

LMRLAC – January 26, 2017

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

January 26, 2017

Members:

- ✓ = present

Current:

- ✓ Gene Porter (Chair) – Nashua (current term expires Dec 2019)
- ✓ Nelson Disco (Vice Chair) – Merrimack (current term expires 08/28/17)
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) – Nashua (current term expires 08/12/17)
- ✓ Christine Dupree (Treasurer) – Hudson (current term expires 11/25/17)
- ✓ Michael Croteau – Litchfield (current term expires 08/12/17)
- ✓ Richard LeBourdais – Hudson (current term expires 11/06/17)
- ✓ Francis Murphy – Nashua (current term expires 02/18/19)

Pending Renewal:

- ✓ George May – Merrimack (current term expired 01/07/14)

Associate Members:

Mildred Mugica – Nashua

Also in attendance:

Rusty Russell, executive director, Merrimack River Watershed Council

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman Gene Porter in the Hunt Room of the Nashua Public Library, with a quorum present.

Minutes

The minutes of April 28, 2016 were approved with one clerical correction submitted at the meeting. The minutes of August 25, 2016 were approved as written.

Treasurer's Report

Chairman Porter explained that the LMRLAC bank account has been transferred from Wells Fargo to Nashua Bank. Chairman Porter and Treasurer Dupree have signature authority.

Merrimack River Watershed Council

Mr. Russell introduced himself. He has been the Executive Director of the Merrimack River Watershed Council (MRWC) since October 2016. Past positions include teaching law and working for the Conservation Law Foundation.

Chairman Porter summarized LMRLAC's mission for Mr. Russell's benefit, explaining that LMRLAC reviews projects within a quarter-mile of the Merrimack River, and promotes the importance of the Merrimack River to the community. Chairman Porter also introduced Mr. May as the current chairman of the Souhegan River LAC.

Old Business

Outreach Briefing

Chairman Porter stated he has briefed the Nashua Planning and Economic Development Committee, the Nashua Chamber of Commerce, and the Litchfield Planning Board in recent months. He found the groups receptive to the idea of adding trails along the river, but is unaware of any follow up actions.

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Local Updates - Nashua

Beazer East

Chairman Porter summarized the history of the property and the current project to treat and contain creosote on the site with a slurry wall to block creosote migration and sodium permanganate to encase it. He explained that work started in 2016 and has stopped for the winter. Chairman Porter hopes to be able to provide some sampling data at the next meeting.

Greeley Park Boat Ramp

Chairman Porter explained that the railroad has agreed, in writing, that the Hills Ferry Road crossing is a public one. The City of Nashua is now exploring funding options for improvements to the boat ramp area.

Residences at Riverfront Landing

Chairman Porter explained that phase 1 is permitted, but has been modified from two buildings to just one building. He said that the City is pursuing the potential for trails on the site.

Local Updates - Merrimack

PFOA Contamination

Mr. Disco gave a brief background on the situation, explaining that perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) has been found in the ground and in groundwater near the St. Gobain plant site. He said recent developments include that St. Gobain is providing for several Litchfield residents to receive public water from Pennichuck. LMRLAC plans to continue to monitor the situation.

Flatley Mixed-Use Project

Mr. Disco explained that the project is adjacent to the St. Gobain plant site. He said that the permits for development have been issued, but development has not yet started.

Local Updates - Litchfield

Mr. Croteau explained that the Litchfield Conservation Commission is putting together a subcommittee to look at access to the river and trails along the river; the first meeting is February 2. He also stated that the Litchfield Planning Board has suggested putting language about Merrimack River access into the Master Plan, which is currently being updated.

Local Updates - Hudson

Chairman Porter asked if either of the Hudson representatives had attended any recent Planning Board meetings. Mr. LeBourdais replied that he will plan to attend one. Chairman Porter highlighted the Hudson river bank violation which was identified in 2016. He explained that NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) contacted the property owner and that restoration has been satisfactory.

American Rivers Report

Chairman Porter reiterated his concern that some statements in the report were misleading. Mr. Russell asked what LMRLAC would like to happen from discussion about the report. Chairman Porter replied that he would like to see cooperation between LMRLAC and the MRWC, stating shared goals of cleaner water and development that is monitored and managed. Mr. Russell agreed that MRWC would like cooperation between the two organizations.

Mr. Russell stated that he had contacted American Rivers regarding the omission of the word “private” in the following statement in the American Rivers’ Web site’s copy of the report.

“An estimated 40 to 63 percent of the private forested land in the watershed is projected to be developed by 2030.”

The original press release had included the word. He stated that the Web site has now been

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corrected to match the press release. Chairman Porter expressed satisfaction at the change.

Chairman Porter will also discuss the possibility of generating a GIS map layer, showing the status of development in the corridor, at an upcoming meeting he is scheduling at the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC).

New Business

EPA Spill Response Planning Meeting

Chairman Porter stated that he was unable to attend the meeting. He will attempt to obtain information from the meeting and pass it along.

Annual Report

Chairman Porter handed out copies of the draft Annual Report for Nashua, and asked for volunteers to tailor the report for the other towns. Mr. Croteau volunteered for Litchfield, Ms. Dupree volunteered for Hudson, and Mr. May volunteered for Merrimack. Ms. Archambault took the action to send a list of projects reviewed and topics discussed for each of the member towns.

Mr. May requested that the Nashua report include a reference to the Nashua screening and disinfection facility, which captures and holds stormwater for later treatment at the wastewater treatment plant. This led to a discussion of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) and approaches to either reduce or eliminate CSO events.

Chairman Porter suggested members look for opportunities to influence municipalities to improve on their current storm water treatment status and members agreed. Chairman Porter also asked members to keep an eye out for news stories on this subject.

New Business

Master Plan Status

Chairman Porter handed out trails-related excerpts from the 2000 Nashua Master Plan. He asked members to review their town's Master Plan and to bring back excerpts or ideas on what LMRLAC can collectively recommend to promote the river, including trails along the river.

Outreach – River Access and Trails

Chairman Porter circulated copies of a recent Nashua Telegraph article on conservation parcels along the Nissitissit River in Brookline. Chairman Porter explained that he has approached the Nashua Conservation Commission and the Mayor of Nashua, and asked members to think about how their towns could be motivated to construct trails and to pursue land acquisition for same.

Chairman Porter handed out a draft map suggesting Heritage Trail extensions along the north bank of the Nashua River and along the west bank of the Merrimack River both north and south of the confluence.

The discussion continued on the difficulties of not only implementing, but maintaining trails. Members agreed that trail maintenance is a non-trivial problem.

The discussion also explored the definition of access and the forms it can take. For example, it means access along the river as well as access to the river. It also refers to visual access to and from the river.

Outreach – Project Notification

Chairman Porter commented that he feels LMRLAC is receiving appropriate notification of upcoming projects at the present time. He explained that he has been receiving plans for

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projects outside the corridor as well as within the corridor.

Membership

Mr. Disco will look into lining up another member from Merrimack. Mr. Croteau will follow up with a potential member in Litchfield. Mr. May plans to seek appointment renewal. Chairman Porter has renewed his membership for another 3-year term.

Corridor Management Plan Update Planning

Chairman Porter pointed out that the Corridor Management Plan is several years old and requested members think about the process of updating it. He will be meeting soon with the NRPC to discuss funding and staff support options for the update.

An action item for all members for the February meeting is to review the current Corridor Management Plan (available on the NRPC Web site: http://www.nashuarpc.org/files/1513/9455/5637/LMR_CorridorManagementPlan_ch1-5.pdf) and make note of what should be improved.

Other Business

- Mr. May has repeatedly contacted the Nashua Garden Club about decorating the Bridge Street bridge and has not so far received a response.
- Mr. May and Chairman Porter briefly summarized the Pawtucket Dam Crest Gate bladder project in Lowell for Mr. Russell. Chairman Porter explained that the Jackson Falls Dam in Nashua (visible from the Hunt Room) also has a Crest Gate bladder system.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16pm.

Next LMRLAC Meeting

The next LMRLAC meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, February 23, 2017, at 7:00 pm at the Nashua Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
Secretary