

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee Meeting 1/14/2010

(Present: Berndt, Goebel, Healy, Kent, Welch, Bo Howes, Jane Korest , Greg Schuster, Jeff Fisher)

- (1) Hollow Rock. Plan has been approved by Durham City Council and County Commission, will come before Chapel Hill Town Council and Orange County by end of March. In latter two cases, it has been referred to various advisory committees for comment. Meanwhile, Pepsico has announced that in lieu of Superbowl TV ads, they are starting a program to give grants of up to \$50 K for community projects, based on short U-Tube presentations and voting over the Internet. The Primate Center is preparing an entry. Jeff Fisher said he will do a submission for moving Hollow Rock Store and restoring it, an idea that received our endorsement.
- (2) Schuster said that the Githens Trail has been heavily damaged by recent rains and needs volunteer work. He said there will soon be a trail head leading from the new city park and thus much more public use. He will propose a Githens Trail work day. Kent said there should be some educational interpretation of the hardwood Piedmont wetland traversed by part of the trail. The student working with Jane Korest is starting to write text for this.
- (3) Kent said there was thick ice on the New Hope at Hwy. 54 when he last went to take water samples. Said there was zero turbidity last weekend, typical of cold water. He saw stoneflies, an indicator of good water quality. He said he saw what might have been otter scat by the creek at Old Chapel Hill Road.
- (4) Healy mentioned apparent lack of erosion control at Sandy Creek where the EEP work is taking place, though no evident sedimentation. Goebel said he thought the informal trail westward from the bridge could be rebuilt after the EEP work is finished. He says there seems to be a dry land crossing between the two wetland areas, and not covered by the conservation easement. Korest said that General Services, rather than Parks and Recreation now maintains the park. [Elaboration on this received from Beth Timson: GSD maintains all the City's parks; DPR manages them (that is, determines what's in them, runs programs, requests renovations, etc.). DPR staff does the park clean-up (trash and restrooms) and after July will be managing the mowing contract for the City parks.] Joel Reitzer is head of General Services, and we should get to know him. She suggested that we do a mini-plan for the area. There are lots of people using the park, for a variety of purposes. Healy said that he, Welch and Goebel had during the holidays put up a mailbox along the trail with a bird list (supplied by Kent Fiala, with an invitation for it to be updated by other users) and a book in which interesting sightings could be recorded.

It was suggested that several of us go to one or more of the upcoming “Coffee with the Council” meetings in Durham to talk up trailbuilding. Goebel said his homeowners’ association has asked Parks and Recreation to move up the priority of the trail extension that would go through the old candle shop property near Cornwallis Road. Healy suggested we name a portion of Sandy Creek Trail after the late Ken Coulter, who contributed so much to New Hope planning, and who had a particular fondness for Sandy Creek Park. There is a city naming committee that would have to approve this.

- (5) Chapel Hill recently completed a Parks and Trails Assessment which makes recommendations for creating maintenance and management plans for its parks and trails. The study may be useful to the group's discussion about the need for a maintenance plan for Sandy Creek. Berndt agreed to send a link to the report. The Assessment is a preliminary study and the Council is considering doing an update to its Parks Master Plan at a proposed cost of approximately \$150,000.

Berndt later provided the following link to the Chapel Hill Parks and Trails Assessment Report, with comments on maintenance on pp. 73ff.

http://townhall.townofchapelhill.org/agendas/2009/11/23/7d/7d-1-Parks_and_Trails_Assessment_Report-Parks_Assessment.pdf

Next meeting Thursday, February 11.