

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting of November 9, 2011

(Attending: Edeburn, Goebel, Healy, Kent, Welch, Bo Howes, Brendan Moore)

(1) Moore said he has recently done some scouting for future trails in vicinity of Garrett Farms. Area is very swampy so trail connections to main NH and Mud creek trails will be difficult to make. Property lines are not marked well. Several community members were enthusiastic about local and connector trails. Moore will flag possible routes and study how wet they get over the course of a few months. He now has an intern to help out. Healy asked if he could bring maps to a future meeting. He said it seems to be time to get Trinity School and Rich Shaw involved in trail planning and construction. Moore said New Hope Bottomlands trail (north of Githens Middle School) is in good shape.

(2) Healy said he recently had taken a glorious walk from the parking lot of Church of the Good Shepard (Garrett Rd.) into the main part of Sandy Creek Park. The trail is very well marked and seems to get quite a bit of use. He noted the great work done by John Goebel and volunteers on benches, informational signs, etc.

A day or two later, Goebel reported, vandals destroyed the "bird list" mailbox and used pavers stored on the site to make a fire ring. He said there's apparently a group of young people who come at night to drink, etc. Goebel and Welch are trying to lock the park gate each night when they can. Goebel said that the lumber paid for by the \$5000 state park grant for the Sandy Creek Bridge would be delivered soon. New bridge will be a full 16 ft. wide, with new wooden railings. Nov. 19 will be a major work day, with a large group of Duke volunteers expected. John asked the committee for help with preparation before then. John will be using the Facebook site for communication—there are now 26 "friends". (See Friends of Sandy Creek Park, Durham on Facebook)

(3) Goebel said that DOST trails plan revision was about to go to decisionmaking bodies. The plan is scheduled to go to Durham City Council work session on Nov. 20 and then would be a consent agenda item at a subsequent regular meeting. Kent expressed great concern about the indicated location of the trail under 15-501. Welch said the plan was only conceptual and actual construction of trails would depend on detailed evaluation of site conditions.

(4) Discussion of TTA route for proposed light rail across New Hope Corridor. TTA has announced that evaluation of alternative routes will be done as part of EIS. Kent said maintenance facility at Patterson Place is no longer in the TTA proposal. The NHCCAC, thanks in great part to work of John Kent, has now submitted not only detailed comments on the environmental damage that would be done by the proposed TTA “cross country” corridor in the New Hope and Sandy Creek region, but also an alternative corridor (which follows 15-501 in main part of the corridor) that would be far less environmentally damaging, both during construction and in operation.

Healy said that he would be stepping down as chair of the NHCCAC. He said that, *despite his best efforts at clarification, debate over NHCCAC comments at DOST and elsewhere has found it hard to separate his general reservations about the Durham-Chapel Hill LRT project (based on economic arguments) from the strictly environmental concerns that the NHCCAC has with the impacts of the proposed corridor in the New Hope-Sandy Creek region.* He said he believed that the environmental interests of the NHCCAC would best be served by a spokesperson who was a known supporter of the LRT in concept. Moreover, he said, he has found working on Sandy Creek Park, Hollow Rock Park and the connecting trail system over the past two years to be highly fulfilling and would prefer to direct his energies in those directions, which will require considerable NHCCAC work in both planning and implementation.

Healy said he was willing to stay on the NHCCAC—if others wish—as Secretary/Treasurer. He would continue to announce meetings and take minutes. He said that he recently persuaded SunTrust to continue our zero fee checking account (current balance \$85.73).

Next meeting, Thursday December 8 at 5 pm (Clubhouse at Garrett Farms development)