

**LMRLAC – December 11, 2014**

**LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**December 11, 2014**

**Members:**

✓ = present

**Current:**

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

**Associate Members:**

Mildred Mugica – Nashua

**Also in attendance:**

Michael McCluskey, DES  
Deborah Zarta Gier, GZA GeoEnvironmental  
Tracie Sales, DES  
Audrey LeBourdais

Meeting called to order at 7:06pm by Chairman Gene Porter. Secretary Archambault affirmed that a quorum (greater than 50% of membership) was present.

**Minutes**

The minutes from the October 23, 2014 meeting were approved with no changes.

**New Members**

Ms. Dupree introduced herself as the newest representative from Hudson. Mr. LeBourdais was also attending his first meeting as a member.

**Beazer Site Briefing**

Mr. McCluskey gave a presentation summarizing the background, current status, and plans for remediation on the Beazer East site. The site is in Nashua, just north of Greeley Park, and abuts the Merrimack River. The site was active until the mid-1980s, used primarily to treat railroad ties with creosote.

Mr. McCluskey briefly explained NAPLs, non-aqueous phase liquids; creosote falls into the dense NAPL category, which is heavier than water. Therefore, it does not mix with groundwater, but follows preferential paths in the soil (e.g. a more coarse soil layer).

Remediation initially consisted of creosote reclamation, using a pump and treat approach. This approach was replaced in the late 1990s by a sheetpile barrier wall along the shoreline. Over time, contaminants have seeped into the river either through leaks in the barrier wall, or as a sheen on top of the water when the groundwater backs up against the wall, then overtops it. Beazer has placed booms in the river to contain the contaminants, but the booms move when the river level changes (seasonally, due to weather, or because of level changes at the Boott dam) and from boat wakes.

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Recent developments with the project include a revised remedial action plan and recognition by Beazer that the wall is not performing as designed. The revised action plan includes:

- A proposed second wall at the top of the bank
- Stabilizing creosote trapped between the two walls by using an “in situ geochemical stabilization” – the chemical surrounds globules of creosote and encases it
- Stabilization of a smaller contaminated area in Greeley Park, beyond the reach of the current sheetpile barrier wall

In the meantime, Beazer is performing the following actions:

- Monitoring for creosote migration
- Daily inspections
- Booms
- Sumps behind the wall and recovery wells

Mr. McCluskey stated that the quarterly report Beazer submits to DES is accessible by the public. He stated that information on the project is available at the DES OneStop site (<http://des.nh.gov/onestop/index.htm>). He also stated that river users are encouraged to contact DES if they see issues at the site. DES has also requested that Beazer provide contact information for someone on-site. Mr. May suggested to Mr. McCluskey that Beazer post the contact information on a sign along the river.

The proposed timeline for the revised remediation action plan is as follows:

2013-2014: Beazer performing pre-design site inspection

2015: Beazer to complete design of remedial action plan and obtain permits

2015-2016: initiate implementation of remedial action plan

When asked about the ultimate goal for the site, Mr. McCluskey replied that the ultimate goal is to return all groundwater in the state to drinking water quality standards. A more immediate goal is to stop the flow of contaminants to the river. Mr. McCluskey is hopeful that this can be achieved in about 10 years.

Ms. Dupree asked how deep the bedrock is on the site. Mr. McCluskey replied that it is between 40 and 50 feet. He also commented that creosote has been detected at bedrock depth, which complicates the containment process.

Mr. Porter thanked Mr. McCluskey for coming in and briefing LMRLAC on the project status.

### **DES File Number 20141113-171 Alteration of Terrain Application and DES File Number 2014-03289 Shoreland Application PSNH Eagle Substation, Merrimack**

Ms. Zarta Gier introduced herself. She is an environmental engineer with GZA GeoEnvironmental, attending the meeting to provide an overview of the proposed expansion of the PSNH Eagle Substation. The substation is located off Star Drive in Merrimack.

Ms. Zarta Gier explained that ISO New England (a regional transmission organization) looks at regional service reliability, and recommends infrastructure changes and improvements. PSNH has several changes planned over the next 5 years or so.

On this site, PSNH is proposing to add a 345,000 volt transformer substation with new transmission and distribution lines. During the design process, the layout was refined and minimum separation distances reviewed to locate the components closer together in order to minimize the impact in the shoreland buffer, but a couple of structures are still within the shoreland buffer.

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Ms. Zarta Gier explained that fewer than 10 trees within the shoreland buffer have to be cut. Other trees may have to have their tops cut, but the trees themselves will remain. The ground cover in the forested part of the site will remain as well. She explained that most of the area where the new structures are going is a large cleared field.

Mr. Porter asked whether the structures will be visible from the river. Ms. Zarta Gier replied that they would not.

The Merrimack Planning Board has seen the proposed project but has not yet voted on it. Ms. Zarta Gier indicated the Merrimack Conservation Commission had reviewed the project and asked similar questions to those raised by LMRLAC.

Mr. Croteau asked whether there were eagles on the site. Ms. Zarta Gier indicated that none of the tall white pines on the site were cleared for the existing substation; the trees being proposed for removal on the current application are further from the river.

Mr. Disco asked whether the site would be treated with herbicides. Ms. Zarta Gier replied that herbicide treatment will occur as needed to keep plants from growing into the equipment. She speculated that the treatment might be required about every 8-10 years. Herbicide treatment is performed by a licensed operator.

Mr. Disco also asked about the site elevation and the 500-year flood level; the shoreland application indicates the 500-year flood is at 124 feet and the plan indicates the structures are at 121 feet. Ms. Zarta Gier stated she would check the data and correct it if it's incorrect.

Mr. May asked about rare species and habitat mitigation. Ms. Zarta Gier responded that the original project raised concerns about vesper sparrows and grasshopper sparrows. PSNH hired Audubon to do a two-year study; they found no evidence of either species on the site. However, there was American kestrel use of the site. PSNH made a donation to NH Fish and Game's Nongame Fund for habitat mitigation.

Members discussed the ATV trail which runs through the site. Ms. Zarta Gier stated that she has heard opinions that the trail use should be discouraged, and from others that it should remain open. LMRLAC members generally agreed that it was a recreational resource and raised concerns that if the existing trail were blocked that users would re-route closer to the river.

Members made the following recommendations for the comment letter responding to the application:

- LMRLAC discussed issues to the committee's satisfaction
- LMRLAC requests clarification on site elevation vs. the 500-year flood elevation
- LMRLAC encourages the applicant to not block the ATV trail which runs through the site, on the grounds that it provides an opportunity for recreation, and that blocking the current trail would lead to a trail closer to the river

Mr. Porter thanked Ms. Zarta Gier for coming in to brief the committee on the application.

### **Workshops**

Mr. Porter summarized recent workshops, most of which focused on the DES permit processes. This led to a discussion on LMRLAC members developing closer relationships with each of the member communities to learn about proposed projects during the review cycle with the communities, rather than when the application is submitted to DES.

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Mr. May asked whether LMRLAC had contact information for the Planning Board in each town, which led to a discussion on the appropriate contact(s) for each town. (Currently, LMRLAC includes a contact from the Planning Department or Community Development on minutes distribution.) Mr. Porter took the action to look into who to use for contacts in each town.

Mr. Porter reminded members to be familiar with RSA 91-a, commonly known as the Right-To-Know Law.

Mr. Porter also reminded members that there could be a need for a special meeting if needed to meet an application deadline.

Mr. Porter encouraged members to monitor agendas of upcoming Planning Board and Conservation Commission meetings to see whether any agenda items are relevant to LMRLAC, and to work individually on cultivating relationships.

### **DES File Number 20141003-154 Alteration of Terrain Application and DES File Number 2014-02812 Shoreland Application for 300 Webster Street, Hudson; “Autumn Circle”**

Mr. Porter stated that the shoreland permit was issued a month ago and the Alteration of Terrain was issued three days ago. The applicant declined to consider granting easements for either a trail or boat launch access. However, the developer did respond to LMRLAC’s submitted comments.

### **Manchester Waste Treatment Plant, NPDES Permit #NH0100447**

Mr. Porter reminded members that LMRLAC had submitted a comment requesting that each CSO event be tested, not just once a year. Members briefly discussed jurisdiction: the Manchester Waste Treatment Plant is beyond LMRLAC’s river corridor, but is upriver from it.

### **NRPC Regional Plan**

Mr. Porter mentioned that NRPC has a new regional plan out. He intends to attend the public hearing on it next week. One recommendation in the plan is that the Nashua River become a Designated River. Mr. Porter asked members what they thought about the Nashua River having its own LAC, or whether LMRLAC should pursue adding the Nashua as a tributary. Mr. May pointed out that the Designated River process is lengthy, and suggested a local committee might be a better approach for the Nashua River. In New Hampshire, the Nashua River runs through only Hollis and Nashua.

Mr. Disco and Mr. May requested that Mr. Porter include mention of the Souhegan River along with the Merrimack and Nashua Rivers in his comments on the regional plan. Mr. Porter agreed.

### **New Business**

Mr. Porter stated he had received an application packet for a development in Bedford, which is upriver of but outside the LMRLAC corridor. Mr. May suggested LMRLAC consider commenting on any projects downriver from the Amoskeag Dam in Manchester. Members also discussed the fact that there is a gap in Designated River coverage between the Upper Merrimack and the Lower Merrimack.

### **Draft LMRLAC briefing**

Mr. Porter gave a brief run-through of his updated draft LMRLAC briefing. The purpose of the briefing is to explain LMRLAC’s background and purpose to local boards and committees. Mr. Porter indicated he would e-mail it to the members for review and comment.

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Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.

**Next LMRLAC Meeting**

The next LMRLAC meeting will be Thursday, January 22, 2015, at 7:00 pm in the Music/Art/Media room at the Nashua Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Archambault  
secretary