

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting of September 11, 2014

(Present: Goebel, Fowler, Healy, Welch, Bo Howes, Ed Harrison, Helen Youngblood)

Before the meeting, Youngblood announced that Durham had just received a \$220,000 federal grant for planning the Beltline Trail, a Rails to Trails project in downtown Durham. Although this is not in our planning area, several members have been involved and it is a commendable achievement.

- (1) Youngblood showed us the proposed plan for a development with two gas stations at the corner of Rt. 751 and I-40. The project requires rezoning. DOST has already commented on it. Issues include light, wildlife habitat, possibility of protecting an area directly adjacent to I-40.
- (2) Healy circulated a letter he had just received from Coulter, Jewell, Thames regarding a public meeting to be held at the Springhill Suites Hotel (Patterson Place) on Tuesday, September 16 at 6:30 pm to present a proposal for rezoning approximately 13 acres along south side of 15-501, just east of SW Durham Drive. There will be a request for rezoning from RS-20 to Commercial General (CG). The land is designated as commercial on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

We need to learn more about this project, but it is clear that protection of a vegetated buffer along 15-501 is a priority. Harrison noted that some of the trees on the property date back to the 1920s.

- (3) Sandy Creek Park. Goebel said that the interpretive signs have almost all gone through the design stage. Thanks to volunteers from Duke Build, there are posts already installed to receive them. There will be 12 small signs and two large ones. Signs will have metal frames to protect them from weathering—this seems to work better than a Plexiglas covering. Two cooking grills have been installed near the picnic shelter. John is talking with a volunteer group from Stewart Building about the design of an ADA accessible unpaved hiking trail.

Personnel from Planning and from Parks and Recreation have done a walk-through to start to get ideas for further development at Sandy Creek. Youngblood suggested getting the park designated as a wildlife habitat area by the state. Goebel said that hundreds of bird and butterfly attractant plants have been installed over the summer and noted that dozens of Monarch butterflies have been observed on them.