

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee Minutes of Meeting of January 13, 2011

(Present: Goebel, Kent, Healy, Jacobs, Lineberger, Korest, Howes, Youngblood)

(1) Jane Korest said Brendan Moore, newly hired to replace Greg Schuster, plans to come to our meetings but had a training course that prevented him from coming to this one. She said he has extensive experience with trails. Korest reported that a recent Eagle Scout project did repairs along Chapel Hill Park Trail and built an informational kiosk. (This is the second of an anticipated total of three.) Educational materials for the kiosks are being prepared. Healy suggested that these be shared with Lineberger so he has a better view of the "big picture" of education along the New Hope system.

(2) **Hollow Rock Park.** Rich Shaw, land manager for Orange County, could not attend, but sent the following message, which was read at the meeting:

I have little to report on Hollow Rock Access Area. As you know, the four local government partners adopted the master plan by April 2010. The primary issue needing attention and leadership is funding for facilities development and operations. There has been very little discussion of Hollow Rock among those parties as part of the Durham-Chapel Hill-Orange County Work Group-- an inter-jurisdictional planning committee that meets quarterly, but nothing substantive to my knowledge. [Many of the same elected officials on this Work Group were on the master plan committee for Hollow Rock Access Area.]

I understand Durham County has been studying/considering the possible closing of Pickett Road (gravel portion), but further steps are needed in that process before taking to the NCDOT for consideration. As you may

recall, the Hollow Rock Access Area master plan included a Phase I (with Pickett Road open) and Phase II (with Pickett Road closed).

I expect there will be a meeting among the local govt. staff prior to the next Durham-Chapel Hill-Orange County Work Group meeting scheduled for March.

Goebel said a number of the flags that Schuster had put up on the Hollow Rock trail on Durham side have been taken. However they have been GPSed and can be replaced. Jacobs said that Bike/Ped Committee has a number of bike racks. She will try to get a couple for Shaw in anticipation of eventual opening of HR Park.

Jacobs said a study has been done on impact of closing upper Pickett Rd. where it goes through HR park, and the impact of closing on traffic on Raldolph Rd and other surrounding roads. There seems to be enough capacity for closing Pickett, but there is still sentiment among some public officials against the Pickett closing.

Healy asked Jacobs to look out, as member of Bike/Ped committee, for possibilities of a trail or sidewalk that could make Forest View Elementary more accessible to HR. The study mentioned about recommended a new signal at Randolph and Erwin and a traffic circle at Kerley and Erwin. Jacobs said that Mary Lou Flowers, who teaches art at FV, would like a trail on the north side of Erwin, letting students enter the park from under the bridge.

Jacobs said there was a recent article on the store in the Durham News. Historic Durham has hired carpenter Howard Staub to repair rotten wood in the building and to replace the tin roof, which proved to be in bad shape.

Healy said that Chapel Hill Mineral Club had agreed to give the Hollow Rock project a number of table-top display cases, which could be used in the store. Shaw has found a place to keep them until the store is moved and Healy will move them soon. Lineberger expressed an interest in some of the Club's educational material, which they will give away at their Feb. 1 meeting (at Chapel Hill Senior Center 7 pm).

(3) **Sandy Creek Park.** Lineberger will get several Durham Academy students to describe each of the four major ecosystems he's identified in the park. He will also use a curriculum on urban ecology. Goebel said Rosetta Radtke of Parks and Rec. will help us apply for a DOST grant for park improvements. It was discovered that that contractor who did the wetland restoration had studied the integrity of the bridge over Sandy Creek for moving equipment. The city is comfortable, as a result, that the bridge can be converted to foot traffic without removing the current substructure and supports. It was noted that we have to talk with City about the values of dead trees. As long as they won't fall on paths, they are major habitat sources, especially for woodpeckers. In other case, just removing branches and leaving the standing trunk can be adequate. Healy presented an idea for keying some of the butterfly watching activities and interpretation to movement impaired people. Butterflies are much easier for such people to see than birds because binoculars are not necessary. He has approached the Duke ALS Clinic, which is only 5 minutes away, about providing information to their patients. Butterfly experts Jeff Pippen had told him we might want to plan additional bushes in sunny spots in the park to make viewing even easier. It was suggested that Michelle

Wallace of the Master Gardeners program could help with this.

Goebel offered ideas for connecting Sandy Creek with Duke Golf Course via the big culvert leading to Western Blvd. We need to investigate this further.

Healy mentioned "Creek Week" March 19-27 and said it would be a great occasion to advance a number of our Sandy Creek plans. He suggest that we supplement CleanUp day (probably March 19) with other activities—a Bird and Butterfly Festival to welcome the first migrants, with guided walks; planting of butterfly bushes, and encouraging bike clubs to ride out to the park. He will talk over all of these activities with Rosetta. We might also do our Big Trek that day. If we have enough people interested, we could have groups starting down each of the major NH tributaries, and see how far we could get, using dedicated rights of way. John Kent volunteered to do the hardest one—the main stem of the NH from Erwin Rd. south.

Healy said he had been invited to chair a panel on watersheds at the Durham Public Library, part of Creek Week, at 7 pm on Thurs, March 24. He suggested that people from all the groups represented could meet for dinner beforehand and talk about the much-discussed coalition for the Greater NH Basin.