

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting of December 8, 2011

(Present: Berndt, Goebel, Healy, Welch, Kent, Bo Howes, Jane Korest, Brendan Moore, Helen Youngblood, Debbie McCarthy)

- (1) Sandy Creek Park. Goebel reported that 34 Duke students, most from the APO service fraternity participated in a work day about three weeks ago and made substantial progress on the decking of the bridge over Sandy Creek. Additional work has been done by John, Rosetta Radtke and various NHCCAC members. Construction is now well advanced on the bridge. Lumber has been delivered and (today) the rocks blocking construction of the top decking have been moved by Parks and Recreation. About 45 photos of the work are posted on the Friends of Sandy Creek Park Facebook site.

Some vandalism has occurred, but John and Charlie Welch are closing the park off at nightfall, which should reduce it. A few people have been (or have almost been) locked into the park when they leave their cars parked at the time of park closing. They should call 911 to have the gate opened (although in one case, police responding did not bring the key). Alternative kinds of gates are being considered. Healy encouraged Goebel to announce work days through the Facebook site, which now has almost 50 “friends”. Lumber for the bridge did not exhaust the \$5000 state grant, so Goebel will have enough money to buy materials for bird “hides”. He intends to use an innovative design used on Duke golf course that has cutouts shaped like the outline of birds and animals. Howes will look for bird posters that can be posted on the new kiosk.

Healy said there will be an initial meeting of the Durham Creek Week group on Jan 11 and he plans to attend. He suggested we make Creek Week (in mid March) a major even that will include formal opening of the bridge. Naming the bridge for Ken Coulter will require action by the city—Healy and Youngblood will follow up with this. Healy is continuing to work on use of the park by the mobility impaired and will work with Goebel and Parks and Recreation to plan and execute necessary physical improvements. Kent said that during a recent visit to the park he saw Duke students studying the water quality in the creek.

- (2) Hollow Rock. Kent said what was thought to be a new species of mussel was, after further study, a variant of one already known to occur in NC. Healy said he was working with the Chapel Hill Mineral Club to obtain rock samples for teachers and to involve club members in planning exhibits and working with young students. In NC, the major study of geology takes place in 4th grade. Healy has been in touch with teachers at Forest View Elementary, Trinity School and Durham Academy and has been helping them get rock samples from the club. A junior geologist club and mineral museum have been started at Forest View. Healy also spoke with Peter (Chip) Denton, headmaster of Trinity School, who referred him to John Morganti, a

4th grade teacher. Healy will try to keep Morganti, Linda Turgian and Jane McCulloch (Forest View) and Howard Lineberger in touch with the CH Mineral Club in the year ahead. Moore asked for contact information at Trinity School so he could work with them on trail planning. He is currently flagging trails in area south of Hollow Rock and studying flooding issues. Youngblood noted that Trinity already has its own system of trails, as well as a designated natural preserve.

- (3) Berndt said that Chapel Hill Greenways Commission has asked the Town Council to request that TTA corridor alignment in the Meadowmont area include environmental analysis of both Alternatives C1 and C2. They note that alternative C1 could have visual impacts on a trail and both options could affect Little Creek floodplain and natural area.

Berndt said work on the Dry Creek trail in Chapel Hill is still a long way away because of competing demands for trail funds. Youngblood said she is continuing to work with Bill Webster (CH) on comprehensive plan issues of joint interest such as those involving Dry Creek and Leigh Farm. Chapel Hill's Comprehensive Plan is due to be updated by June 2012. Kent noted that both the Real Estate Division and the Permitting Division of the Corps of Engineers will doubtless have an interest in this project because of the amount of wetlands potentially involved. He also noted that the Metropolitan Planning Organization (umbrella for all forms of transportation in Triangle) is a key actor because they look at the big picture of transportation. He noted that they have planned a major overpass/underpass at intersection of Garrett Rd. and 15-501 and that this is relevant to location/design of the TTA corridor. He also said that there is ample existing right-of-way along south side of 15-501 to accommodate a LRT corridor without the need for additional acquisition.

- (4) Howes gave us a copy of a letter sent (12-8-2011) by Triangle Land Conservancy president, Kevin Brice, to NHCCAC and TTA restating the significant interest that TLC has in the New Hope corridor and urging TTA to "seriously consider the concerns that have been raised by the New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee."
- (5) After discussion, it was decided that Healy would become co-chair of NHCCAC, with another co-chair to be selected by our voting membership. The second co-chair would work on transit-related issues, including setting up the meeting with TTA requested by Wib Gulley. This might be at our January 12 meeting, with January 19 as an alternate time. Pending selection of the co-chair, Charlie Welch will be acting co-chair. Youngblood suggested that TTA be provided with a list of key issues before the meeting (though that is already the subject of two concise documents, the NHCCAC adopted comments on the proposed corridor and the description of the alternative proposed route.) Healy will send a list of voting NHCCAC members to Welch and Goebel so that a co-chair can be elected in a timely manner.