

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting of May 8, 2008

(Present: Goebel, Olive, Fowler, Healy, Jacobs, Youngblood, Welch)

- (1) Hollow Rock Area Planning. The HR Committee met in March. A major topic of discussion was the proposed closing of Pickett Road to through traffic. Among several rationales is the problem that cars going down Pickett as a cut-through raise clouds of dust that could interfere with park users. Input from transportation planners from Durham and Chapel Hill indicated that closure would be a lengthy and complicated process. The upshot is that HR area planning will have to start without assuming road closure. Also discussed at the meeting were park facilities. More evidence was presented of archeological sites that would limit soil disturbance in several areas. Among the sites are several old roads. The HR committee discussed the possibility of site interpretation of both Native American and colonial history of the area. Next HR meeting will be May 29.
- (2) The Piedmont Wildlife Festival at Leigh Farm was attended by over 500 people. The NHCCAC had a table, as did an organization we hadn't known of, Northeast Creek Streamwatch www.northeastcreek.org. Northeast Creek drains a major portion of southern Durham, including part of RTP, into Jordan Lake. We will add a link to their website on the NHCCAC website. Thanks to Charlie Welch and Walter Fowler for helping man our table! It was nice to see so many people using and enjoying Leigh Farm.
- (3) Mass Grading. Melissa Rooney had sent us a proposed new policy on mass grading and tree removal that was to be presented to the InterNeighborhood Council in May. This is being pushed by people in southern Durham County, particularly in light of several large development proposals in the Jordan Lake watershed, among them the Jordan at Southpoint proposal. Jacobs and Youngblood observed that while the general idea has merit, the proposed policy document is very specific and could create some unintended incentives, among them discouraging clustering of structures. Many of these points deserve further study and debate. After discussion, the NHCCAC unanimously approved the following resolution:

“RESOLVED: The NHCCAC endorses the concept of limitations on mass grading, protection of stream buffers, and increasing tree protection and tree save requirements. We look forward to working with the InterNeighborhood Council and local planning departments to draft specific recommendations that will better achieve these goals.”

- (4) Lawsuit on Turkey Farm Road bridge. Healy reported on progress of our lawsuit against the NC Division of Water Quality and NC Department of Transportation. The State has filed a petition to moot the suit, on the basis that they have submitted a new bridge design. We reject this contention, because we believe that both designs were put forward with inadequate environmental analysis. **Update (May 30, 2008) Judge Manning has ordered the parties in this case to go to mediation. A mediator has been engaged and the meeting will occur at Duke Law School on June 2. If mediation is unsuccessful there will be a hearing in June on the petition to moot, and if that is rejected a trial will probably be held in September. Update (June 10, 2008) As a result of the mediation, we have entered into a consent decree with NCDOT. Among other things, it provides for a field meeting, which will involve personnel from NCDOT and the Division of Water Quality, and three biologists selected by the NHCCAC. The objective is to assure that design and construction of the new bridge will not adversely impact NH resources. The meeting will be held July 3 or July 7.**
- (5) Trail planning. Youngblood suggested that it would be appropriate to update various parts of the NH plan that contain trails, in light of the fact that so many corridors have been acquired. This might be done by revising individual plan sections, or preparing a “concordance” that would elaborate on the plan. We will make this a future agenda item.
- (6) 15-501 bridge. Concern was raised over whether the erosion control measures at this site and the bridge replacements along Garrett Road were being implemented properly. Healy will contact Durham Erosion Control to see if NCDOT is responsible for such monitoring. Youngblood asked if there is provision for a footpath under the 15-501 bridge. Need to walk this with Greg Schuster. Youngblood noted construction of a new kiosk on the Githens Trail.