

LMRLAC – October 26, 2017

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

October 26, 2017

Members:

- ✓ = present

Current:

- ✓ Gene Porter (Chair) – Nashua (current term expires Dec 2019)
- ✓ Nelson Disco (Vice Chair) – Merrimack (current term expired 08/28/17)
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) – Nashua (current term expired 08/12/17)
- ✓ Christine Dupree (Treasurer) – Hudson (current term expires 11/25/17)
- ✓ Chris Barrett – Nashua (current term expires 08/22/20)
- ✓ Michael Croteau – Litchfield (current term expired 08/12/17)
- Richard LeBourdais – Hudson (current term expires 11/06/17)
- ✓ George May – Merrimack (current term expires 06/14/20)
- ✓ Francis Murphy – Nashua (current term expires 02/18/19)

Associate Members:

Mildred Mugica – Nashua

Also in attendance:

John Boisvert, Pennichuck Water Works
David Cedarholm, Tighe & Bond
Adele Fiorillo, Normandeau Associates, Inc.

Meeting called to order at 7:31pm by Chairman Gene Porter in the Nashua Public Library Theater, with a quorum present.

Minutes

The minutes of the August 24, 2017 meeting were approved as written. Mr. Croteau abstained, having missed the August meeting.

New Business

Merrimack: Pennichuck Water Expansion Shoreland Application (File #2017-00449), Dredge and Fill Application (File #2017-00386), Shoreland Application (File # TBD)
Litchfield: Shoreland Application (File 2017-02197), Dredge and Fill Application (File #2017-02305)

The project is located in Merrimack and Litchfield, and involves installing a new intake raw water pipe in the Merrimack River and a finished water pipe from Merrimack to Litchfield.

Ms. Fiorillo spoke first, summarizing the need for further applications after the initial application review and comment at the February 2017 LMRLAC meeting. There have been engineering changes to the project design which have triggered the need for further review. She explained that the Merrimack Shoreland permit had already been issued prior to the need for the design changes, so a new Shoreland permit application is being submitted.

Mr. Cedarholm summarized the original proposed project and the changes. The original project had proposed directional drilling from the Merrimack side to minimize shoreland impact. However, further review showed a need for excessive temporary weights to prevent breakout, which became an impractical approach. *(Secretary's note: the February 2017 minutes which*

LMRLAC – October 26, 2017

refer to directional drilling from the Litchfield side are in error; the directional drilling had always been proposed from the western, i.e. Merrimack, side.)

The updated approach proposes an additional coffer dam to install the pipe portion which would have been installed by horizontal drilling. The coffer dam will hold the excavation open to allow for digging a trench, laying the pipe, and backfilling. Construction will occur 'in the wet'; dewatering is not necessary for this project.

The ballasted pipe will be floated into place and then sunk into the trench within the coffer dam area. The coffer dam area will be ten feet wide. Instead of a single continuous piece of pipe, the project now uses ductile iron pipe sections with a bell and spigot connection. This approach has a greater impact to the shoreland buffer.

Chairman Porter commented that horizontal drilling was considered best practice for river crossing pipe installations, and asked for further justification for the change in approach.

Mr. Cedarholm explained that there was insufficient sediment in the river bed above the bedrock to allow for horizontal drilling with a sufficiently small risk of breakout. There is enough sediment depth to excavate but not enough to horizontally drill successfully.

Chairman Porter then asked why the horizontal drilling approach was considered in the first place. Mr. Boisvert replied that it was best practice, but that further study of the site itself led to concerns.

Chairman Porter asked why there was such short notice for the updated approach. The response was that the need for the change had been determined no more than four weeks ago.

Additional impacts to the shoreland buffer with the coffer dam approach include the need for a pad to situate the crane which will dig the coffer dam. The crane will excavate from the bank; no equipment will be in the river. There will also be three additional trees removed because they are either in or near the coffer dam and pipe trench.

Ms. Fiorillo explained that a tree inventory was now needed for the Merrimack side of the project due to the increased impact in the shoreland buffer. The inventory and removal of three trees met the point threshold, so there is a proposed planting plan. The plan will use four- to six-foot stock with a mix of silver maple, red oak, black willow, and black birch.

Chairman Porter asked about the diameter of the pipes. The response was that the pipe sizes as proposed in February remain the same.

Chairman Porter asked about the economics of the change and whether there would be any cost savings. The response was that this approach might save one to three percent of the total cost, and the coffer dam approach opens up the project to more potential bidders.

Chairman Porter asked about mitigation. Ms. Fiorillo indicated that the tree planting plan is the extent of it.

This led to a brief discussion of the potential for a boat ramp south of the site. Mr. Boisvert stated the bank is fairly steep in the area, and also expressed concerns about water supply protection. Chairman Porter replied that the ramp could be sited downstream of the intake and pipe. Mr. Boisvert reiterated that the bank is fairly steep.

Chairman Porter asked about the plan for maintenance and inspections. Mr. Cedarholm explained that there will be a scour analysis and that the weights on the portion of the pipe

LMRLAC – October 26, 2017

which rests on the river bottom (part of the original application discussion in February 2017) are designed to prevent scour. Mr. Boisvert explained that there will be periodic inspections to check the integrity of the pipe and riverbed.

Chairman Porter explained his original intent was to comment that there was not sufficient justification for the change. As a result of the meeting discussion, Chairman Porter expressed his satisfaction with the expressed need for the change. Other LMRLAC members concurred with Chairman Porter's assessment.

The LAC thanked Ms. Fiorillo, Mr. Cedarholm, and Mr. Boisvert for coming in and explaining the changes.

See attached addendum for the comment letter submitted to DES for the project.

Nashua: Eversource utility pole work near the Nashua River

Chairman Porter explained the project falls under maintenance and upgrade of existing utilities. The project is within the Merrimack River quarter-mile corridor, but is not subject to review because of that characterization.

Litchfield: Prospective Car-Top Boat Launch

Chairman Porter explained he attended a hearing for the prospective launch in Litchfield. He stated abutters expressed some concerns, but that the project is moving forward. The site will include an access road, parking, and a car-top boat launch. The site is above Cromwell's Falls, so it does not provide access downriver for power boats, even if the site were to be expanded in the future.

Old Business

Nashua: Greeley Park Boat Ramp Improvement

Chairman Porter stated that Nashua has received grant funds for the project and is going out for bids.

Nashua: Beazer East

Chairman Porter stated that there was a site walk in September. He explained that the project is a year behind schedule. One setback is that quicksand was found on the site so fill was needed to neutralize the quicksand before the project could resume. Chairman Porter mentioned that there is less creosote showing up in the sampling wells.

Merrimack and Litchfield: PFOA Contamination

Chairman Porter explained that New Hampshire has agreed to adopt the Federal standards for PFOA contaminants in drinking water (70 parts per trillion advisory limit) and that the situation in Merrimack and Litchfield continues to develop.

Nashua: 131 Burke Street

Chairman Porter stated that the LMRLAC recommendation that the Nashua Conservation Commission receive an easement for a path along Salmon Brook was included in the application.

LMRLAC – October 26, 2017

Nashua: Nashua River Waterfront Initiative, Downtown Riverfront Development Plan

Chairman Porter has a hard copy of the report generated from the crowdsourcing exercise Nashua undertook this spring and summer. He indicated his review of the report seemed to indicate that many recommendations submitted by LMRLAC members had been incorporated into the report.

Other Business

Membership

Mr. Croteau informed the chair that he has sent in his reappointment paperwork to the Litchfield town administrator. Mr. Croteau also mentioned that there are new members on the Litchfield Conservation Commission who could be approached to join LMRLAC.

Meeting adjourned at 8:39pm.

Next LMRLAC Meeting

The next LMRLAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, December 14, at 7:00 pm at the Nashua Public Library. This will be the combined November/December meeting, if agenda items require a meeting prior to the end of the year.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
Secretary

LMRLAC – October 26, 2017
Lower Merrimack River Local Advisory
Committee (LMRLAC)
77 Concord Street
Nashua, NH 03064
27 October 2017



Mr. Eben Lewis, Wetlands Inspector, Southeast Region
NH DES, Wetlands Bureau

RE: Pennichuck Waterworks Water Main river crossing; #2017-00386

Greetings,

On October 26 a quorum of the LMARLAC formally reviewed the revised application for a permit to install a new water main across the Merrimack River.

As you know, the revision consists of a major change in the previously proposed and approved construction method on the western end of the intended crossing. The LAC was initially concerned that the proposed shift from horizontal direction drilling (HDD, the “best practice”) to cofferdam entrenchment might needlessly disrupt the wetlands and shorelands buffer. However, the applicant clearly explained the extent to which the shallow depth of the underlying bedrock had been found to render the HDD approach inadvisable due to the high risk of drilling fluid contamination of the river despite efforts to suppress such a threat with temporary concrete pads.

On the basis of the foregoing as well as the planned replanting of the disturbed etland/shoreland on the Merrimack side in mitigation, the LMRLAC offers no objections to permitting this project, which is particularly important to the residents of Litchfield whose private wells have been contaminated by PFOA.

Sincerely,
Gene Porter
Gene Porter
Chair, LMRLAC