

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee

Minutes of meeting of April 9, 2009

(Present: Edeburn, Goebel, Fowler, Healy, Berndt, Kent, Welch, Helen Youngblood, Emily Weinstein, Rhianna Strickland, Greg Schuster, Daniel Ribiero Lima)

- (1) Healy discussed NHCCAC participation in various upcoming local festivals. We will have a table at Duke Earth Day (Apr. 22 11-2 pm) and the Piedmont Wildlife Festival (May 2 11-6 pm at Leigh Farm). For Durham's Earth Day, we will try to share a table with DOST. Berndt brought up Chapel Hill's Earth Day (April 18). Healy will see if we can share a table with an appropriate organization. Healy has a 4 ft. banner, some maps, and (old) leaflets. He will make a new handout directing interested people to our website www.newhopecreek.org
- (2) Emily Weinstein brought 25 copies of her book on the New Hope, which we will display and sell at the various festivals. List price is \$23.50, of which \$10 will be returned to Emily.
- (3) Update on Turkey Farm Road bridge construction. Strickland and Ribeiro Lima gave a Powerpoint presentation. There have been almost daily visits by them, Longest, Kent, Fowler, Healy, etc. since bridge removal started Feb. 27. Bridge removal did not result in visible dropping of deck material into the water. Significant rain events in the last two months have made the water turbid and the creek bottom difficult to see. The measures taken by the contractor seem to have minimized erosion as seen from the bank. Kent observed that we had requested "hardware cloth" as part of our agreement with the state to cover exposed soil on the bank, but it was not installed. The contractor said that his erosion control measures were adequate. On March 29 new bents were in place (the old ones did not have to be removed). There is a UTube page title newhopecreek with 29 film segments showing how construction has progressed over time. It can be accessed by those getting these minutes—password is creek. As a result of the new bents and installation of riprap there will be no dryland passage under the bridge. Our strategy so far has been to visit NCDOT's field office, request documents, have constant on-site inspections documented with video where possible, and take turbidity tests of the creek. We would be prepared to seek injunctive relief if we observe significant sedimentation related to construction. To date, turbidity tests did not show large differences above and below the bridge site. Strickland and Ribeiro Lima are graduating soon, but Ryke Longest will continue to give us legal advice on this matter.
- (4) Electric illuminated signs. Healy said that Durham City-County Planning Commission had been given a presentation in January by the company that owns dozens of billboards in Durham, regarding conversion to electric (TV-

like) technology. For many years new billboards have been prohibited in Durham. Healy said that this technology, if permitted, could affect at least 6 billboards in the New Hope area, including those located near Sandy Creek Park and new the New Hope bridge on 15-501. They would be constantly changing and would, he said, be a great distraction from the existing view, which we have labored to protect. After discussion, the NHCCAC voted unanimously to direct Healy to write a letter of concern to city and county elected officials and to planning staff (Julia Morgan is contact) expressing our opposition to this new kind of billboard/sign, on the basis of our longstanding concern about further lighting the night sky, impacts on wildlife, blurring the boundary between Durham and Chapel Hill, and the possibility that new signs could be larger than existing ones.

(5) Trails

- a) Sandy Creek Park Cleanup. Welch reported that about 15 volunteers participated in the cleanup. They moved a big fuel oil tank, since removed from the site, cleaned mulch off the parking lot, and did a general cleaning of trash. Most volunteers were from the Rails to Trails Conservancy. Goebel had 6 neighborhood volunteers when he did a cleanup the previous (rainy) weekend.
- b) New DOST trail map. Goebel said staff and DOST are working on an update of Durham's trails plan. He noted that DOST emphasizes paved trails, not the natural surface recreational trails. Tyler Waring, a GIS expert in the planning office, has done a large map of the New Hope in Durham and Orange counties, which was displayed. It is still a work in progress and does not show all trails, nor information such as elevations and parcel boundaries. We will be working with DOST and Durham Bike/Ped committee to see that it contains the latest information, both factual and our "wish lists". Berndt said that there was Orange County information on the map, but not Chapel Hill information.
- c) Bike/ped strategies. Schuster said that Durham got \$5.3 million in federal stimulus payments. Part of the county's allocation will be used for the Third Fork Creek Trail. Healy encouraged the group to lobby for more spending on bike/ped trails, partly because they are logical ways to save energy, partly because they provide jobs for youth, the unskilled, and small contractors.

**Next meeting Thursday, May 14 at 5 pm at
Garrett Farms Recreation Center**