

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee—Minutes of Meeting of June 11, 2009 (Present: Fowler, Goebel, Harrison, Healy, Kent, Jacobs, Shaw, Schuster, Welch, Peter Denton and Julian Culton [Trinity School], Rod Florence [Geo. Stanizale Planning])

- (1) Hollow Rock Park. Jacobs said that an intergovernmental work group met June 10, at which she and Jane Korest presented the final draft of the park plan. The elected officials are concerned about (a) selecting a management entity for the park and developing a management plan and (b) budgeting for construction of facilities. The latter could involve a great deal of volunteer labor. The park's current plan recommends strengthening ties with Forest View Elementary School and with Trinity School. Jacobs also said that local governments are still moving toward closing of Pickett Road, despite the bureaucratic difficulties. The old Hollow Rock Store building is under contract to Preservation Durham through Jeff Fischer. Julian Culton expressed a concern that the park's parking lot could become a teenage drinking hangout.
- (2) Playing field and track at Trinity School. This is currently seeking a variance from the zoning board of appeals in Orange County. Healy said there was a need for the NHCCAC to get timely notification of New Hope development proposals in Orange County and Chapel Hill, as we have in Durham. The plan for the field, which has been revised several times in an attempt to move it away from the floodplain, now calls for intrusion of part of the running track into about 10,000 sq. ft. of the stream buffer. We noted that the Orange County buffer is considerably wider than that required in Durham. There was considerable discussion of whether impact on the stream corridor could be minimized by making the track surface water permeable and perhaps restoring vegetation that had been removed by mass grading several years ago.

The NHCCAC concluded that the quasi-judicial nature of the request for a variance from the watershed setback requirement means that it wouldn't make much sense to take a position "for" or "against" the proposal. However, the committee offered the following as a comment on the matter:

"The New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee is charged, among other things, with safeguarding the quality of the water of New Hope Creek and its tributaries. We believe that the proposal by Trinity School to locate a small portion of its running track within the watershed buffer is best judged (given the hardship involved in siting the track elsewhere and the School's detailed consideration of all possible alternatives) not by the strict application of the setback requirement but by the actual effects of the track on water flowing into New Hope Creek. The appropriate standard should be that the quality of

water flowing toward the creek after construction of the track be as good or better than the current flow. This could be achieved by the design of the track itself and/or by site improvements that would improve water quality."

Healy communicated this resolution by letter to Peter Denton, Trinity School headmaster, on June 11.

- (3) Schuster said he has flagged the Hollow Rock trail eastward from Pickett Road. Certain segments of the informal trail have be realigned to prevent erosion. Several bridges will be needed. Healy suggested some geological interpretation near Erwin Road to explain the sudden break between the Carolina Slate Belt and the Triassic Basin. A few days later, Schuster led a hike, attended by Welch, Fowler and Healy, on the trail. It appears that a great deal of the work is simple clearing that could be done by volunteers. Bridges might be built with the wood from fallen large trees, especially cedars.

Next meeting Thursday, July 9 at 5 pm at Garrett Farms Recreation Center.