

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee—Minutes of Meeting of Dec. 8, 2005

Present: John Goebel (new DOST rep.), Charlie Welch, Bill Hutchins, Bill Olive, Hildegard Ryals, Bob Healy

Goebel has led Durham Academy students in “adopting” the trail in Sandy Creek Park. He raised issue of 4-WD trucks using the Park destructively during wet weather, spinning around in muddy places. He would like to see the Dept. of Parks and Recreation put up a fence to keep them out. He also notes that Parks and Rec. has not put up a sign recognizing DA’s trail adoption, despite their many months of work. The area is rich in wildlife and has potential for birding. [Healy later repeated this idea to the management of the Wild Bird Center in Chapel Hill, which sponsors monthly birding trips. They were quite interested in the fact that there is permanent water in the Park]. We need to think more about Sandy Creek Park, and encourage better management and more signage there.

Goebel said that the Durham Open Space and Trails Commission (DOST) has asked city and county officials for a briefing on relevance to trails and open space of the monies from the newly passed bond issue. Healy said he would try to go to December 15 DOST meeting to underline the interest of NHCCAC in more trail building in the New Hope Corridor, particularly a Hollow Rock access point and trail. Olive asked whether private funds were likely to be added to the bond funds.

The Committee then discussed webmistress Sally Robertson’s report, and her request for more information from us. Ryals has a number of excellent photographs, which she will bring to Sally. The following NHCCAC members agreed to provide update information to Sally on specific Components of the New Hope Plan:

Component 1 NC54 to Chapel Hill Rd., incl. Leigh Farm—Ryals
Component 3 Sandy Creek--Goebel
Component 4 15/501 to Erwin Rd.—Welch
Component 7 Mud Creek—Welch
Component 8 Cornwallis/Erwin Natural Area—will ask Judd Edeburn
Component 10 Orange County Wildlife Corridors—Hutchins
Draft text for a Jordan Lake to NC 54 page—Healy

Volunteers are sought from the NHCCAC membership for working on other components.

The Committee discussed the poor condition of the “trail” behind New Hope Commons. Healy had led a student field trip there in late October and found it all but impassible. The Committee also discussed the ongoing construction at the Indigo Corners development, on the corner across Mt. Moriah from New Hope Commons. There has been significant tree removal, but as yet no mass grading. We are wondering what the ultimate contours of the site will be.

Ryals said she had received from Durham Planning a proposal for a housing development on Randolph Road. Healy said he had not been sent a copy, despite the Planning Department's promise to do so.

The Committee then discussed Leigh Farm. We need to keep up with what Parks and Recreation may be planning for the site. Healy said that at an early summer meeting, Parks and Recreation referred to Leigh Farm in terms of a cultural park. Tom Miller is very interested in Leigh Farm and we need to get Curtis Booker involved again. Curtis has many family artifacts that he would be willing to put on display.

Healy will get a copy of the NHCCAC 10 year report to Bill Olive, for use in his history.

Ryals suggested we approach the NC Department of Transportation to see if they could improve walkability of the shoulder of Erwin Road between Forest View School and New Hope Creek, increasing access for the students, who have become very involved with the Creek.

Next meeting, Thurs. Jan 12, 5 pm Forest View Elementary School.

Prepared by Bob Healy. Additions and corrections welcome.