

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting of August 10, 2006

Present: Joe Blackley, Walter Fowler, John Kent, Ed Harrison, Bob Healy, Hildegard Ryals, B.B. Olive, Wendy Jacobs

- (1) Blackley is making progress with the New Hope history. He has contacted the local office of the Corps of Engineers and believes they will be quite helpful.
- (2) Healy reported on the Leigh Farm planning meeting held last month at Durham Parks and Recreation. Consultant Heather Fearnbach presented detailed estimates of costs of stabilizing and rehabilitating the many structures on the site. Her estimates were based on maintaining historical accuracy in as many cases as possible, but not making a perfect restoration to the 1850s condition. In any case, some of the buildings, such as the tobacco barn, are much more recent in origin. The Parks and Rec. meeting then briefly discussed alternative uses of the site as a park. Fearnbach noted that attendance at living historical farms and other historic recreations has been declining around the country in recent years, perhaps because people have so many alternative forms of recreation.

The NHCCAC discussed some ideas for uses of Leigh Farm Park. Ryals said that a planning charette for Leigh Farm was done by NCSU students 8-10 years ago. She will try to find the slides from it. Harrison mentioned use of the Park as a meeting site for various organizations—a farm park in Ohio does it very successfully. Healy mentioned his recent visit to Copia—the Center for Wine, Food and the Arts in Napa, California. He raised the possibility of using part of Leigh Farm Park as a place where local organic and alternative farmers could have demonstration plots and perhaps sell their products. Ryals thought that inner city children could be involved with such an activity, and that a place could be set aside for older adults to can food and preserves. She said that Jean Anderson (Durham local historian) and Brenda Brodie (community gardens) would be excellent people to involve in a planning session that NHCCAC might help organize. Healy raised the possibility of moving other old farm buildings to the site, as has been famously done in Skansen Park in Stockholm.

Olive asked whether, given the proximity of Leigh Farm to I-40, would it cater only to Durham residents or also to long distance travelers. What will be potential traffic? Will there be improvements to exits, which Harrison says are now very inadequate?

- (3) Harrison brought up the fact that the proposed Farrington Rd. townhouses, which came before the Durham Planning Commission last week, (project was deferred for a month) would potentially involve building a major new sewer line diagonally across Leigh Farm, despite the fact that the project is on the other side of I-40. Questions were raised as to whether the city or state may hold use restrictive easements that would prevent such construction on the parkland. NHCCAC must monitor this project.

- (4) Trammell Crow proposal for Garrett property (on Garrett Rd. just north of Oak Creek, across from Mark Jacobson Toyota)--Jacobs said that the North Garrett Road neighborhood association has been meeting regularly with Trammell Crow, but the company then held an open citizen meeting without notifying the association. The NHCCAC needs to identify its interest in this project, particularly with respect to runoff and to any potential trail that would connect with the Sandy Creek trail. It was noted that there are existing farm roads on the property. Also, if the tract were developed, would there be public access to the unbuildable bottomlands, or would they belong to the homeowner association?

The following communication from Charlie Welch, dated 27 July, is relevant:

I have looked at on-line maps of the proposed trails within the New Hope/Sandy Creek/Mud Creek system, and see nothing marked as passing through that property. That is with the exception of the proposed trail to run along Mud Creek, which I assume, but am not sure, would be included on that property -- I was surprised that the property as posted on the Durham GIS tax parcel map, is large and extends well to the west of Mud Creek, coming close to New Hope Creek. I don't know if TCR would purchase that full piece -- they certainly were not talking of developing west of Mud Creek in the first meeting. Most, if not all, of that is flood plain anyway.

There was talk of the Sandy Creek connector trail running through the property, but I do not see that marked as such anywhere. Are there any other maps other than those on the New Hope site, and the DOST info?

- (5) The Committee continued its discussion of the scheduled replacement of the highway bridge at Turkey Farm Road. Kent said he has learned that DOT will start acquiring land in Fall 2007. Judd Edeburn had tried unsuccessfully to contact DOT District Engineer Mike Mills to come to our next meeting to discuss our concerns and ideas. It was suggested that Mills may be too high in the DOT hierarchy for this purpose and we should just ask him to send someone who works for him. We hope Judd will continue to press DOT to meet with us. Kevin Brice or someone else from Triangle Land Conservancy could also usefully attend such a meeting. When we do meet, Rich Shaw should bring some of his always-excellent small area maps. In the meantime, John Kent will circulate 4 photos he has taken of the current bridge and its crossing of the creek.

The following communication from John Kent, provided before the meeting and discussed in part at it, is relevant:

1. An off-site detour should be used during construction, employing existing roads, rather than building a temporary bridge.
2. Replacement bridge should have no bents (piers) in the creek. Such bents catch floating debris and cause excessive scouring of the creek channel under the bridge and downstream.
3. Limited clearing and grubbing of tree roots
4. High Quality Waters (HQW) erosion and sediment control measures should be followed

5. Name, phone number, etc., of the NCDOT person responsible for project environmental monitoring should be provided
6. Replacement bridge should increase opening underneath (especially the distance from end bent to end bent) over that of the existing bridge, for channel flow and wildlife passage and to reduce channel scouring under the bridge and downstream
7. Replacement bridge should have no scuppers draining directly into the creek, if roadway safety permits
8. All existing bridge material to be removed such that none of it goes into the creek unless such material is presently in the creek in which case impact of any removal to be minimized
9. Possibility of bike lanes, thought that would increase the width of the bridge.
10. Commitments by NCDOT to the above to be in writing

To these comments, Rich Shaw added the following, in an email of Aug. 10:

One of the good suggestions from John and Judd is that the new bridge span be long enough to accommodate the passage of wildlife under the bridge. I suggest we also note that people in that community might also want to walk under that bridge, given that we have TLC's Johnston Mill Preserve (with footpaths) on the west side of the road and the Lockridge community common area (with footpaths) on the east side. Duke Forest (with footpaths) is also adjacent to the Lockridge, to the east. So let's suggest that the new bridge also accommodate that pedestrian trail opportunity.

In discussing this suggestion, the Committee thought the idea had considerable merit, but needed input from Duke Forest and TLC, as any trail would tie in with their trail systems and have impacts on their land management.

**Next NHCCAC Meeting Thurs, September
14 at 5 pm Forest View Elementary**