to think of ways to spend LMRLAC's funds. He suggested LMRLAC consider updating its Corridor Management Plan. He also stated that LMRLAC might need to pursue some grant funding for future projects, such as the Corridor Management Plan update.

Expanding Jurisdiction

Ms. Sales summarized the Designated River process and stated that any expansion of jurisdiction requires the full Designated River nomination process. She indicated that three LACs have done this, but that more typically another organization, such as a regional planning commission (RPC), does this. She suggested that LMRLAC pursue expansion first, if desired, and then update the Corridor Management Plan.

Ms. Sales stated that the Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is in the process of updating the statute and the rules for nomination.

Chairman Porter asked whether DES had a presentation or other information summarizing the benefits of an LAC. Ms. Sales indicated there is some information on the 25th anniversary poster. She also said she has a presentation which explains the benefits of a Designated River. She will pull together some materials for Chairman Porter for him to use when discussing the possibility of Designated River status for either the Nashua River, some portion of the currently undesignated Merrimack River, or both. Dr. Shumway expressed interest in the materials as well.

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Chairman Porter asked what LACs might have information on their activities. Ms. Sales suggested that UMLAC and the Lamprey River LAC would be good resources. Michele Tremblay chairs UMLAC and Dick Snow currently chairs the Lamprey River LAC.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

Next LMRLAC Meeting

The next LMRLAC meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, January 28, 2016, at 7:00 pm in the Music/Art/Media room at the Nashua Public Library. Chairman Porter will schedule a meeting for November or December, if agenda items warrant such.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
Secretary