

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting of February 12, 2009

(Present: Edeburn, Fowler, Healy, Harrison, Ken, Goebel, Welch, Schuster, Ryke Longest and Daniel Ribeira [Duke Environmental Law Clinic])

(1) Turkey Farm Road Bridge Update. Construction to start next week. Duke Power has already relocated the utility line. It appears that our written agreement with NCDOT never appeared in the specifications given to the contractor. We will be monitoring the construction process very closely, particularly after rain events. In theory, we could go to Superior Court in Orange County to stop construction if damage to the stream or mussels is apparent. We hope to avoid this and will encourage Orange County NCDOT office to communicate our agreement to the contractor, then hold him to its terms.

(2) 15-501 and Mt. Moriah Area. Now that the automobile dealership is no longer up for rezoning, we have the chance to take a new look at this important area. Healy said it will be important for us to encourage the primary landowner, and perhaps some adjoining, to come in with a single plan for the entire area, rather than a lot-by-lot approach. He noted, however, that the several lots right along 15-501 already have commercial zoning, which gives them considerable value. Jerry Emison had done some planning for the larger area about 6 years ago with some Duke students. We may be able to get the document from Hildegard Ryals or Mike Waldroup.

(3) Jordan Lake pool measurement. Healy will write a letter to Durham County Commissioners asking for an independent survey of the pool level, paid for by government, rather than acceptance of a survey by an interested developer. He will write on behalf of the Friends of New Hope Creek, but make reference to the fact that many of the Friends have worked with the NHCCAC. Harrison expressed concern that any new survey might change the pool line on the Chapel Hill side. It was noted that the entire upper Cape Fear is a critical watershed.

(4) Hollow Rock. The HR planning group had a recent meeting at which is discussed comments received at the public session last month. Mara Beth Carr, from Orange County government, is drawing up a budget for stage 1 development. Costs might be split 4 ways among the local jurisdictions.

(5) Schuster is working to lay out new trails in Durham Co. on east side of Pickett Rd., connecting Solterra to the Hollow Rock trail system. Dale McKeel submitted useful comments via Greg on a number of Durham trails and bike/ped routes that would connect to the Hollow Rock system. (See below) Schuster said Orange County stormwater staff identified areas prone to flooding and erosion. Healy repeated his suggestion that we seek federal stimulus money for trails/bikeways/sidewalks, emphasizing youth employment, small contractor involvement, and energy conservation.

Next meeting, Thursday, March 12 5 pm Recreation Center in Garrett Farms development.

Comments and suggestions on Bike/Ped plan by Dale McKeel. Dale emphasizes that these are personal opinions and ideas (particularly the next to last paragraph) and do not represent positions of the Durham government.

The 1999 Orange County Bicycle Plan calls for 4-foot paved shoulders on Erwin and Whitfield Roads in the vicinity of Hollow Rock Park. The plan set a goal of providing these facilities by the year 2020 (see page 18 of plan). To my knowledge, none of the wide shoulders called for in the plan have been provided. Here's a link:

http://www.co.orange.nc.us/planning/PDFs/transportation/BIKEPLAN_99.pdf
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The 2004 Chapel Hill Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan shows bicycle corridor improvements on Erwin Road and Sunrise Drive in the vicinity of Hollow Rock Park. These improvements could be paved shoulders, bicycle lanes, or wide outside lanes, to be determined based on a policy adopted by the Town Council. Here's a link to the bicycle map and more information:

<http://www.ci.chapel-hill.nc.us/common/modules/documentcenter2/documentview.asp?DID=780>
<<http://www.ci.chapel-hill.nc.us/common/modules/documentcenter2/documentview.asp?DID=780>>

<http://www.ci.chapel-hill.nc.us/index.asp?NID=141>
<<http://www.ci.chapel-hill.nc.us/index.asp?NID=141>>

The 2006 Durham (City-County) Bicycle Transportation Plan calls for bicycle lanes on Pickett Road (including the unpaved portion) as well as paved shoulders on Erwin, Mt. Sinai, and Kerley. Curiously, the plan does not call for facilities on Randolph Road. Both bicycle lanes and paved shoulders provide an extra four feet (typically) of riding surface, the main difference between the two is the way they are striped and marked. Here's a link to the map and plan:

http://www.durhamnc.gov/departments/works/pdf/bikeplan_Chapter_4_Map_4_5.pdf

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http://www.durhamnc.gov/departments/works/pdf/bikeplan_Chapter_4_Map_4_5.pdf>

http://www.durhamnc.gov/departments/works/bike_plan.cfm
<http://www.durhamnc.gov/departments/works/bike_plan.cfm>

Also note that the local governments adopt "local priority lists" that are submitted to NCDOT for the Transportation Improvement Program (basically the state CIP for transportation projects). The recently adopted local priority lists for Durham County and Chapel Hill listed bicycle lanes on Erwin Road as a local priority. The list can be viewed at the following site:

http://www.dhcmppo.org/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=41
<http://www.dhcmppo.org/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=41>

Finally, I would suggest that if the committee recommends that Pickett Road be closed and/or remain unpaved, consideration be given to providing a 10-12 foot paved multi-use path within the Pickett Road right-of-way. I know there is much opposition to introducing impervious surface, but would state that (1) the roadway is already impervious, (2) pavement would help to promote the use of bicycles (road bikes avoid unpaved streets), (3) unpaved roads generate sediment runoff, and (4) unpaved roads require more maintenance. If the recommendation is to leave Pickett as it is, I would suggest that the committee recommend that the Durham Bicycle Plan be amended to show bike lanes on Randolph. It's not completely analogous, but compare the paved and unpaved sections of Bolin Creek in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. In the Chapel Hill section there is a paved trail and most folks stick to the pavement, so vegetation adjacent to the creek is maintained. On the Carrboro section, there is no defined path so people walk all over, and vegetation is lacking adjacent to the creek in many areas. Are we being better stewards on the unpaved or paved section?

I would also note that there is a general need for sidewalks along some sections of Erwin, Randolph, Pickett, and other roads in the vicinity of the park. However, some of these areas are outside the city limits. It is generally difficult to build sidewalks outside the city limits because neither NCDOT nor NC counties are in the business of building or maintaining sidewalks. Sidewalks in NC, even along state roads, are almost always maintained by municipalities.