

LMRLAC – May 28, 2009

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

May 28, 2009

Members:

- ✓ = present

- ✓ Bob Robbins (Chair) – Hudson
- ✓ Kathryn Nelson (Vice Chair) -- Nashua
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) -- Nashua
- Jim Barnes (Treasurer) – Hudson
- Glenn McKibben – Litchfield
- George May - Merrimack

Associate Members:

Mildred Mugica – Nashua

Also in attendance:

Geoff Daly, corridor resident and potential member, Nashua
David Scaer, corridor resident and Nashua Country Club manager, Hudson

The meeting was called to order at 7:20pm at the Nashua Country Club. Jim is out of town and could not attend the meeting. Members welcomed David Scaer, Nashua Country Club manager and corridor resident, to the meeting.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the meetings of March 26, 2009 and April 23, 2009 were accepted.

Local Updates – Hudson

Geoff brought up the issue of a 24-inch pipe with riprap on the bank in Hudson, across from Thoreau's Landing. Geoff indicated this work had taken place in mid-May, replacing a much smaller pipe. Geoff could find no record of permits being filed with the town or the state. Geoff will determine the address, get some photographs, and will draft a letter to the Hudson Conservation Commission and to DES Wetlands Bureau about the situation. Kath will provide Geoff with the appropriate contact person at DES.

Membership

Bob summarized the current membership and Bob and Kath gave an overview of LMRLAC's purpose and duties for David's benefit. Bob mentioned LMRLAC currently has two Hudson members, one Merrimack member, no Litchfield members, and three Nashua members (two full members and one associate). Once Geoff completes the application process, he will be the third full Nashua member.

Bob and Kath stated LMRLAC represents both conservation and recreation interests, with a different focus than Conservation Commissions but with some common goals. LMRLAC provides comment to DES on Alteration of Terrain permits and on wetland permits.

Bob mentioned that LMRLAC often sponsors canoe/kayak trips that the Merrimack River Watershed Council organizes. This year, LMRLAC is a trip partner for the July 5 trip in Manchester and the September 6 trip in Merrimack.

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LMRLAC Meeting with Hudson Planning Board

Members discussed the LMRLAC presentation to the Hudson Planning Board on June 3 or 10. Bob indicated he can attend either date; Kath cannot attend on June 3. Bob indicated he had been told on Wednesday that the meeting date is June 3. Kath and Karen had both understood June 10; Kath will find out which date is the correct one. (Information received after the meeting indicated that June 10 is the correct meeting date.)

Members discussed topics to cover at the Hudson meeting with the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission.

LMRLAC will bring along copies of the corridor management plan comments developed by the Hudson Planning Board, the NRPC Recreational Trail Inventory report, and copies of the updated plan review checklist for discussion. Kath will ask Jim to bring hard copies of the Hudson comments to the meeting.

Trails and recreation space were discussed at some length as topics for the meeting. Bob brought up Terry Stewart's efforts in Hudson to extend the Heritage Trail. Kath summarized recent plans in Hudson that had come before LMRLAC – of three projects seen by LMRLAC, just one ended up including a trail easement on the plans. Members also discussed the issue of trail location and how there should be some engineering work prior to locating the easement to determine the best spot for a trail (e.g. at the top of bank rather than on the bank slope). Members agreed that trail location should be documented on subdivision plans so potential buyers know there is a trail planned for the site.

Members also discussed Merrill Park at some length. Bob indicated he understands there is a Scout who is interested in doing work in Merrill Park as an Eagle Scout project. Kath suggested that money for improvements to Merrill Park could be an option for mitigation for other wetlands impacts in Hudson, and suggested we ask whether the Hudson Conservation Commission might be interested in such an option. Bob also mentioned the Riverside Drive area in Hudson as another area LMRLAC may be interested in for trails or river access.

Members also discussed the DES Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund (ARM) that has its first round of funds available for restoration projects in the Merrimack River watershed, and what project or projects in the member towns would be good to promote for that. Members briefly reviewed highlighted projects in Litchfield and Hudson, and discussed informing the Hudson boards that LMRLAC would be interested in sending a letter of support for projects applying for the ARM, especially for projects within the corridor.

Members also discussed the topic of Hudson's Conservation Fund, and what uses they may be planning for it. Members briefly discussed whether LMRLAC should encourage conservation or recreation along the river and decided that both were appropriate. On the issue of trail improvements, LMRLAC would focus on trails within the corridor.

Geoff brought up the topic of hazardous spills, and Bob pointed out that all of Hudson is within the Merrimack watershed. Members agreed that LMRLAC would be concerned with matters such as spills within the entire watershed.

The discussion turned to current and future boat access on the river. Members discussed the state of the Greeley Park boat ramp and the at-grade railroad crossing to access it, and briefly discussed the meeting LMRLAC had held a few years ago with a representative from NH Fish and Game about the situation. A boat launch has the potential for going into the Beazer site when it gets developed, which led to a discussion about the location for the train station and its possible connection to a boat launch. Geoff mentioned that there is also the potential for boat

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access to the river at Thoreau's Landing, but it's at the part of the site where the erosion is at its worst.

Geoff mentioned the scull launch area (Independence Rowing Club site at the end of Crown St.); Geoff and David agreed the bank there is not too steep for rescue boats. They contrasted that to the Beazer site, which they felt was too steep, except for the northern end of the site. Geoff indicated that cutting into the bank would be needed to put a boat launch at the Beazer site, even on the northern end.

Members agreed that LMRLAC would take no position at this time on a preferred location for a boat launch, but will keep the matter in mind for the future.

LMRLAC will bring up the need for boat access along the river at the Hudson meeting.

Members summarized access points in the area:

- Depot St, Merrimack: cartop only
- Litchfield: cartop
- Greeley Park, Nashua: limited access
- Dracut
- Merrill Park, Hudson: cartop (at one time)
- Sparkling River, Hudson: future boat launch planned

Another topic to discuss at the Hudson meeting is the relationship LMRLAC wishes to continue to develop with the Planning Boards and planning staffs of the member towns. LMRLAC would like each Planning Board to request that the applicant fill out the LMRLAC checklist (available on the Web site) and to come to a LMLRAC meeting to discuss their project. LMRLAC would like to formalize its relationship with the Planning Boards in the member towns.

Members also discussed what projects LMRLAC would like to see of those coming before Planning Boards or Conservation Commissions. Any project 'of substance' within the corridor would be something LMRLAC would like to be made aware of. Kath pointed out that we need to mention that LMRLAC understands it is an advisory board, but would like to be notified of anything happening in the corridor so we are aware of what's going on.

Violations is another topic LMRLAC plans to discuss with the Hudson Planning Board. The pipe Geoff noted is an example of a possible violation that can be used to discuss the matter. Kath mentioned that there is a state violation form; she will download it and we can ask if the town would be willing to provide a link to it.

The possibility of public/private partnerships to maintain and create recreation opportunities along the river was discussed. Kath gave the example of Rotary Park in Nashua, where the Rotary Club provided funding to improve the site. Perhaps a similar partnership could be formed for Merrill Park. If LMRLAC could encourage someone to adopt Merrill Park, LMRLAC could help in ways such as grant research.

Members discussed who the major employers are in Hudson, speculating that area employers may be interested in such a partnership. Members felt that BAE SYSTEMS and Wal-Mart/Sam's Club are the major employers in Hudson.

Bob mentioned the twice-yearly cleanups on Robinson Pond, and the publicity for those cleanups. He suggested that arranging for a cleanup and publicizing it can get the ball rolling for improving the appearance and use of a site like Merrill Park.

Members discussed pervious pavers as another topic to bring up. Bob brought up that he recently learned of a lawsuit against an engineer who installed pervious asphalt. Water was

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getting underneath the asphalt and splitting it. Bob is going to find out more about the lawsuit and its circumstances. Members discussed Bob's driveway, and suggested the presentation should distinguish between pervious pavers and pervious pavement, since Bob has personal, positive experience with the former.

Members discussed how to wrap up the presentation. Bob mentioned that we could point out some of our objectives (from the plan) – LMRLAC is interested in recreation, in maintaining the character of the river, in access to the river and trails along the river, etc.

Local Updates – Nashua

Possible cell phone tower in corridor

Kath stated that Lucy St. John had notified Kath that an applicant has expressed interest in placing a cell phone tower within the quarter-mile corridor in Nashua. Lucy gave Kath contact information for the site engineer and Kath notified the site engineer with summary information of LMRLAC's purpose. Kath extended an invitation to the engineer to send a plan for LMRLAC to review and/or attend the May meeting. Kath and the rest of the members agreed that this is a good example of the kind of communication LMRLAC is hoping to promote with planning staff in the member towns.

Nashua Country Club

Members discussed recent and upcoming river-related activities at the Nashua Country Club. David mentioned that the country club is looking for Audubon certification. He mentioned the stormwater project (with constructed wetlands) at hole 16 that had been put in a few years ago, and that the country club may discuss with the city of Nashua whether something similar can be done at holes 3 and 4, parallel to the river.

David mentioned that the country club is withdrawing less water from the river, due to such things as a change in grasses. Members discussed with David the possibility of taking water from a combined sewer overflow separation project in that part of Nashua and routing it to the country club for watering.

Miscellaneous

HB2 Sunset Clause

Kath mentioned that LMRLAC had sent a letter to the Senate Finance Committee, recommending LACs be exempt from the sunset provision in HB2. Kath believes the budget vote will be sometime in June.

Water Resources Roadshow presentation at NRPC

Geoff briefly summarized the Water Resources Roadshow presentation he attended at NRPC back in March. He indicated the workshop was very good. Members thanked Geoff for attending.

Kath mentioned that she understands Manchester is considering a major withdrawal. Members briefly discussed whether to take a position on the matter and decided more information was needed before potentially doing so.

Geoff will contact Paul Susca of DES, who presented at the workshop, to give him Bob's e-mail and request that he notify LMRLAC as the situation develops on the proposed large withdrawal in Manchester.

2009 Watershed Conference

Geoff brought up the call for papers for the upcoming 2009 Watershed Conference, scheduled this year to be held on November 20 and 21. Kath mentioned that LMRLAC has set up a booth at past conferences and mentioned that it is a good event to attend.

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Boott Hydro Dam Repair Status

Geoff indicated the river level is still down as of May 15 and Enel has not indicated when it will come back up. David mentioned that the flow of the river appears to be way down as well.

LMRLAC Mail

Bob asked if Geoff would be willing to pick up the LMRLAC mail the next time he is at NRPC.

LMRLAC Meeting Venue

Geoff provided contact information for Martha's; contact is required four days prior to the scheduled meeting. The meeting space available at Martha's can accommodate up to 10-12 people. Karen took the contact information for future use.

Meeting adjourned 9:30pm.

Next meeting is currently scheduled to be held in conjunction with the presentation to the Hudson Planning Board on June 3 or 10. The regular June meeting will be canceled, unless a project requiring comment comes to the committee prior to the June regular meeting date. Bob indicated that he will be out of town and unable to attend the regular June meeting, if it is held. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 23 at 7pm, at a meeting place to be announced.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
secretary