

## **NEW HOPE CREEK CORRIDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MARCH 13, 2008 MEETING**

**(Present: Berndt, Goebel, Fowler, Harrison, Healy, Longest, Olive, Kent, Bill Webster)**

(1) Hollow Rock Planning Committee Update. Welch said that the HR Committee held a public input meeting in February. Each participant was given 10 stickers that they could past on a list of options so as to indicate priority that should be given to various goals. Closing of Pickett Rd. to through traffic was heavily supported. There was also interest in hiking trails, interpretive historic signage, use of the open field by the house owned by Triangle Land Conservancy, and a birdwatching platform. Oliver proposed a steam powered sawmill, with a whistle. Webster said that there was an intergovernmental meeting March 12 at which the Pickett Rd. closure was discussed. There was much support for the idea by transportation planners raised the possibility that some current users of the road might object when a public hearing is held. He said that the last traffic count (2005) was 430 case per day. Webster said that potential opposition should be gauged before an official road closing process is begun. Next Hollow Rock meeting is April 1.

(2) Healy mentioned that there would be a Celebration and Commemoration of the Creation of New Hope Preserve, Tuesday, April 8, 2008 5:00 pm Durham County Commissioners' Chambers

Webmistress Sally Robinson, with input from Rich Shaw and Wendy Jacobs, has posted some very useful material on the Hollow Rock area on our website—see

<http://www.newhopecreek.org/preserve/preserve.htm>

(3) Healy said that he had recently visited Leigh Farm Park and toured the Piedmont Wildlife Center facilities. They are currently using two of the “modern” houses on the site. The Wildlife Center will hold a “Festival for Wildlife” on May 3. The NHCCAC will have a table and hand out literature at this event. Healy will try to have a NHCCAC banner made for the table.

(4) Turkey Farm Road Bridge Replacement Update. Longest said that a contested case document was filed against the NC Division of Water Quality, along with a petition to add NCDOT. There is a rule that all parties to this kind of dispute must mediate prior to trial, which in this case means by May. We have proposed three possible mediators. Longest believes that NCDOT may hope that its bridge redesign will require no state permits. Healy noted that the revised plan has not

been presented to the NHCCAC, and that removal of the bent from the stream does not address the issues of (1) assurance that no environmental damage will be done during construction and (2) under-bridge passage of wildlife and people. Longest has periodically had a wildlife camera on the site, but is concerned about leaving it for long periods. He said he would like more specific information about what NCDOT environmental construction standards really are.

UPDATE (4-6-08) Kent, Longest, and Healy testified on March 18 before the Orange County Board of Commissioners, asking them to endorse the resolution on the bridge that had been passed by the NHCCAC in February. On April 1, after further testimony by Kent, the Commissioners passed a resolution identical to that of the NHCCAC, save for the useful addition of the following paragraph:

"WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation has in the past acknowledged the uniqueness of the New Hope Corridor and the value of the corridor to the community by responding to the concerns of the local jurisdictions and the public with an expanded design for the bridge on US 15-501 over New Hope Creek to 300 feet with a 10-foot vertical clearance to enable safe wildlife passage and future greenway trails;"

(5) Presentation by Bill Webster, Assistant Director, Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Dept., on Dry Creek planning in CH. Webster described detailed planning, and some initial construction, of construction of a trail along Dry Creek east of I-40. The area is very wet, perhaps the largest wetland in CH. But the city has purchased a considerable amount of dry land. Key elements of the plan are (1) parking (2) safe crossing of Erwin Rd.—a pedestrian “refuge” in the middle of the roadway is probably the best option; (3) crossing of major wet areas by a combination of bridge and boardwalks. He said that CH recognizes the need to tie into the New Hope/DOST trail plan on the Durham side. This could be done either by routing a trail along Erwin Rd. over the existing I-40 bridge or through a future bridge connection of Eastowne to New Hope Commons.

(6) The possible role of NHCCAC in commenting on developments and other planning activities outside 1992 NH Plan boundaries was briefly discussed. There is considerable support for NHCCAC action. Healy remains concerned that the NHCCAC does not have a mandate from the governments to do this, nor any plan to guide its input. This will be discussed in future meetings.

In response to a question from John Goebel about data on watersheds and their boundaries, Healy found the following link:

<http://h2o.enr.state.nc.us/basinwide/Capefear/documents/2005CapeFearPRHaw.pdf>

**Next meeting-- Thurs. April 10  
5 pm Forest View Elementary School**