

LMRLAC – January 22, 2009

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

January 22, 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:

Millie Mugica – Nashua

Also in attendance:

None

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm at Margaritas.

Old Business

Membership

Members briefly discussed the current active membership list, recently sent to members by DES. Bob, Kath, Jim, Glenn, and Karen are currently active. George indicated he intends to reapply.

Minutes

The minutes of the December 4, 2008 meeting were accepted as written.

Recreational Trail Inventory/Plan

Bob reminded members that the Merrimack presentation had included questions from Planning Board members about recreation and the recreation plan. George pointed out that the plan refers to itself as a trail inventory, and pointed out that there is a difference in scope between a trails plan and a recreation plan.

George suggested the trails inventory plan raises two questions: first, what does LMRLAC want to see for a trail network along the river? Second, that LMRLAC should look at areas along the river with existing trails in use, or areas in need of a trail, and pass that information along to the applicable town as a priority area for LMRLAC. Kath mentioned that NRPC would have parcel maps from which LMRLAC could determine parcels of interest.

Members briefly discussed who would know the trails best, and considered fishermen and hikers. Members thought fishermen would know access points to the river, but probably would not be as familiar with trails along the river. Members also mentioned that ATV riders would know about trails along the river. Paul Wiggins was also suggested as a person familiar with trails.

Bob suggested we could contact the people from the survey list and invite them to talk about the trails online. Bob mentioned his recent experiences with Facebook, indicating Facebook could be a way to spread information about LMRLAC and to spread interest about activities. Bob

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asked George to e-mail him the newsletter mailing list and Bob will invite them to 'friend' him in Facebook.

Members briefly discussed the Heritage Trail easements in Hudson – easements which exist but for which there has been no trail work so far. Members discussed preferred easement placement – whether placing the trail on the slope or on the shelf was a good idea as opposed to locating the trail at the top of the bank. Recent applications in Hudson where LMRLAC had requested the easement be placed at the top of the bank had been met with some resistance for lots with existing homes.

Kath will remind Minda of the follow up LMRLAC is looking for as discussed at the December meeting (forwarding Laura Weit's comments, putting together information gathered on the Heritage Trail) and will c.c. Steve Couture at DES.

Corridor Management Plan Review of Hudson Comments

Kath had forwarded the Hudson comments to Steve Couture at DES and Steve had indicated he was pleased with the Hudson feedback. Members were reminded that LMRLAC has been invited to the June 3 Hudson Planning Board meeting to help fulfill its objective of meeting annually with the member towns.

Members discussed in more detail some of the comments and feedback that the Hudson Planning Board had given to LMLRAC.

Under Goal 2, Conservation, the Hudson Planning Board indicated that its Master Plan already recommends that the board work with the LAC.

Under Objective 2.2, conserving prime and active farmland, the Hudson Planning Board is looking for feedback from the LAC on specific parcels. Members discussed the topic, expanding the issue to cover parcels in general and not just agricultural lands. Bob brought up one spot in particular, land across from Presentation of Mary, that has a brook running through it that once had trout.

Kath pointed out that the ideal situation would be to have a green swath all along the river, but that in reality we probably won't have that. Kath suggested that the trail could use roads as linkages; that the whole length of trail doesn't have to run right along the river.

Members turned to a brief discussion about who owns the shelf. George suggested it would be owned by the state if it's below the high water mark. George suggested that the trail could use the shelf – that it's less desirable to do so but the issue might work itself out over time. Members generally agreed that the LAC is not likely to get full cooperation for trails on private land.

The discussion turned briefly to vandalism and ways to deal with it. George stated that the way to deal with it is to replace immediately whatever's been broken, and to keep replacing the item (picnic table, etc.) until the vandals get tired of breaking it. This example broadened to discussions of clearing trails, and that trail cleanups need to be ongoing. Trail monitors could be used to adopt sections of trail to keep it clean. Bob gave the example of Robinson Pond cleanups, which occur twice annually.

George mentioned that a maintenance plan should be put together for the trail.

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Members decided that among the things to mention at the June 3 Hudson Planning Board meeting would be that LMRLAC's vision includes not only trails along the river, but also working with the towns on trail cleanups.

The discussion returned to the subject of selecting specific parcels of interest in Hudson for agricultural land, trails, or open space. Kath will ask Minda for help putting together this information. The hope is that Minda could put together a list of parcels and a map.

Members again discussed whether the shelf along the river was a good place for the trail. It was agreed that it's not the ideal location but that we understand it is being used. Members discussed the view that perhaps use of the shelf itself as a trail is less of an issue than getting down to and up from the shelf along the bank.

Members briefly discussed what topics would be useful to present at the June meeting with the Hudson Planning Board, and came up with the following list:

- water quality monitoring (probably with last year's data)
- membership
- specific parcels to focus on for protection (a parcel list with a map)
- planned cleanup

Jim suggested that the Hudson Conservation Commission also be invited to the meeting, perhaps to present the results of their prime wetland study. Bob may also make separate contact with the Hudson Conservation Commission to establish direct contact between that group and LMRLAC.

Members suggested a couple of potential Hudson cleanup spots, including Merrill Park and the area behind the power station (across from T Bones).

Jim will look into the use of the LMRLAC checklist by the Hudson Planning Board, and the possibility of marking the quarter-mile corridor boundary on site plans.

Kath will look into updating the checklist that LMRLAC has available on the NRPC Web site.

Under Objective 3.1, Low Impact Development (LID), members discussed how to encourage use of LID techniques. Kath will ask Minda for a schedule for the LID Guidebook grant effort. Karen reminded members she currently has the LMRLAC copy of Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques from the State. Bob asked whether it would be worthwhile to have someone from UNH in to speak to the planning boards about LID. Jim replied that he's not sure there is currently much interest in that topic currently on the Hudson Planning Board.

Under Objective 3.2, CSPA training, Kath will ask Minda to set up a training session at NRPC to which either all NRPC member towns or just the LMRLAC member towns will be invited.

The discussion then turned to the possibility of a planner's night at an upcoming LMRLAC meeting. Kath will draft an invitation to be sent to the chair of each Planning Board and to planning staff in each town, inviting them to an upcoming LMRLAC meeting, probably the February meeting. The plan for the meeting will be to give copies of Hudson's comments to the other towns to get the discussion started, and then to plan an informal followup meeting to get a response similar to Hudson's, preferably by someone on the Planning Board for each member town. For Merrimack, the contact people will be Nelson Disco, Planning Board chair, and Scott McPhie. For Nashua, the contact is Lucy St. John. For Hudson, John Cashell is the planner.

Members also discussed setbacks/buffers along tributaries to the Merrimack. Those portions of the tributaries within the corridor would fall under LMRLAC's jurisdiction, but the Conservation

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Commission in each town would have to look at that in areas where LAC does not have jurisdiction.

Members briefly discussed Hudson's comment about linking to LMRLAC Web site information on water quality monitoring results, and also briefly discussed George's receipt of a small EPA grant to measure conductivity.

Miscellaneous

Bob will follow up on getting new checks for the NRPC bank account, and to add Jim's name to the account. Bob asked if anyone would be going to the NRPC office in the near future to pick up the mail.

Kath will put together the 2008 annual report.

Kath mentioned that Meanderings, the newsletter for the state's Rivers Management and Protection Program, is looking for article submissions. Bob suggested we contact Glenn to get a copy of the eagle picture and to ask Glenn to write something up for Meanderings.

Members briefly discussed the upcoming public information meeting at the PSNH building in Manchester on February 17th on the Merrimack River Watershed Wetland Restoration Plan. Kath briefly summarized the background of the fund – that developers put in money per watershed toward an aquatic restoration fund to mitigate wetlands impacts. Kath also stated she learned that the funds cannot be used to fix the banks of the Merrimack River. Karen indicated she intends to attend the presentation.

Meeting adjourned 9:00pm.

Next meeting will be held Thursday, February 26, at 7pm at Margaritas.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
secretary