

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:

- ✓ Steve Couture, DES Rivers Coordinator
- ✓ Minda Henderson, NRPC planner
- ✓ Millie Mugica, corridor resident

Vice Chair Kath Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm in the meeting area in the east wing downstairs in the Nashua public library. Kath indicated that Bob would be unable to attend the meeting, and that Cynthia had mentioned at the last meeting that she would be out of town. Kath also mentioned that she had spoken with Will Jewett about the meeting, and that Will had informed her that he would be stepping down from the committee. Members expressed their regrets that Will would no longer be participating and signed a card.

Kath introduced Minda Henderson, an environmental planner at NRPC who will be writing the corridor management plan. Kath also introduced Steve Couture, DES Rivers Coordinator. Members in turn introduced themselves to Steve and Minda.

Annual Report

Kath handed around copies of the 2006 Annual Report that Glenn had drafted and reminded members that a 2005 annual report that she had written had been circulated via e-mail the previous week. Members briefly discussed what format to use for the annual report and how and when it should be distributed to the towns. It was agreed to keep the chronological format for the 2006 report and to find out information from the member towns for the 2007 report. Reports would have to go to each town per the towns' schedules for compiling annual reports. George and Kath volunteered to get information on annual report submissions – both timing and format – for their respective communities (Merrimack and Nashua) for 2007. Making a version of the annual report in a press release format was also discussed. George made the motion to accept the 2005 and 2006 annual reports; the motion passed. The 2005 and 2006 annual reports will be submitted to NRPC for posting on the Web site.

Minda mentioned that NRPC is in the process of redesigning its Web site and any feedback or suggestions would be welcome.

Corridor Management Plan

Minda introduced herself and handed around copies of the draft of Chapter 2 that she had put together, along with a table highlighting several discussion items. Minda started with the outline that had been reviewed by LMRLAC. Minda also discussed her intended approach for the plan,

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to have the Goals and Objectives framed around the major issues. She also distributed a chart categorized by topic area (e.g. Corridor Management, Water Quality, etc.) with her newly proposed objectives highlighted.

Members provided several comments on the Goals and Objectives in Minda's draft, summarized as follows:

- Under the Topic Area of Water Quality and the proposed new objective referring to maintaining and enhancing the Class B water quality standard
 - Look at whether the wording can be tightened
 - add a reference to the Shoreland Protection Act (SPA), RSA 483
 - mentioning of continued water quality testing, including mention of trying to standardize the collection as much as possible so the data can be used in the Environmental Monitoring Database (EMD) for assessment purposes under the provisions of the Clean Water Act
 - recommending removal of Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) into the river
 - promote a lessening of the nutrient load entering the river / upgrading of waste treatment plants to reduce harmful effects
 - conducting a survey of possible illicit discharges to eliminate them / using the water quality monitoring data to identify 'hot spots' such as illegal hookups, cross-connections
 - promote more accessibility to the water quality testing information
- Under the Topic Area of Water Quantity and the proposed new objective referring to maintaining flow conditions
 - Much of this section of the river is dam-controlled, by the dam in Lowell. Some discussion followed in general on how change in water flow can affect the river habitat
 - Recommending that the notification from the Boott Dam personnel on upcoming changes in water level continue and become institutionalized
 - There was also a discussion item about checking the dam's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license for the its conditions relative to required flow levels
- Under the Topic Area of Historic Resources
 - It was pointed out that this section of the Merrimack River is part of the Middlesex Canal, and that the locks may be covered as New Hampshire historic sites.
- Under the Topic Area of Scenic Quality
 - Change the existing objective to "protect the significant views of the River and from the River" i.e. preserve the aesthetic experience while on the river
- Under the Topic Area of Public Access
 - Discussion of how "Increase public access to the river for both active and passive recreation" could be at cross purposes with some of the other stated goals and objectives. There was discussion of how public access points should be implemented at an appropriate scale as well as appropriate to the particular stretch of the river. Modification to the wording was suggested along the lines of "in consideration of the context of preservation of character" or "while still meeting the overall management goal to preserve its characteristics and integrity". Any development along the river should be sensitive to an environmentally-friendly design and should use Low Impact Development (LID) methods
- Under the Topic Area of Conservation

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- Discussion about how the railroad corridor serves as a barrier on the west bank, and how if further development of the railroad takes place that the river be taken into consideration. If the railroad corridor becomes abandoned, recommend that a trail be considered in its place. There was also a brief discussion about whether there may be historic significance to the railroad.
- General Comments
 - Add restoration language – Steve Couture will be able to supply to Minda a good example of this in the Upper Merrimack River's Management Plan, which will be made public roughly the middle of February. Restoration was discussed in the context of water quality, edge of bank, wetlands, river bank vegetation, floodplain forest
 - Steve Couture indicated that references to "avoid" in the objectives would be more factual if changed to "avoid or minimize" (e.g. avoid alterations, avoid any degradation...)
 - Recommending each town to go through the Prime Wetland designation process
 - Recommending that the LAC and the towns be better coordinated in order for the LAC to be informed about projects in the river corridor
 - Recommending coordination with communities upriver and downriver (discussion was primarily in the context of CSOs) and at the Federal level (e.g. the Army Corps of Engineers). In conjunction with this, Steve Couture pointed out that there is a proposed change to the SPA legislation regarding coordination between the towns and the LAC, changing a reference from 'designated river' to 'designated river corridor'

After discussing the goals and objectives, members discussed the process and the desired outcome. Minda will write about each of the topic areas in more detail. She plans to work backward from the Goals, and with LAC members adding specific local perspective on the issues, to use the issues, goals, and objectives to start forming action items. This will lead to the ideal 'wish list'.

A discussion of the structure and format of the plan followed. Minda indicated she would work on Existing Conditions simultaneously with working on the topic areas. She indicated that much of the useful information in the old corridor management plan can be represented in map form. Minda indicated she believed the plan would require 12-15 maps, and that the needed maps would fall out of the plan as it develops. Members discussed the need for one large presentation map with some basic features that could be used in circumstances where electronic projection is not feasible.

Steve Couture mentioned that there should be a reference to the Wildlife Action Plan.

Minda indicated she would have a draft of the Introduction available for review next month. Minda also indicated her goal is to have the plan completed by June 30. While that is not a hard deadline, she wants to have the completed plan in place before other projects (for example, the trails inventory) gets underway.

Members reviewed the plan development process with Minda. Minda offered to have a draft available two weeks prior to a meeting, with members to submit comments back to her no later than one week prior. Minda would then have a final draft available for the meeting, with a list of issues or conflicting ideas to be resolved at the meeting. Minda asked to be present at the meetings in order to keep the review process on track. It was decided that the February meeting would use the 7-8pm hour as a work session, and have Minda attend the 8-9pm hour to work out questions and issues with her.

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Minda will e-mail the chapter to Kath and Kath will forward to the committee. One or two hard copies of the chapter under review will be available at the meeting for those members without access to e-mail. Those members will have to make their review comments during the meeting.

Kath offered to send an e-mail to members to remind them of the plan review process.

Chapters may be sent to the member towns at natural groupings.

Local Updates

Hudson Riverplace: Kath indicated Jim Barnes had told her that copies of the plan are available at the Hudson Town Hall. Kath will contact Bob Robbins to see if he can get a copy of the sections of the plan relevant to the LAC so that the LAC may review it. Kath asked Steve Couture whether he had seen a Dredge and Fill filed for the project yet. Steve indicated that he had not yet seen one but would check again. Karen mentioned that the Telegraph mentioned that the Hudson Planning Board is scheduled to discuss the plan being of regional impact at its meeting on February 7.

Millie brought up a recent example of an apparent pending development near the river. Kath reviewed the process – that a plan would come before the LAC if it included alteration of the bank or required a state Alteration of Terrain application and was within the quarter-mile corridor.

Kath suggested that she could submit a letter to the editor describing who we are, what we do, indicating that the LAC review projects with a focus on the river.

Meeting adjourned at 9pm. Next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 22 downstairs in the East Wing of the Nashua Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
secretary