

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting of May 9, 2013

(Present: Fowler, Welch, Healy, Kent, B. Moore, Bo Howes, H. Youngblood, Mike Waldroup, H. Fischer, S. Bukowsky,, Jeff Weisner—URS Consulting, Juanita Shearer-Swink,-TTA, Greg Northcutt—TTA, several other TTA staff and consultants)

- (1) Sandy Creek Park. Durham County Commission has not yet acted on our approved proposal for a \$10,000 matching grant. Approval, and authority to spend money, expected before end of fiscal year or (we hope) earlier. We cannot buy materials for wildlife observation deck and fence for the meadow until this funding is approved.
- (2) Hollow Rock Park. Moore said that Durham County has been approved for a \$200,000 grant from the North Carolina Recreational Trails Program to acquire and install four pedestrian (trail) bridges, construct a parking area and install signage at Hollow Rock. There is a requirement for a 25% match.
- (3) June 8 is national Trails Day and a hike is planned on the New Hope Bottomlands. We will send a separate announcement to the New Hope list-serv for this event. John Goebel offered to co-chair the event with Brendan Moore.
- (4) Berndt reported via email that the CH Greenways Master Plan is still scheduled for adoption on May 29. The revision is not yet posted, but hopefully will be available for public comment. The Greenways Commission looked at tentative revisions at its April 24 meeting and Berndt is hopeful that the text revisions will address the concerns raised by the NHCCAC relating to connections to Hollow Rock Park and bridge/underpass ideas for a pedestrian crossing of I-40. She said that Chapel Hill is undertaking a major new Bike Plan, in the early stages, with a meeting tonight. The Greenways Commission has a representative on the Committee developing the Plan. It wants to make sure there are adequate connections between greenways and bikeways, as well as extending the use of “multi-purpose paths”.
- (5) NCDOT is proposing to widen I-40 between 15-501 and I-85. Kent attended initial scoping meeting for environmental analysis that will be performed for the project. We have had correspondence with NCDOT trying to make the point that the NHCCAC is an official government advisory body and hence should be consulted early in the process, rather than at the “citizen involvement” stage (the latter is generally too late in the process to raise important new issues.) NHCCAC interest is this project involves (a) possible water quality impacts during construction (b) possibility of improving wildlife and bike/ped crossing of I-40 by replacing existing box culverts by a bridge or some other structure that will be less impeding than the current situation. We note that when I-

85 was upgraded, the Ellerbee Creek Association secured this kind of improvement. John Kent is following this for NHCCAC.

- (6) Discussion with staff of TTA and URS consulting regarding fieldwork to be utilized in the EIS for the TTA rail crossing of the New Hope Corridor between Garrett Rd. and Patterson Place. Weisner (URS) said the TTA project proposal sent to Dept. of Transportation a few months ago has been returned for modifications because the agency rules have changed. Weisner said that said data collection on environmental features will start very soon and last all summer. The entire process will take about 2 years and there will be multiple meetings where input can be offered.

Healy raised the question of rapidly changing technologies in both private vehicles and transit (e.g. “smart cars and smart highways”) and his concern that the system could be obsolete by the time it finally opened, at least 10 years in the future. Korest asked for more explicit responses by TTA to how public comments have been used in planning for the transit system. Youngblood raised archeological issues (significant archeological and historical resources have been found farther upstream in the New Hope corridor) and the issue of “light pollution” in an area that is currently dark. Healy suggested that ongoing development in the corridor might change the trip generation modeling. Weisner replied that economic data used by TTA are updated with information obtained from the local planning departments.

NEXT MEETING OF NHCCAC TO BE HELD THURSDAY, JUNE 13 AT 5 PM