

LMRLAC – July 23, 2015

LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

July 23, 2015

Members:

- ✓ = present

Current:

- ✓ Gene Porter (Chair) – Nashua (current term expires 12/18/16)
- ✓ Nelson Disco (Vice Chair) – Merrimack (current term expires 08/28/17)
- ✓ Karen Archambault (Secretary) – Nashua (current term expires 08/12/17)
- ✓ Michael Croteau (Treasurer) – Litchfield (current term expires 08/12/17)
- Christine Dupree – Hudson (current term expires 11/25/17)
- ✓ Richard LeBourdais – Hudson (current term expires 11/06/17)

Pending Renewal:

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

Associate Members:

Mildred Mugica – Nashua

Also in attendance:

Gregg Gordon
Marnie Gordon

Meeting called to order at 7:24pm by Chairman Gene Porter in the Hunt Room at the Nashua Public Library. Secretary Archambault confirmed there was a quorum present (greater than 50% of members in attendance).

Minutes

The minutes from the April 23, 2015 meeting were approved with no further changes.

LAC Purpose

Chairman Porter summarized the main tasks of the LAC: to review proposed projects within the Merrimack River corridor in Merrimack, Litchfield, Nashua, and Hudson; and to increase public awareness of and public involvement in issues affecting the river.

Membership

Chairman Porter urged current members to consider adding additional members. LAC representation can be up to three members from each member town.

Recent Activities/Local Updates

Chairman Porter summarized his recent activities. He has completed a boat tour of the Nashua River, and has proposed a Merrimack River boat tour with members who have not recently been on the river.

Chairman Porter stated that the FY16 Nashua City Budget includes a Waterways Manager position. He plans to invite the new Waterways Manager to a LMRLAC meeting once he or she is hired. Mr. LeBourdais suggested that the new Waterways Manager could be approached to join LMRLAC.

Mr. Croteau stated that Litchfield is in the process of updating its Master Plan, and is looking at adding a section about the Merrimack River. Ms. Archambault suggested they consider the

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Lower Merrimack River Corridor Management Plan as a resource for that section, if they have not already done so.

Mr. Disco commented that the former Merrimack Hilton has been purchased by a group of developers. He stated the site is adjacent to Naticook Brook, that the previous development was without setbacks, but that redevelopment on the site will be subject to setbacks from Naticook Brook.

Chairman Porter asked about the progress at the Flatley site; Mr. Disco replied that the project development will be in phases and that progress is currently slow. Chairman Porter suggested a public access easement on the site. Mr. May commented that building height should be a primary concern to preserve the aesthetics of the view from the river.

Financial Report

Mr. Croteau will contact the bank to find out what he needs to do so he can receive statements and cut checks.

Designated River Signs

Chairman Porter stated he has been told the signs are in process.

Lowell: Pawtucket Dam Crest Gate Bladder Project

Chairman Porter explained that he has a request in to Enel about the construction schedule to find out when the river level will be lowered and for how long. He has not yet received a response.

Proposed Northeast Energy Direct (NED) Pipeline Project

Chairman Porter stated that he and Mr. May had been researching the project and construction techniques for such a project, and had submitted comments through NRPC based on that research. Chairman Porter also stated that, according to a recent press release, the pipe has been downsized from 36" to 30".

Mr. Disco stated that the Merrimack Town Council submitted comments to FERC this week and included the LMRLAC comments in their submittal.

Mr. Croteau indicated that the Litchfield Board of Selectmen sent a letter stating Litchfield does not want the pipeline in Litchfield. He stated the Planning Board has the same stance.

Chairman Porter requested that members notify him if any town comments are specific to the river crossing itself.

Mr. LeBourdais asked where the proposed pipeline crossing is relative to the Pennichuck water intake from the Merrimack. Chairman Porter replied that the intake is about a mile south of the proposed pipeline crossing.

Chairman Porter stated that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) comment period is now open until late August (August 31). He presented an outline of comments which he proposes LMRLAC submit to FERC during the comment period. The comment outline included

- LMRLAC's interest is limited to the river crossing itself
- LMRLAC acknowledges the importance of Kinder Morgan's decision to bore under the river as a best practice
- In view of the environmental sensitivity of the corridor, LMRLAC asks that additional steps be taken to

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- Ensure the river crossing section of the pipeline can be rapidly and automatically isolated if a problem develops
- Consider installing the river crossing section of the pipeline in a ‘sleeve’ such that repairs could be effected with minimal disruption
- In view of the unstable and meandering and seasonally scoured nature of the Merrimack’s river bed
 - Locate entry and exit points well beyond the usual setback distance used for more stable river crossings
 - Increase the overburden requirements above the bore hole by a suitable percentage to further limit the chance of the pipeline being dislodged by exceptional flows
- In view of the disruption of recreational activity across the state incident to the NED project, Kinder Morgan should be asked to contribute funds to state recreational activities in mitigation, some of which should be earmarked for improved public access to the Lower Merrimack River

Members discussed the proposed comments and voted in favor of submittal. Chairman Porter stated he would put the comments into letter form. He stated he would not be in town for the Nashua meeting on July 30 and asked for a member to present the comment letter at one of the public comment meetings. Mr. May volunteered to submit the letter at a Merrimack meeting. *(Post-meeting, Chairman Porter contacted members to indicate that he intends to research the comment issues further and to submit the comment letter electronically before the end of the comment period.)*

Mr. LeBourdais brought up the subject of earthquakes in New England and asked about possible earthquake effects on the pipeline. Chairman Porter replied that he would look into how the proposed pipeline would plan to mitigate for potential seismic activity.

Meeting Speakers

Chairman Porter asked members for suggestions on speakers to invite to upcoming meetings. He suggested inviting members from a local kayaking club to speak. Other members suggested the Independence Rowing Club and Renaissance Downtowns. Chairman Porter will approach James Vayo about discussing the project’s status at an upcoming meeting. Chairman Porter also commented that he himself is still investigating the possibility of having some form of a dock on the Renaissance Downtowns development site.

Other Business

Chairman Porter reminded members that the Lower Merrimack River Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is available on the NRPC Web site (at http://www.nashuarpc.org/files/1513/9455/5637/LMR_CorridorManagementPlan_ch1-5.pdf) and suggested members consider whether an update is due. Mr. May suggested that LMRLAC ask NRPC to put a CMP update on its priority list. Chairman Porter will look into that.

Mr. May distributed copies of a flyer for New Hampshire Rivers Council River Runner™ training workshops. The Souhegan River LAC is sponsoring a workshop on August 12 in Milford. The workshop provides training on how to recognize invasive species such as Didymo (“rock snot”), Eurasian Milfoil, and others. Pre-registration is required at www.nhrivers.org.

Mr. Gordon suggested a kiosk (e.g. at a boat launch) would be a way for LMRLAC to reach out to the public. He suggested that it would make a good Eagle Scout project as well.

Chairman Porter suggested LMRLAC put together a poster for public events and outreach.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

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Next LMRLAC Meeting

The next LMRLAC meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, August 27, 2015, at 7:00 pm in the Music/Art/Media room at the Nashua Public Library if agenda items warrant an August meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Archambault
secretary