

Members:

- ✓ = present

Current:

- ✓ Bob Robbins (Chair) – Hudson
Kathryn Nelson (Vice Chair) -- Nashua
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) -- Nashua
- ✓ David Scaer – Hudson

Pending Renewal:

- ✓ Jim Barnes (Treasurer) – Hudson
Glenn McKibben – Litchfield
- ✓ George May - Merrimack

Associate Members:

Mildred Mugica – Nashua

Also in attendance:

- Geoff Daly, corridor resident and potential member, Nashua
- Michael Redding, prospective member, Merrimack
- Laura Games, Siting and Permitting Specialist, PSNH
- Jack Holland, Engineering Manager, AI Engineers, Inc.

The meeting was called to order at 7:07pm in the East wing downstairs at the Nashua Public Library by Chairman Bob Robbins.

Proposed PSNH Eagle and Thornton Substations, Merrimack

Members welcomed Laura Games of PSNH and Jack Holland of AI Engineers, who were in attendance to informally present the proposed project.

Mr. Holland gave a brief overview of the project and the site. The site is just to the north of the Anheuser-Busch plant in Merrimack, between Route 3A and the Merrimack River. The proposal is to construct two substations, a distribution substation and a transmission substation. The distribution substation would have access by a gravel road from a private road that is associated with a commercial development to the west of the site. The distribution substation construction has two wetland impacts. The transmission substation would be located between the railroad and the river, and would have access via Star Drive. Mr. Holland indicated that there is an at-grade crossing proposed over the railroad. The access will be used after construction is complete for monthly maintenance, and will be gated. Mr. Holland also stated that they have spoken to the Merrimack Planning Board, the Merrimack Conservation Commission, and to DES, and intends to submit the application in July or August. The project requires a Dredge and Fill wetlands permit, an Alteration of Terrain permit, and a Comprehensive Shoreland permit. Mr. Holland indicated the total disturbance for alteration of terrain will be between 300,000-400,000 square feet.

Ms. Games summarized the substation construction. The material on the ground at the substations will be mostly crushed stone; some of the piers are concrete. Bob asked what's under the crushed stone; Ms. Games replied a couple of feet of gravel. She also indicated the technical borings indicate mostly sandy soil on the site.

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George asked what the difference is between a transmission and a distribution substation. Ms. Games replied that a transmission station steps up the voltage to send it, sometimes at a distance, to a distribution station, and a distribution station steps down the voltage to distribute it. She also indicated the distribution station is needed as current capacity in the area is around 95 percent.

Bob asked where the power lines come from. Geoff indicated they come from across the river. Ms. Games indicated she believes there is one new line proposed. She also pointed out an existing substation that PSNH owns and Anheuser-Busch currently uses.

Members observed that the proposed fence line around the transmission substation encroaches into the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (CSPA) 250' buffer.

Ms. Games indicated that PSNH does not plan to change the buffer, except to perform cutting for the existing power line right of way. She also indicated the site has no sewer, no water, and does have onsite propane. David asked about the height of the poles on the site. Mr. Holland replied that the poles will be about 60 feet tall.

Michael asked if there are any transformers, or other devices with oil in them. Ms. Games replied that she believes there will be switches with sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆) in them. Jim asked about vehicle storage and was told that there will be an emergency generator onsite, but no vehicles.

Geoff asked about drainage on the site. Mr. Holland replied that there is no enclosed drainage proposed, just natural runoff. There may be some grading, especially between the transmission substation access road and the railroad. Mr. Holland indicated that post-construction discharge will equal current discharge, but the stormwater plan is not developed yet. Jim asked what size storm would be used for the design. Mr. Holland replied it would be the 10 year for drainage and 50 year for storage.

Ms. Games pointed out that the proposed work is within the 500-year floodplain but outside the 100-year floodplain. She stated that the National Electric Safety Code does not allow building within the 100-year floodplain.

Michael pointed out a well that Anheuser-Busch has on its site and asked whether there were any concerns about the substation location relative to that. It appeared from the plan that the well site is about 250' from the transmission substation.

Bob asked whether there will be any change to plant life in the detention area. Mr. Holland replied there was none planned. Jim asked about the characteristics of the wetland near the distribution station. Mr. Holland replied that the wetland is isolated and has no outlet.

The discussion turned to potential mitigation options. Mr. Holland and Ms. Games asked for suggestions. George commented that it doesn't have to be onsite. Michael summarized the types of mitigation options, and mentioned a fee if the other options are exhausted. Michael also suggested Minda Shaheen, and NRPC in general, would be a resource for potential projects.

George asked about the possibility of boat access on the site. Geoff mentioned the bank is quite steep in that area.

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Ms. Games mentioned the possibility of a Heritage Trail section. She stated that, between the PSNH site, the Anheuser-Busch plant site and Merrimack town land to the south of that, there could be about 2.5 miles of trail.

Mr. Holland pointed out there is a 36" drainage pipe that extends from the turnpike along the southerly end of the property and discharges to the river. Michael asked what the outlet looks like and whether there was opportunity for improvement there. Mr. Holland replied that any change to the pipe would probably require agreement from NH DOT.

Geoff suggested Mr. Holland and Ms. Games look at the drainage setup at the end of Townsend West in Nashua, off Amherst Street, for an example of a well functioning drainage system.

Michael brought up a project in Merrimack on Currier Road, which is off Baboosic Lake Road west of the police station. He summarized the project as a 1960s subdivision that has a closed drain system proposed and that the Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee had asked they consider better treatment in the area. George suggested the applicant ask the Merrimack Conservation Commission about the Currier Road project as a possible mitigation option.

Geoff asked again about the 250' CSPA incursion, and whether the substation could be moved or the fence pulled back. Mr. Holland mentioned the need for access around the substation, and believes the substation location is due to line configuration. He said it may also be due to a need for a particular distance from the railroad. He also stated that DES made the same comment.

Jim asked about the construction schedule. Mr. Holland replied that he expects construction to start in spring 2011.

George asked the purpose of the project. Ms. Games replied it's intended to increase the efficiency and reliability of the service in the area.

Members thanked Mr. Holland and Ms. Games for coming to the meeting and discussing the proposed project.

Bob said that Kath would review the minutes and would draft a letter to DES. Bob summarized LMRLAC's comments as follows:

- LMRLAC requests PSNH consider moving the fence line out of the CSPA 250' area.
- LMRLAC would like to be in contact regarding proposed mitigation for the project. Suggestions include the Heritage Trail section and the Currier Road project.
- LMRLAC would like to see the stormwater calculations when they are available, and encourage the applicant to utilize infiltration practices to decrease stormwater runoff.

Minutes

The minutes of June 24, 2010 were approved with changes circulated July 10.

Boott Hydropower Dam

Bob asked members whether LMRLAC would like to send a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in support of the proposed crest gate dam installation at the Boott Hydropower Dam in Lowell. He stated that he got the sense that the LAC was generally in favor of the proposed project. He also mentioned that Kath had told him the Merrimack River Watershed Council is going to be sending a letter of support.

George recommended that the letter indicate LMRLAC is in favor of the project, but that FERC should consider the concerns of the residents. He further suggested that Enel should be

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required to demonstrate to FERC that environmental concerns take equal weight with business concerns. George pointed out that the river belongs to all residents and that Enel gets to use it to generate power.

Bob suggested their primary concern should be to consider the communities all along the river. George replied that LMRLAC should indicate in the letter that it speaks for the member communities. He stated that he feels the letter should state LMRLAC believes the bladder system would be an improvement, but that FERC should pay attention to the concerns of the Pawtucketville residents. George further stated he feels the benefits of the project outweigh the concerns.

Bob asked for a motion that Kath draft a letter to FERC and distribute it to members for review. George so moved, Jim seconded, and the motion passed.

Boott Hydropower Pond Level Lowering for Maintenance

George mentioned his disappointment when he saw the e-mail notification from Enel that the river was going to be lowered for river debris removal work the week of July 4. This led to a brief discussion about the timing of the effort. Some members suggested that lowering the river in the summer, during high power demand times, seems counter to business interests to sell power at peak demand. George stated he was glad to later learn that Enel decided against doing the work at this time. David agreed, and commented he feels the river level in general has been up (considering the lack of rain) and that Enel has been considerate.

Possible RFPs for Grants

Bob mentioned an e-mail Minda had sent recently requesting LMRLAC discuss ideas for grant funding for her to pursue. The discussion that followed resulted in the following suggestions:

- Michael suggested a possible tie-in to the statewide Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Study. Since the Merrimack is defined as being impaired for bacteria, there could be a study of combined sewer overflows (CSOs), stormwater runoff, or other items along those lines, that might contribute to, or be a way to reduce, the measured levels in the Merrimack.
- Bob suggested a study of regional recreation areas that could get improvements and then be available to service the whole area. He mentioned river access is more of a challenge on the west bank due to the railroad, and pointed out that Merrill Park in Hudson provides an opportunity for river access but is currently unimproved.
- Geoff suggested looking into acquiring one or more continuous flow meters and installing them at spots on the river, similar to the height gauge. Data from the meters could be used to monitor flow all along the river.
- Bob suggested boat dock specifications, or a study or survey of dock criteria or guidelines – considering both aesthetics and impact on the river. Jim suggested perhaps a model site plan regulation for river boat docks.
- Michael suggested an illicit discharge study.
- George suggested a study on how the water testing could be upgraded, looking into program and funding sources, and types of testing to be added and recommended timing of same.
- Bob suggested a study to perform fish autopsies to sample concentration of substances (e.g. metals) in fish in the Merrimack River. George suggested that bugs could also be tested.
- Geoff suggested a study of potential development along the corridor based on current buildout plans.
- Bob suggested a wildlife study along the corridor.

Bob asked David to explain the wildlife program at the Nashua Country Club. David explained that the country club has a cooperative sanctuary program that respects the needs of golf and

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creates wildlife habitat at the same time. The program reduces water consumption, and letting areas grow naturally reduces the chemical need in those areas, which saves money.

Members briefly discussed how having an existing list of potential mitigation projects would have been useful to show to Ms. Games and Mr. Holland.

Water Sampling

George brought up the high e. coli level that had been measured at the Tyngsborough bridge in June and that had been discussed at the June meeting. He stated that the most recent test (on Tuesday, July 20) showed a level of 8 colonies per 100 ml, down from about 1000 in the June test. He mentioned again the construction along the river bank at the bridge, and speculated that the high level in June was due to that.

George mentioned that the Merrimack in general has been clean as far as testing results indicate. He stated that Tuesday's sampling did measure an e. coli level of over 1000 at Goff's Falls. He had no upriver sample to compare to. Karen mentioned that there had been a thunderstorm in the Manchester area Monday night. George stated he believes there is a wastewater treatment plant discharge, perhaps from Londonderry, near that sample site. Geoff pointed out that the retention pond work is currently underway at the airport.

Statewide TMDL Study

Michael reminded members of the statewide TMDL Study draft report that had been discussed at the June meeting, and indicated that comments are due Friday, July 23. He summarized portions of the report that discussed proposed e. coli levels for the Merrimack River, and asked members if some proposed levels should be lower for swimming areas along the river. Michael stated the draft report proposes TMDL levels of 126 counts for the geometric mean, and 406 for a single grab sample. He mentioned that the single sample level for a designated beach is 88 and asked whether LMRLAC should recommend the 88 level for portions of the Merrimack that are known to be used as swimming areas. Members discussed concerns about attempting to identify specific swimming areas along the river. Bob suggested that Michael approach DES to get their feedback on that possibility.

David asked what the purpose of the proposed levels would be. Michael replied that the purpose is to get better rules in place and to try to get funding to fix those areas where the measured TMDL exceeds the proposed levels.

Other Business

Bob asked if there was a master e-mail list available for distributing information of interest to people along the river, such as meeting announcements, workshops, and so forth. Karen indicated that there is the standard LMRLAC draft minutes distribution list of members and town and state contacts, but that she does not currently have a master e-mail list of other people who have expressed an interest in LMRLAC or in the river.

Geoff briefly mentioned an EPA e-mail requesting feedback from small businesses and municipalities on a proposal to strengthen the national stormwater program, focusing on discharges from developed sites.

Meeting adjourned 8:51pm.

Next meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, August 26, at 7pm at the Nashua Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
secretary