

## **New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee Minutes of Meeting of June 9, 2011**

[Present: Goebel, Kent, Healy, Edeburn, Jacobs, Helen Youngblood, Brendan Moore, Harrison, Helen and Stan Bukowski (Sandy Creek Park neighbors)]

- (1) Sandy Creek Park update. Healy passed out new brochures, edited and reproduced by Rosetta Radtke. He has now handed out nearly 100 of them, mostly at presentations made to vocational rehabilitation staff at Duke Hospital (about 20 people) and at the Veterans Administration hospital. He reported that at a recent visit he observed a city crew scraping dirt off the paved path, which as usual had been covered in mud by a recent storm. He replaced the butterfly list mailbox, which had been burned/blown up recently by vandals. The Bukowskis reported seeing four young men who may have been involved and reported their license number to the police. He has also heard gunshots and suspects that drug dealing is occurring. Youngblood suggested installation of a gate that automatically closes the park at dusk. She also said that the police may have funds for a surveillance camera given the possible drug dealing. She suggested that contacting the city council member from that district could get this done. Goebel suggested installation of community watch signs. In general, it was agreed that creation of a multi-neighborhood "Friends of Sandy Creek Park" should be a priority.
- (2) Healy said he had recently met a scoutmaster from St. Thomas More Church in Chapel Hill who was looking for projects for his troop. Youngblood indicated that Colony Woods neighborhood would also furnish volunteers. She and Radtke had recently made a presentation to their homeowners association. Jacobs suggested an annual celebratory event like the very successful Creek Week we had on March 19. It was noted that Lineberger and the Durham Academy students had just put up a wonderful informational kiosk near the bird mailbox. Moore will supply plexiglass and informational signage.

Recently, an employee of state wildlife agency who specialized in beaver eradication had been observed in the park looking at beaver activity that had caused interruption of water flow between the two ponds. It was agreed that attempts be made to control the problem by structural changes to the water flow rather than killing the beavers.

With regard to volunteer projects, Goebel noted that there are things to do on trail and bird observation platform on east side of park, but work on the west side will require parks department approval of specific trail alignment, especially in light of the conservation easement on much of the land. Healy observed that we had asked more than a year ago that a revised easement document make provision for recreational use on the conservation property.

- (3) Hollow Rock Park. Youngblood reported that Durham city council and county commission had passed resolutions supporting closure of Pickett Rd. to through automobile traffic. This would allow pedestrian access and parking for access to the park. Next step is to secure a similar resolution from Orange County commission. Jacobs said that she and Charlie Welch had made a presentation on Sandy Creek park to downtown Rotary Club and that the organization had later put an article on it in its newsletter. Stan Bukowski, who has a background in North Carolina archeology, might be willing to help with preparation of exhibits on Native Americans or educational activities on the site.
- (4) NHCCAC comments on Triangle Transit Authority plans for construction of mass transit route in the New Hope corridor. Healy and Kent reported that TTA is on verge of submitting a request to Durham County Commission for a ballot measure that would provide a half cent sales tax for transit construction. They noted that recent TTA documents show a “locally preferred alternative” route that would go through Sandy Creek wetlands on east side of Garrett Rd. and cut directly across the main New Hope corridor south of 15-501. The committee expressed great concern that an endorsement of this routing by TTA and local transportation bodies (expected in October) could privilege it when an EIS is prepared for the project. Healy said that he had been at a meeting the previous night in which Wib Gulley (TTA), Ellen Reckhow (Durham County Commission) and Mike Woodard (Durham City Council) all assured him that other alternative routes would be considered based on environmental impact. Harrison, a member of the Chapel Hill Town Council repeated this promise at the NHCCAC meeting.

The committee had raised its serious environmental concerns about the proposed routing at a public participation session in Durham in March, and at a meeting with TTA officials in April. (see minutes of April NHCCAC meeting). Healy and Kent repeated those concerns at the meeting last night. NHCCAC members are encouraged to come to TTA public participation sessions scheduled in the next 10 days to again raise these concerns. The NHCCAC is also preparing a written document outlining its serious objections to the route shown on the most recent TAA map and stating that a route following 15-501 or Old Chapel Hill Road would avoid many of these impacts. A document is being prepared by Kent and Healy for circulation to NHCCAC members as the basis for a resolution to be voted on either by email or at the July meeting, as the schedule of TTA plans and actions seems to warrant.