

# **New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee—Minutes of Meeting May 10, 2007**

**(Present: Kent, Goebel, Jacobs, Welch, Olive, Harrison, Beth Timson, Jane Korest, Greg Schuster, Healy, Fowler)**

- (1) Wendy Jacobs passed out new maps showing public and private land along the New Hope. Several committee members had heard rumors of a large new development on Duke (Forest?) land near 751 and Erwin Rd. Timson checked out one proposal and found it was an addition to Duke Primate Center—probably not a problem. Healy will ask Edeburn if that is the only development foreseeable on Duke lands in the New Hope area..

(2) Jacobs described the very successful New Hope educational day at Forest View Elementary in April. Hundreds of students were bussed to educational stations at various points along the creek. Nicholas School students, John Goebel and Charlie Welch were among the adult participants. Boy Scout Troop 461 wants to “adopt” the New Hope for Eagle Scout projects and has already collected tons of trash from Erwin Road. Orange County has put up new no-dumping signs in the Hollow Rock area. Last Tuesday, the Durham Planning Commission changed the plan designation of the newly acquired Hollow Rock lands on the Durham side to Open Space/Recreation to reflect its future intended use. With regard to the slow pace of planning for Hollow Rock, it was mentioned that Orange County has had two major planning projects that are occupying staff and are delaying the process, including the first meeting of the joint area planning committee. Korest said she is talking with Orange County staff about preparatory measures.

Orange County was awarded a state planning grant for an archeological survey of the Hollow Rock area, which was matched by OC and Durham, for a total fund of \$15,000. A consultant will be hired to do this work. If significant evidence of Native American occupation is found, we may be able to promote additional archeological research. Healy mentioned the work of Duke Ph.D. student Miguel Swartz, who is using “witness trees” in 18<sup>th</sup> century deeds to try to measure Native American land clearing in pre-European settlement times (old pines are evidence of prior clearing).

Kent asked whether NCDOT must do an archeological survey prior to a bridge replacement (e.g. Turkey Farm bridge). Korest responded in the affirmative, but said that the survey is usually limited to the immediate area of the land disturbance.

- (2) Status of Chapel Hill Road Park. Timson said the plan is final and does not require DRB approval. The soccer field is now no longer on the cedar area, but is partially in the floodplain (permitted by zoning for such a use). The Corps has allowed this, subject to a fence being constructed to protect field users from hunting on Corps lands. Healy asked Timson to take particular care in writing construction contracts and supervising contractors so that heavy machinery does not, in the process of construction, intrude onto New Hope lands not in the developed part of the park. There was a brief discussion of efforts by Parks and Recreation to promote joint school-park development.

Timson said that the future use of the area around the former Easterling house has not been determined, but it could be used for some form of environmental education. She suggested that the NHCCAC try to get the whole NH floodplain into a special zoning overlay so as to give it added legal protection.

- (3) Condition of trails. Greg Schuster is regularly inspecting Durham trails and reports that some graffiti had been spray painted on trees in the Githens School loop trail. Some may be gang logos. Greg has been trying to start a trail stewards group and has been removing graffiti from trees. Goebel noted issues of damaging public use in Sandy Creek Park. The committee discussed the possibility of putting up bollards or gates to keep out ATVs and regulate after hours use.
- (4) Harrison described a series of parcels owned by the Town of Chapel Hill in the Dry Creek area and passed out a useful map. This is the watershed extending west from New Hope Commons. Chapel Hill is talking about purchase of additional land along Dry Creek, including higher areas that could be used for a trail. The committee discussed the possibility of a long distance trail that could connect New Hope Commons with Eastowne and go over or under (box culvert) I-40. It could be part of a hiking/biking trail that would extend from Chapel Hill to Duke University. The connection over or under I-40 could happen when/if I-40 is to be widened or as part of the construction (long on the books but unfunded) to build a North Circulator Road connecting New Hope Commons with Eastowne. Healy asked Harrison to have Chapel Hill Parks and Greenways Commission appoint one of their members to fill an open slot on the NHCCAC.
- (5) Leigh Farm. Timson said that Piedmont Wildlife Center will be a tenant in two of the modern buildings at the site and will move its offices and wildlife rehabilitation center there. A parking area is being built. Palladium (the office complex next door) will build a series of hills with excess fill dirt between it and Leigh Farm. It was suggested that we promote the creation of a Friends of Leigh Farm Park organization. Healy said that he had talked with two organic farmers in Durham to tell them of the possibility of including demonstration farm plots in the Leigh Farm plan and to encourage them to take part in the planning process.
- (6) Healy observed that our webmistress, Sally Robertson, continues to add interesting and useful material to the web site ([www.newhopecreek.org](http://www.newhopecreek.org)) Among the latest additions is an account of a hike along a significant portion of the corridor. He encourages committee members to continue to send photos, maps and other materials to Sally.

Goebel asked that we put on the agenda for our June meeting a discussion of what the NHCCAC would like to see at Hollow Rock so that Charlie Welch can have more ideas to use in his future participation in the Hollow Rock Planning Committee.

**Next meeting, Thursday, June 14, 5 pm  
Forest View Elementary School**