

LMRLAC – September 25, 2014

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

September 25, 2014

Members:

✓ = present

Current:

- ✓ Gene Porter (Chair) – Nashua
- ✓ Nelson Disco (Vice Chair) – Merrimack
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) – Nashua
- ✓ Michael Croteau (Treasurer) – Litchfield
- George May – Merrimack
- Michael Redding – Merrimack

Associate Members:

Mildred Mugica – Nashua

Also in attendance:

Emily Drury, student
Thomas Friel, Independence Rowing Club board member
Richard LeBourdais, corridor resident

Meeting called to order at 7:18pm by Chairman Gene Porter. Attendees introduced themselves to one another. Mr. LeBourdais explained that he is a corridor resident in Hudson. Ms. Drury explained she was attending a public meeting as research for a psychology course.

Mr. Porter handed out copies of his understanding of LAC responsibilities and briefly summarized them, as follows:

- Provide advice at all levels of government on matters pertaining to the management of the river segment
- Consider and comment on any plans that would alter the resource value and characteristics of the river
- Develop and promote the adoption of a local Corridor Management Plan
- Report biennially on compliance within the corridor

Mr. Porter explained that Shoreland, Alteration of Terrain, and Wetland permit applications are the ones for which LMRLAC is requested to consider and to provide comment to DES.

Mr. Porter commented in particular on the Corridor Management Plan and stated he felt LMRLAC was falling short in getting the Plan adopted by the member towns. He further cited his concerns that NRPC had apparently given less emphasis to the Plan in the recent draft of its Regional Plan. Mr. Disco commented that he understood from a discussion with a representative from NRPC that this may change in a later draft.

Ms. Archambault took the action to forward copies of recent LMLRAC annual reports to Mr. Porter.

Minutes

The minutes from the June 26, 2014 meeting were approved as written.

New Business

DES Permit Review Workshops

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Mr. Porter explained that DES has recently started an ongoing series of weekly workshops to discuss the current permit application review process. Mr. Porter and Mr. Disco have attended the workshops. Mr. Porter displayed a copy of a flowchart documenting the current permit application review process with the various agencies and organizations involved.

Mr. Disco added that the process of putting together the flowchart exposed the complexity and a better awareness of the existing process. He stated that next week's discussion is expected to be on ways to improve the process.

Nashua - Independence Rowing Club

Mr. Friel introduced himself and the Independence Rowing Club (IRC). The IRC is located on the west bank of the Merrimack River, just downstream of the Taylors Falls and Veterans Memorial bridges. He gave a brief history of the club, which started in the mid 1970s. Mr. Friel explained he is on the board of directors and that the IRC is a 501 (c) (3) organization; its purpose is to foster rowing training and competition.

Mr. Friel explained that the IRC had constructed a boathouse in the 1980s, which was destroyed in the 1990s by arson. The IRC plans to build a boathouse on the existing foundation, to replace the storage trailers currently used on site to store its boats. The IRC is attempting to keep a youth program going, and has concerns that the current appearance of the site is a potential deterrent to youth participation.

Mr. Friel explained that the IRC has met with the Nashua Conservation Commission and the Nashua Building Department. They have a site plan from the 1970s, which includes parking as well as the boathouse footprint, and as-built plans drawn up by Hayner/Swanson in 2012.

Mr. Porter asked whether the IRC had approached DES yet. Members briefly described aspects of the Shoreland protection zone and recommended the IRC approach DES for more information.

Mr. Friel pointed out the levee which extends through most of the site, and explained that the Army Corps of Engineers, reviewing levees post-Katrina, requested trees be removed from the levee. Mr. Disco commented that the State's point of view is to provide natural protection and to leave the trees in place.

Mr. Porter asked about the parking lot on the site plan from the 1970s and encouraged Mr. Friel to look into using a permeable surface for it. Mr. Friel replied that the Nashua Conservation Commission had recommended a paved lot and a detention basin for treatment.

Mr. Friel pointed out the slope of the boathouse roof slopes to carry roof runoff westward – i.e. away from the river.

Mr. Porter asked about the public access easement along the property and pointed out that the site has a gate and a No Trespassing sign. Mr. Friel replied that the IRC has been concerned about unwelcome guests on the site. He pointed out that the easement is for access to the river front, but that the dock itself is not a public dock. Mr. Friel also stated that the gate is no longer locked. Members in general agreed that encouraging increased appropriate use of the site would naturally discourage unwelcome visitors.

Mr. Croteau asked what the boathouse would be used for; Mr. Friel replied that it would be just for boat storage.

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Mr. Friel stated he would follow up with DES to research any permitting requirements. Mr. Croteau suggested that the Nashua Conservation Commission would be a good resource to help with this as well.

Ms. Archambault took a copy of the 1970s site plan, the 2012 as-built plan, and the boathouse exterior plan for the files.

Members thanked Mr. Friel for coming to speak with them about the project.

List of recent and upcoming permit applications

Mr. Porter distributed copies of the result of his research on the DES OneStop Web site, summarizing recent permit applications within the corridor.

Hudson:

- no permits granted since 2009

- Sparkling River Phase IV comments submitted and response received in July

Mr. Porter distributed copies of the letter he received from Maynard and Paquette in response to LMRLAC's comments submitted regarding Sparkling River as discussed at the June 26 LMRLAC meeting. Among the comment responses is that the Heritage Trail is not considered part of the project.

Mr. Porter will draft a response to the letter and will forward it to the town of Hudson, requesting a Hudson representative to LMRLAC as part of the correspondence.

- Derry Road retail application

Mr. Porter commented that this application just barely touched the quarter-mile corridor and LMRLAC responded in July that it did not require further review of the project.

Litchfield:

- PSNH power line upgrade

Mr. Porter stated that the project was beyond the quarter-mile corridor (.31 miles). A copy of this permit was received directly from the applicant. Members agreed that they had no comment on the project and Mr. Porter will respond as such.

- 16 Colby Road storage building

Mr. Porter stated that this project was just beyond the corridor as well (.27 miles). Mr. Croteau commented that the applicant had appeared before the Litchfield Planning Board, which provided several comments. Mr. Disco asked about drainage on the site and Mr. Croteau replied that drainage is what the Planning Board requested the applicant look into. Members agreed they had no comment on this project; Mr. Porter will respond as such.

Merrimack:

- FW Webb proposed warehouse

Mr. Porter stated the project fell through and the sale was cancelled. Mr. Disco commented that there are other parties potentially looking into developing the site.

Nashua:

Active permitted projects:

- Beazer East

Mr. Porter summarized the ongoing work to contain and collect the creosote contamination on site.

- Nashua CSO

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- No new active applications
- Independence Rowing Club – pending

Mr. Disco asked about the status of the Renaissance project. Mr. Porter replied that he understands that work is underway on the levee. Members briefly discussed how different municipalities develop and focus on their waterfronts. Mr. Porter stated that Burlington, Vermont had spent seven million dollars developing its waterfront. Mr. Porter will look into the status of the Renaissance project.

Encouraging municipalities to work with LMRLAC

Mr. Porter highlighted how Merrimack has been providing information to LMRLAC on projects within the corridor. Mr. Croteau mentioned that Litchfield applications include a reference to LMRLAC as well. Mr. Porter asked Mr. Croteau and Mr. Disco to provide some written information on the process and references to LMRLAC in Litchfield and Merrimack, respectively.

Mr. Porter stated he will contact Sarah Marchant, Director of Community Development for Nashua, and that he also plans to contact officials in Hudson.

Mr. Porter circulated a copy of a photograph he had taken of a private residence in Hudson with a dock and what appeared to be significant waterfront modification. Mr. Porter had noted the GPS coordinates of the lot. When he asked DES about whether the site had a proper permit on file, he was told he needed a street address in order to research it.

Old Business

Appointment Status

Ms. Archambault, Mr. Croteau, and Mr. Disco all stated that their reappointments had been processed.

Checklist

Mr. Disco brought a hard copy of the LMRLAC checklist, to be used as a guide when reviewing permit applications. He provided it to Mr. Porter to scan in and then return. The LMRLAC checklist is also available on the NRPC Web site

http://www.nashuarpc.org/files/8113/9334/6261/Updated_DevlpmtRevChecklist.pdf

Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Members briefly discussed a rescheduled November or a combined November/December meeting. Mr. Disco commented that he is not available the first week of December; Mr. Porter will research possible meeting dates and will poll the membership for the best fit.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.

Next LMRLAC Meeting

The next LMRLAC meeting will be October 23, 2014, at 7:00 pm in the Music/Art/Media room at the Nashua Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
secretary