

New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting of October 18, 2018

(Present: Fowler, Hogan, Smith, Healy, Kent, Schreiber, Jane Korest,

Dave Connelly [DOST], Celeste Burns [Durham County])

(1) Sandy Creek Park. Goebel, via email, said that trail to Garrett Rd. is finished and he hopes to have an inaugural event in early November. There was some concern about funding priority for extension of paved trail north of Pickett Rd, taking advantage of the new Cornwallis Rd. easement, but we are assured by staff that they will be advocating for this project.

(2) Durham Planning has pulled back from their recommendation, as part of the Patterson Place Compact Neighborhood Plan, for a 300 ft. stream setback and substantial protection for steep slopes. They will have new recommendations at an October 25 public workshop. However, staff said they hoped that Beacon Properties and environmental advocates could come to an agreement on recommendations for both rezoning and resource protections. If so, they would recommend that the boundaries of the compact neighborhood planning district would be pulled back to reflect the “no build” area. It was noted that if this takes place measures (easement, sale) need to be taken to ensure that the no build area is permanently protected. It was suggested that a meeting with Beacon might take place November 9.

Hogan asked if the floodplain might be remapped. Korest said that this is done as a comprehensive re-evaluation, rather than parcel by parcel. In any case, the slope is so steep that an adjustment of the floodplain would not in itself make much difference. Healy said that we need to know what the developer wants to build. There was some confusion over whether Beacon actually owns the property or just has an option. This could easily be checked in county records.

Korest said that we need to emphasize the 15-501 bridge as a “pinch point” for the area’s function as a wildlife corridor. Hogan said that it would be helpful to have photographs of the area. It was suggested that we ask Beacon properties for permission to enter the property to take photos and to GPS important resources.

(3) Trails. Korest said, and others agreed, that a nature trail along Dry Creek would present problems. Who would use it and how would it be maintained, given that there are wet areas. It was noted, however, that it would be more useful if it could connect to the New Hope Bottomlands Trail under the 15-501 bridge. There was great interest in a transportation trail (paved for bike/ped use) that would connect Eastgate and New Hope Commons, then go along the north side of 15-501, cross Garrett Rd., then connect with the Sandy Creek trail and extend northward to Duke Golf Course. The group voted to endorse such a trail and to make this one of our comments on the Patterson Place Plan. It was noted that bridges would be needed—large ones at I-40/15-501 and at 15-

501 crossing of the New Hope, and 2 smaller ones over Sandy Creek. It was suggested that if we could get I-beams in place at the latter locations, it might be possible to build the bridge superstructure with volunteers, as was done inside Sandy Creek Park.

- (4) Welch said that land along Garrett Rd. just north of Garrett Farms is slated for development. This land includes a large farmhouse.
- (5) Welch said he is working with Trees for Durham (Katie Rose Levin) to strengthen Durham's tree ordinance, which is now the weakest in the Triangle.
- (6) The annual Duke Forest Gathering will be held on November 8, so the regular November meeting of the New Hope Creek Corridor Advisory Committee is cancelled. It is important to RSVP for the gathering as space is limited.