

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

September 22, 2005

Members:

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- ✓ 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 7:20 pm in the Hunt room at the Nashua Library. It was noted that a quorum was present.

Minutes

August's minutes were approved as submitted. Bob asked Karen to check her e-mail for contact information on the NRPC Webmaster for posting LMRLAC minutes.

Updates

Kath informed the rest of the committee that she is now on the Shoreland Protection Study Commission, representing the Rivers Council. The Commission has been put together in response to SB83 to study the Shoreland Protection Act. Kath is looking for input from the LAC. Bob asked whether the LAC should put in the corridor management plan that all towns should adopt their own shoreland acts. Discussion ensued on the benefits of a local ordinance providing a means for local enforcement, rather than referring to the state and DES for enforcement. Ray made a motion that the LAC should send a letter to the study commission, to "strongly support strengthening the Shoreland Protection Act". The motion was seconded by Jim and passed unanimously. Bob indicated he would write the letter and get information from Kath as needed.

The committee briefly discussed Permit By Notification (PBN) and the presentation by Sandy Crystall of DES that was given to the LAC back in February. At that time, Sandy had indicated that PBN cannot be used within .25 miles of a designated river. The DES Web site contains the list of and information about designated rivers (www.des.state.nh.us/rivers/designriv.htm).

The discussion again brought up the point that the corridor management plan should include a recommendation that the corridor towns write their own shoreland protection ordinances, and should include a model ordinance. Kath indicated that she is including a model ordinance in the Souhegan corridor plan that she's currently working on for NRPC and the Souhegan LAC. Members of the LAC would have to follow through with each town as their shoreland protection ordinances are proposed, speaking at public hearings to provide support during the process.

Ray brought up NPDES Phase II (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Federal Stormwater Program), and the educational aspect of it to label storm sewers. Cynthia brought up how she has witnessed people dumping such things as waste oil into storm sewers in her neighborhood, and how enforcement is difficult or impossible for that. Cynthia was directed to contact Kathy Hersh at Nashua City Hall to pursue this issue.

Survey

Bob said he ended up with only 'Resident' for all the Nashua addresses, although he had received names with the addresses from Litchfield, Merrimack, and Hudson. Bob handed out sample survey postcards for the committee to view. He had gone with a smaller card (than previously considered) to save printing costs, but it ended up being more expensive to mail since it was too small to accommodate the address bar code. To mail the postcards out of the Manchester post office, with the bar code, would have cost only \$.14 per card. Bob described the printing and mailing process and indicated that he found a firm to assist with the mailing. Ralph Menard, Menard Advertising in Concord, provided support and excellent advice – they were able to print the addresses and postage directly on the postcards, eliminating the need for labels or stamps.

Bob indicated that DES has approved the survey, and that Bob will talk to the mailer this time first, before getting the surveys printed. Ray summarized alternatives to envelope stuffing for producing the survey mailings – there are forms that can be re-folded to produce the return mailing, for example. The question came up whether the LAC will provide stamps for the return mailings – Bob indicated that return postage was included in the grant.

Tabulating the survey responses was briefly discussed. Kath indicated that 52 Souhegan survey responses took her a half day to tabulate. Bob indicated that he was confident that he could find a way to get LMRLAC survey responses tabulated in a timely manner. Discussion continued on the means to collect responses – using an electronic form on the Internet could be tied to a database to provide automatic tabulation, for example. Ray asked if the LAC could look into the relative cost of mailing the survey vs. posting it electronically.

Discussion turned briefly to the separation of efforts between writing the corridor management plan, which NRPC is doing, versus tabulating the results of the survey, which is considered by NRPC to be separate from writing the plan and thus LMRLAC will be responsible for that.

Distributing surveys and collecting responses from town boards and committees was discussed. Bob indicated he would have to update the survey to include selections for town boards, which had been removed for the survey version being distributed to landowners within the corridor. Kath indicated the LAC should allow about three months to collect data from town boards and officials. Members divided the list of boards within each town as follows:

Litchfield: Ray will cover the Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Planning, and ZBA

Hudson: Bob will cover the Selectmen, Conservation Commission and Friends of Hudson Natural Resources; Jim will cover Planning and ZBA

Merrimack: George will cover all boards

Nashua: Karen will cover Conservation Commission and ZBA; Kath will cover DPW and Park and Recreation; Cynthia will cover the Planning Board

Once Bob has distributed the updated version of the survey, members should request to get on the agenda for their assigned boards for 15 minutes, briefly discuss the LAC and the survey, distribute copies for the board members to fill out and turn back over or to send in later if necessary. Each member took the action to make contact to get on the agenda of their assigned boards prior to the next LMRLAC meeting.

Field Trips along the river

The committee discussed that the purpose of the field trips is two-fold: to educate members on river access points and highlights within each town, and to educate Danielle on that as well. However, due to schedule conflicts, the LAC will not be conducting formal field trips along the river this fall and will leave it to individuals to explore on their own. Bob took the action to contact Danielle to let her know this.

The Merrimack River Watershed Council canoe trip along the Merrimack on October 1 (NOTE: the MRWC Website indicates the trip is on Sunday, October 2) was mentioned as an opportunity to

see part of the river. (The trip runs from Merrimack to Nashua.) This led to a discussion that LMRLAC could include discussion of the highlights of the river in each town as part of a meeting, and could invite Chuck Mower to speak at a meeting about the river and make the meeting a public event. (Chuck Mower is leading the canoe trip on October 2). Chuck had also led this canoe trip last year, which had included a dedication of the Depot Street boat ramp.

Kath will try to book Chuck Mower for the next LMRLAC meeting on Thursday, October 27. If she's able to line him up, she will let Cynthia know so Cynthia can publicize the meeting. Members from each town should brainstorm prior to the meeting to put together a list of river areas in their town to highlight.

Ray brought up the Litchfield boat ramp and how it was mentioned during the previous meeting that the steep bank makes the prospect difficult. Ray indicated that a natural slope does exist along the bank and said he would make contact at the State to pursue this further.

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 27, at 7:00pm in the Hunt Room at the Nashua Library.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
secretary