

# LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

January 26, 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:

None

Prior to the formal start of the meeting, Chairman Bob Robbins reported on the status of compiling the survey results. Bob indicated that the response rate was excellent; around 250 responses out of about 1600 surveys sent out. He highlighted some responses – that there was a mix of interests and concerns, and nearly 100 respondents had provided contact information to the LAC. Chairman Bob Robbins called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm in the Hunt Room of the Nashua Public Library. It was noted that a quorum was present.

### Minutes

December's minutes were approved with one correction to fix the date of the January 2006 meeting, correcting it from January 27 to January 26.

### Corridor Management Plan and Outreach

Newsletter: The committee discussed the possibility of starting an electronic newsletter. Many survey respondents provided e-mail addresses, giving LMRLAC a ready list of contacts for such things as meeting minutes, alerts on legislation, canoe trips, requests for water sampling volunteers, items of interest to those in the river corridor (for example, information on water level changes due to the Lowell dam), and so forth. The committee discussed whether it should be a periodic newsletter with stories, or a more informal, as-needed means of transferring information. George volunteered to coordinate the newsletter activity, and proposed putting something together by the end of February, to include a story about how the e-mail list came about. George also indicated he would use a blind carbon copy (BCC) approach to keep the list private.

Cynthia will put together a publicity release on the newsletter and submit it to the Telegraph, requesting that people interested in being added to the e-mail mailing list should contact LMRLAC via George's e-mail address or by writing to LMRLAC c/o NRPC.

It was mentioned that the newsletter should not include graphics or logos in consideration of people with dialup accounts, and should avoid the use of attachments.

Kath indicated the contact could be two-way – that people on the e-mail list could in turn e-mail LMRLAC with information they have about the river. There was concern about the potential for an overwhelming amount of e-mail, but speculation that we really wouldn't get a lot of active e-mailers back to the committee.

Bob asked that members submit e-mail addresses for people in the member towns who would be interested in the communication (committee members, selectmen, etc).

The committee was reminded that Danielle Fillis will attend the February LMRLAC meeting to discuss the status of the management plan and work plan, as the committee had discussed in December.

Bob informed the rest of the committee that he had contacted DES about the grant timeline to determine the possibility of an extension. He was informed that the effort must be complete by year's end and the final report must be in by 1/31/07.

### **Local Updates**

Hudson: Jim gave an update on the Green Meadows project. There was a workshop with the Hudson Planning Board the first week of January to discuss the process. The next planning workshop may take place in March, but Jim expressed doubts that this would take place. A master plan for the layout is currently being developed, and the expectation is that plans will come before the Planning Board on a site by site basis. There has been some discussion about multi-family housing on the parcel, but current zoning does not permit it.

Kath indicated that the concept stage is when LMRLAC should make its wishes known regarding issues such as river access, and suggested we ask the developer in to LMLRAC after the next planning workshop takes place. George indicated that, when contacting the developer, we should inform him that we will need to provide input to the plan. Kath added we should inform him that LMRLAC has a regulatory role to play in the development of the parcel. It was also mentioned that the plan will need to take the Shoreland Protection Act into consideration.

Bob indicated he had tried to contact the developer but had received no response. He will attempt to make contact again.

Jim indicated he will continue to keep an eye on this project as it progresses. He also indicated that the Hudson Planning Board is in favor of such things as walking trails, buffers, and preserving open space.

Litchfield: There was a meeting on January 9 on a senior housing project near the river. Bob will ask Glenn to give us an update, and will thank Joan McKibben for having us in the loop.

Nashua: Karen brought up the current issues in Nashua about land owned by the City in the southwest portion of the city (beyond the river's jurisdiction) that did not have conservation easement protection, and the proposed change for current use change tax in Nashua, from its current transfer of 100% into the city's Conservation Fund, to a proposed amount of 50%. This led to a general discussion about how different communities direct use change tax funds to Conservation Funds, and how those funds are used (primarily for land purchase).

Discussion also followed on conservation lands in general and uses thereon. One example given was of the Horse Hill Nature Preserve in Merrimack. Merrimack turned down LCHIP funds for that purchase so that the town could keep its options open on possible future use of the land. Further discussion followed on what determines the uses on lands such as wildlife preserves and conservation land. The committee then discussed conservation easements and methods for setting up easements – deed language, having a second party hold the easement. It was mentioned that town counsel should always review and comment on proposed conservation easements.

Bob asked how LMRLAC should follow up on the survey respondents who indicated a desire for conservation easements to protect land. The committee agreed that mention of conservation easements and mitigation should be incorporated into the corridor management plan.

George brought up the Shoreland Protection Act, and how that should be protecting the river. Bob indicated having a newsletter article on the Shoreland Protection Act would be a good idea, including the process for reporting a problem when it's seen. George indicated he gets responses from DES when he calls with violations along the Souhegan River. Kath indicated she would provide information on the current person to contact and a violation form. She also indicated that reports to DES often turn out not to be violations. It was also discussed that LMRLAC could be a point of contact for people to report possible violations. LMRLAC could then pass along the report to DES. This would put LMRLAC on the form instead of the individual reporting, providing the individual with privacy should that be a concern.

Kath mentioned that DES is looking to push enforcement of Shoreland Protection to the towns.

Merrimack: George indicated that the letter about Merrimack Village Dam went out. He said the letter was very well received. He also indicated that DES is pursuing another grant (Fish America) to remove the dam.

George also mentioned legislation. He showed the committee a list of bills being followed by NRPC; some of which LMRLAC may want to follow. He also had information from the NH Rivers Council with legislation of interest. George will send information to LMRLAC members on how to be added to the NHRC list.

George brought up the need to allow Bob to speak for the committee on issues where timing is critical (e.g. on responses to legislation). It was decided to poll the membership via e-mail on such matters and if anyone objects within a time frame, that individual should then respond. Such matters would be followed up with a vote at the next meeting.

George asked the committee whether we wanted to respond to HB1495 (proposing to increase the setback required for landfills located near rivers) with a letter to local legislators on the committee who conducted the hearing. George will provide the information to Bob. Bob will in turn forward to the rest of the committee and to Angie Vincent at the City of Nashua. George made the motion that LMRLAC send a letter indicating it supports HB1495 to move landfills further from rivers. Kath seconded, and the motion passed.

Bob asked if LMRLAC should have a list of legislators' e-mail addresses and to maintain that list. Kath indicated she would provide such a list to Bob. Kath indicated she would also send a copy of LMRLAC letterhead to Bob.

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 23, at 7:00pm in the Hunt Room at the Nashua Public Library.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Archambault  
secretary