

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting of April 12, 2007

Present: Walter Fowler, John Goebel, Bob Healy, Jodie LaPoint, Debbie McCarthy, Beth Timson and Rosetta Radtke (Durham Parks and Recreation), Gail Abrams (Piedmont Wildlife Center)

- (1) Healy said that the NHCCAC would have a table at the Duke Earth Day celebration, Friday, April 20, 11 am-4 pm at the Bryan Center Plaza on the Duke campus. He asked for volunteers to help him for part of this period. Free parking is available. Contact healy@duke.edu
- (2) Orange County is starting a revision of its comprehensive plan. There is an initial meeting April 17 at 7 pm at the Southern Human Services Center. Healy will check with Rich Shaw to see if we should be represented—Walter Fowler may be able to attend if necessary.
- (3) Beth Timson and senior planner Rosetta Radtke of Durham Parks and Recreation attended to brief the committee on Chapel Hill Road Park and Leigh Farm Park.

Chapel Hill Road Park—Timson said that after meetings of with the Corps and Durham storm water management, agreement was reached to re-locate the soccer field parallel to the school football field, with a fence (!) providing a barrier for stray bullets from hunting on the Corps land. The field is still in wetlands,* but not in the ecologically important area where it was first proposed. The plan will go to Development Review Board in 3-4 weeks.

Leigh Farm Park—Timson reported that the first step in park development will be to spend \$300 K to stabilize the main house and slave cabin. A new development is the possibility that the Piedmont Wildlife Center, a wildlife rehabilitation and release group, might relocate to Leigh Farm and occupy four of the non-historical structures. Gail Abrams, Executive Director of the Piedmont Wildlife Center said they now occupy office space in Carrboro and have a rehabilitation reception facility and “hospital” in Parkwood. They could centralize these functions at Leigh Farm. An advantage to PWC is that they could release rehabilitated animals and birds directly to the Corps land. They would have wildlife interns on the site 24 hours a day, which would help in protection of the historic site. PWC use of the site would not preclude other uses that have been suggested, including Frisbee golf, interpretation of 19th and 20th century farming, and demonstration gardens. If the PWC board approves the idea, the organization might want to put some pre-release bird cages on the property this summer, with 3-4 interns in residence.

The NHCCAC agreed that if this idea goes forward, we should walk the site with PWC, Parks and Recreation and other interested parties to investigate the on-ground possibilities of such a use.

Timson said that the developer of the office park next to Leigh Farm has a large pile of earth that he would (to save hauling costs) like to use to build a berm between his development and the park. Healy suggested that a quid pro quo might be an offer by the developer to allow use of his parking facilities for overflow parking for Leigh Farm during events (there should be little coincidence in time between use of the offices and use of Leigh Farm).

(4) Radtke* reported on activities of a group working on environmental education facilities in the Triangle. She showed recently prepared maps of existing environmental ed. centers in the region and the schools they served. Healy noted that the Hollow Rock Planning Group would no doubt consider ideas related to environmental education, and said that he would put her in touch with Charlie Welch, the NHCCAC representative to the Hollow Rock group.

(5) Sharon LaPoint, a graduate of the Nicholas School who works for TNC's state office, attended the meeting. She was suggested by Marin Magat as a possible replacement for her. Sharon is not an Orange County landowner (Marin's slot on the committee) but is welcome to participate in our activities. She indicated a particular interest in trail design and siting.

* Corrections submitted by Beth Timson:

The proposed athletic field in Old CH Rd. Park is NOT in a wetlands area; it is in a flood plain area.

The report on the EE centers in the Triangle area came from Gail Abrams, not DPR Planner Rosetta Radtke.