

**LMRLAC – April 27, 2006**

**LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**April 27, 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:**

- ✓ Millie Mugica, corridor resident, Nashua

Prior to the formal start of the meeting, George pointed out that he had brought a copy of the Souhegan River LAC (SoRLAC) updated management plan to the meeting, and distributed copies of a SoRLAC brochure. George also handed out a few stacks of Merrimack River Watershed Council 2006 canoe trip brochures to be distributed around the towns.

Chair Bob Robbins called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm in the Finance Conference Room in the Old Town Hall in Merrimack. It was noted that a quorum was present.

**Minutes**

March's minutes were read for those in attendance as not all members had received them prior to the meeting. The minutes were approved with no corrections or changes.

**Updates**

Bob mentioned the following correspondence received by the LAC: a copy of a letter to Senator Carl Johnson from DES regarding HB1495, a copy of a letter to Rep. Frank Tupper from DES regarding HB1495, bank statements, a letter from DES regarding elderly housing in Merrimack (dated 1 March), and a copy of a letter to the Litchfield board of selectmen about appointing candidates to the LAC. Litchfield LAC members were reminded to submit a completed nomination form and questionnaire to be re-nominated.

An informal treasurer's report was presented. The LAC has roughly \$3000 currently available, but most of it is committed for unreimbursed expenses.

Bob raised concerns about the approach for the updates to the corridor management plan, and the level of influence the LAC would have on the focus of the plan. He recommended that the LAC (himself, Kath, other members if they wished to attend) conduct a meeting with Danielle Fillis at NRPC and invite Steve Couture from DES to attend. The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss getting LAC input into the plan. It was suggested that Steve Williams, NRPC Executive Director, be invited to attend the meeting as well, to provide further details on Danielle's level of involvement with the LAC. Another topic for the meeting would be to learn more about why NRPC did not apply for DES funding.

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Bob reminded the rest of the LAC that it will be the LAC's job to 'sell' the management plan to the towns once it's complete, in order to convince the towns to incorporate recommendations from the plan into each town's Master Plan.

Bob will re-send updated information from the survey, including updated information from the towns, to Danielle and to LAC members.

### **Old Business – Update on Hudson Proposed Development**

Bob mentioned that he would like low impact development (LID) techniques as something to be emphasized in the Green Meadow development plan. Jim indicated that the developer has said they are looking at doing that, but there are no plans available yet. Jim estimates that June will be the earliest time frame for more details from the developers, and he expects those details will come in the form of an overall Master Plan for the site.

Glenn asked whether a copy of Bob's LID booklet should be provided to the developer for reference. Bob indicated he would look for another one; he had provided one copy to the engineers for the Horseshoe Pond project. Bob mentioned that he is looking into having people over to see his LID driveway (constructed using EcoPavers), to demonstrate its effectiveness at absorbing moisture and to show off its aesthetic qualities. Jim mentioned that the parking lots on the site would be good candidates for such techniques, and Bob added that perhaps the streets could drain to the parking lots.

George stated that perhaps hiring an environmental planner should be part of the plan. Jim added such an approach would be beneficial, not only because the project is along the river, but also due to its sheer size. He mentioned that the size of the proposed Green Meadow project corresponds roughly to that in South Nashua (Pheasant Lane Mall and the DW Highway), and it's roughly half of that in the Framingham/Natick 'golden triangle' area between Route 9 and the Mass Pike.

George asked that Bob contact the project manager again to follow up on the LID information and to encourage the hiring of an environmental planner. Bob agreed to do so.

The March 30 site walk was briefly discussed. Karen indicated that those involved in the project are saying the right words as far as environmental sensitivity goes. Members indicated that they had received the site walk notes that Kath had forwarded.

### **Dredge and Fill – Nashua Country Club**

Karen brought out her copy of the Nashua Conservation Commission application that the Nashua Country Club had submitted for buffer encroachment in three areas under its greens replacement project, including the Dredge and Fill that had been included in the packet. There was some discussion as to what Dredge and Fill this refers to, as the dredging work for hole #9 lies outside the 250' river buffer under the Shoreland Protection Act. No correspondence has been received by the LAC on this project as of yet.

Bob asked the rest of the LAC what its response should be. Jim indicated that the LAC should refer the applicant to BMPs for erosion control. Bob added that fertilizer should be prevented from getting into the pond. Bob will forward an e-mail to the rest of the LAC as he finds out details on the project.

Discussion turned to the Dredge and Fill for the cleaning of the outfall at the 9<sup>th</sup> hole. Members indicated concerns that there would be less absorption of nutrients and pollutants with the removal of the cattails, and considered whether to disagree with the Nashua Conservation Commission on dredging the area. George indicated that the LAC would like to see a reduction in pollution from the Country Club getting into the river. Glenn asked about BMPs for golf

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courses at the state level, and George indicated he believed there was information available via the DES Web site.

### **Old Business**

Cynthia discussed the status of boat ramps on the river. She indicated she had been in contact with people in Hudson regarding the Merrill Park boat ramp (just south of the Taylor Falls bridge in Hudson), including Dep. Fire Chief Chalk. Cynthia indicated that all concerned want the Merrill Park boat ramp to go in, but expressed concerns about reaching Rick Maddox on the issue. Jim mentioned that Rick is now head of the Board of Selectmen and, as such, the boat ramp is only one of many issues on his list. Jim indicated that, in the late 1980s, the ramp could not go in due to the steep slopes involved.

Bob asked about the status of the Greeley Park boat ramp. Cynthia indicated that work on that ramp was scheduled by Fish and Game for 2008, but that Fish and Game is in financial straits.

Jim mentioned how the Green Meadow proposal includes boat access, perhaps even a marina, that would be public and possibly better than Merrill Park.

Bob indicated that survey responses about Merrill Park referred to activities that are 'less than wholesome' taking place there, similar to concerns about the Greeley Park ramp area at present. Bob also indicated he thought Merrill Park was too steep to put in a kayak. George indicated that he has put out there, near the little brook in the area, although he agreed that it's not very pleasant.

Cynthia said that the Greeley Park boat ramp area has more trash and potholes. There was some discussion on how much parking space was currently available for the ramp – speculation varied as to whether there was room for up to a half-dozen cars, and how many cars or trucks with trailers could fit in there. Cynthia mentioned that there are No Parking signs. George speculated that those signs may be there for maneuvering or boat ramp access reasons. George indicated that in his view, ideally, the area would have a large parking lot and a loop for people to pull in, drop off a boat, and return to the parking lot, then walk to the river on a walking trail of a couple of hundred feet at most.

Bob suggested that Cynthia and George write a letter. After a brief discussion, it was decided that Cynthia will contact Nick Caggiano (Nashua Park and Recreation) on the matter.

### **Oxbow Coalition**

George summarized HB1495, indicating that it is positive for the river, but that a landfill is still planned to be placed in Canterbury on an oxbow. George wanted to know if the LAC wanted to go on record about the proposed landfill. The application for the landfill went in before HB1495 was proposed.

Bob read from the legislation. This led to a brief discussion on how landfill contents would be prevented from entering the river. George indicated that it is a new landfill being proposed, with lining, etc. George pointed out that the nature of a meandering river is that it changes direction over time. George continued that our portion of the Merrimack changes over time as well. He mentioned that Chuck Mower points out how Merrimack is getting Litchfield's land on the canoe trip he generally leads. George stated that people who live on rivers, and their concerns when the river alters its course, are generally one of the biggest issues facing river advocacy organizations. George stated his feelings that there should be provisions that do not allow for riprap or for channelizing the river.

Bob stated his concerns with siting a landfill near an oxbow, or near a river. George mentioned that the landfill is in compliance, and asked whether the LAC wished to lend its name as an organization, or members as individuals, to the petition.

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Jim made the motion to authorize George to sign the petition on behalf of the LAC, seconded by Cynthia. Millie asked for a copy of the petition to be forwarded to her, so that she could sign as a member of the public.

A brief discussion followed about emergency access to the river and how far upriver people could go with various sized boats. Bob reminded the LAC that the pontoon boat trip went nearly as far as the Budweiser plant in Merrimack. George indicated that little boats can go up further than that.

### **Corridor Management Plan**

Review of updated TOC: no updated TOC had been received prior to the meeting.

Compile list of desired maps for the Plan:

Bob asked what members wanted to see on the maps. George indicated his idea of having two large maps, one with the 'good stuff' on it, and one with the 'bad stuff' on it. He further described the 'good stuff' as access points and conservation land (for examples). 'Bad stuff' would be things like CSO pipes, landfills, outfalls.

The LAC reviewed the list put together at the March meeting. Bob suggested the list be e-mailed around for specifics.

Glenn asked whether people would be able to call up overlays on the CDs on which the maps would be distributed. George indicated that the Souhegan plan's CD does not have overlays. Jim expressed concerns about the possible software expense. Glenn asked whether there was a Reader form of ArcView that could possibly be provided. George indicated that there might be something on the Web that could be done. Karen gave the example of Nashua's GIS on its Web site that allows a user to select layers for display.

Bob added the topic of GIS maps/layers on the NRPC Web site as a topic to discuss at the meeting with Danielle and Steve Williams of NRPC.

George indicated that the plan should give us some decisions and guidance for now and roughly the next ten years. It does not have to try to solve all the corridor problems all at once.

Plan goals:

Bob mentioned that the plan should list specific things that the towns could do. George stated that the plan could cover strengths and weaknesses in each town. He gave the example of setbacks for each town. It was further stated that the plan should encourage town to adopt the Shoreland Protection Act and BMPs in the corridor. Members were reminded that this is a plan goal; it's still up to the towns to decide what to implement.

Jim suggested that the goals from the Souhegan plan would be a place to look for goal ideas. Bob indicated we could use the goals that came off the survey. Jim asked who has copies of the old plan, as goals from that may still apply. Bob indicated that NRPC has a copy of the old plan, and that nearly everything in the old plan is appropriate since little of it was enacted.

Bob indicated that many survey results indicated a desire for more access. Some people on the river expressed concerns about noise. This led to a discussion about boat regulations – for example, headway speed (about 6 mph) is required within 150 feet of the shore – but that there are no regulations as to boat size or speed limit.

A discussion about designated rivers followed, and how a river gets on that list. Some of the criteria mentioned are that it must be a fourth order stream, and that it must be nominated for inclusion in the Rivers Management Protection Program. The nomination process is essentially

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a corridor management plan. George indicated that it took about 3 years for the Souhegan to go through the process.

### **Local Updates**

George brought up several issues. First of all, he mentioned a possible Shoreland Protection Act (SPA) violation in Litchfield. George indicated that he had become involved in a discussion about the application of the SPA to designated rivers. Glenn commented that there had been a discussion about, he believed, the Annondale development and a question about the response to the LAC's letter on whether some of the LAC's comments applied if they were for an area beyond 250' from the river. George asked if we could make copies of the SPA available to project engineers. Glenn mentioned that he thought the question came from one of the engineers in trying to interpret the SPA. Discussion continued on whether the LAC should again provide copies of the SPA to town boards, and whether municipalities and engineers understand the SPA.

George mentioned an upcoming charrette on the Merrimack land by the mouth of the Souhegan, near the fire station. This is for an approximately 12 acre parcel donated to the town. He believes the charrette is in May sometime and he will circulate the date.

George brought up the I-93 meetings that Ray Peeples has been attending. George was wondering if Kath should attend as well, and if the LAC should ask for mitigation for improvements on the Merrimack River as part of the I-93 widening. George will contact Ray with particulars so that Ray can bring it up at a meeting.

George also wanted to point out to Danielle, for the corridor management plan, that the locks on our stretch of the river are on the Historic Register and should be emphasized as such.

George asked for inputs to the next newsletter. Bob indicated he'd like to see portions of the minutes, but it was mentioned that minutes do get posted to the NRPC Web site upon approval. Bob said he'd like to get feedback on things like concerns about the proposed development in Hudson, and concerns about the Greeley Park boat ramp conditions, maintenance, access. He also mentioned additional calls for monitors, asking the public for feedback on what maps to put in the plan, purposes of the plan update (here's our thoughts, what are yours?), and to publicize the MRWC canoe trips.

Bob indicated that he would like Curt Laffin added to George's e-mail list.

Bob brought a copy of the by-laws to remind members that a nominating committee should have been appointed in March for the June elections. Bob appointed Kath, George, and Karen to the nominating committee. George asked if current officers were interested in serving again. Bob indicated that he was currently considering whether he would serve one more term. Glenn expressed interest in continuing as Treasurer.

Karen mentioned the Nashua Waste Water Treatment Facility's plans to expand its Wet Weather Treatment capacity, and how that proposal includes putting a chlorine contact tank partially within the 250' buffer. She indicated that she expected the LAC may see information on that soon.

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 25, at the Hunt Room in the Nashua Public Library.

Meeting adjourned at 930 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Archambault  
secretary