

Notes on the July 13, 2006 Meeting of the New Hope Corridor Advisory Committee (NHCCAC) Present: Wade Penny, John Kent, Jud Edeburn, Rich Shaw, Bob Healy, Floyd Bridgwater, Charlie Welch, Joe Blackley

The items discussed were

1. Introduction of new NHCCAC member Floyd Bridgwater. He will be the new liason with the Orange County Recreation and Parks Advisory Council, replacing Tom Sievert. Floyd is a retired US Forest Service researcher.

2. Shaw reported the completion of the acquisition of the Penny land along New Hope Creek between Erwin Rd. and 15-501. The land will be held by Orange County, with the State of North Carolina retaining a conservation easement that allows for trails only. The adjoining Penny residence tract should be under conservation easement by the end of this year. All told, about 115 acres in the area south and east of Hollow Rock will be protected in fee or by easement. The four relevant jurisdictions are working on an interlocal agreement that will create a process to determine what public use facilities will be built in the area. Orange County has already signed the agreement. Current plans are to develop a small (10-12 vehicles) parking area on the West side of Pickett Road to allow access to trails once they are developed. There are two small meadow areas outside the streamside buffer that allow for very limited development. A newspaper article follows.

The Chapel Hill News has a weekly "Roses and Raspberries" editorial. The longest item in its recent edition was this:

Roses to Wade and Carolyn Penny, who forwent -- and yes, according to Mr. Webster, that is the past tense of "forgo" -- a handsome sum for their land in order to make it available for conservation.

The Pennys' 22-acre tract on the Orange-Durham border could have brought \$450,000 or more on the open market. They sold it instead for \$123,000 so it could be added to adjacent tracts as part of a permanently preserved open space along New Hope Creek.

"It is very important that we save in these more urban areas as much as we can of the natural beauty and the ecological systems that make it so special," Wade Penny said.

The Pennys' land will be added to a network of nearby tracts to form a preserve of more than 100 acres in preservation around the creek.

The preserve is the work of private individuals such as the Pennys, citizens' groups, the Triangle Land Conservancy and the local governments of Orange and Durham counties and the cities of Chapel Hill and Durham.

It's a complicated arrangement that has required a great deal of cooperation and teamwork among the various partners. That collaborative nature is one of its virtues, and we all are the beneficiaries.

2. Leigh Farm Planning Meeting

There is to be another planning/design meeting on July 18, 2006 from 7:00 – 9:00 pm at the Durham Recreation and Parks headquarters in downtown Durham.

There was a discussion of the Curtis Booker proposal to make the park a working farm and minimize development for recreation. The pros and cons of a Frisbee golf course were discussed. It was noted that the State of North Carolina's Cultural Heritage Division will certainly take an interest in development plans, both because of the site's historic character and by virtue of its financial contribution to its acquisition. NHCCAC members are encouraged to attend the July 18 planning meeting.

3. Turkey Farm Bridge Replacement

Edeburn reported that right of way acquisition is to begin in February, 2007 and construction is to begin about one year later although there may be a delay of a few months due to inadequate funds. There is no design at present but the NHCCAC intends to actively engage DOT to have input into the design. Among NHCCAC concerns were a) that there will be "scuppers" from the bridge designed so that runoff that would drain directly into the creek but would be intercepted in a catchment structure, b) that there be dry land passage for wildlife under the bridge, and c) that there be adequate control of sedimentation during construction. Kent noted that Jane Lasserma is the president of the neighborhood association in the area. The bridge adjoins TLC's Johnson Mill Preserve, and TLC will certainly want to have input on the bridge design.

It was suggested that NHCCAC members try to come up with a few photos of good and bad (e.g. piles of large rip rap) bridge practice on previous new bridges on the New Hope. Edeburn will invite DOT's Mike Mills to attend our next meeting to answer questions about the proposed bridge replacement.

4. Trammell Crow proposal to develop the Garrett Farm property

The property under consideration is adjacent to the Alexan Farms development across from Mark Jacobson Toyota on the opposite side of Garrett Rd. The proposal is for the development of the same piece of property that Centex Development attempted to have approved. The current proposal by Trammell Crow Residential (developer of Alexan Farms) is for 325 rental units (100 more than previously proposed by Centex).

According to Welch, the site plan seems better than that proposed by Centex. The NHCCAC concern is the potential impact of construction on the New Hope bottomlands and trail access connecting Sandy Creek with the New Hope. A June 12 meeting called by the developer did not elicit community opposition, but concerns about traffic impacts had mobilized large numbers of neighbors against the Centex proposal last year. Welch will monitor what the community is doing.

5. Land For Tomorrow Bond Issue

Kent introduced discussion of the proposed legislation to bring a bond issue before the public during the next election to gain commitment for \$200 million over each of the

ensuing five years for a total of \$ 1 billion to purchase land for natural and historic conservation and farmland protection.

There is a web site at <http://www.landfortomorrow.org/>. Orange County and Chapel Hill have adopted resolutions supporting the legislation. However, it was noted that there didn't seem to be support for the proposal in this session by the Governor or legislative leaders from either major political party. However bills for the bond issue have been introduced in both the General Assembly and Senate, and there seems to be considerable support among individual legislators with House Bill 2827 having 75 of 120 House members as sponsors and Senate Bill 1907 having 22 of 50 state senators.

For copies of the bills check the following web site:

<http://www.ncleg.net/homePage.pl>

Next NHCCAC meeting will be Thursday, August 10 at 5 pm at Forest View Elementary School.