

Minutes of Souhegan River Local Advisory Committee

Milford Police Facility, Milford, NH

May 19, 2022

In attendance were members Celeste Barr (Milford), Cam Lockwood (Temple), Rob Clemens (Amherst), Bill Mahar (Wilton), George May (Merrimack), Nelson Disco (Merrimack), Cory Ritz (New Ipswich), Marshall Buttrick (Greenville), Peter Howd (Wilton) and Kleta Dudley (New Ipswich),

Guest were Kierstyn and Zach Williamson (Milford Dog Park advocates), Niels Liljedahl (NRCS, Natural Resources Conservation Service), and Eric Doberstein (Amherst) potential new member.

Milford Dog Park-Kierstyn and Zach Williamson are helping the Milford Dog Park group work on a layout for the proposed dog park at 127 Elm Street. Zach explained that in terms of site selection, they worked with what was given them. Lincoln has a spreadsheet of all the sites considered and their were issues with each one.

Celeste explained that the Brookstone Manor, LLC met with the Milford ZBA May 5, 2022 (re: property at Tax Map 19, Lot 25-9) seeking a Variance to allow the existing 92 unit multi-family development on 4.8 acres of the subject parcel and to allow the donation of the remaining 7.1 acres to the Town of Milford for permanent conservation/recreational use. The Brookstone

Apartments, originally consisting of an 11.9 acre parcel was allowed to build a high density housing unit with 92 units on 4 of those acres (the dry, non-floodplain acres) if the remaining acres remained "open space." The ZBA approved this variance. The Brookstone Manor is now a non-compliant site. The ZBA decided to allow the subdivision to be donated to the Town as they felt it was not a change in land use as long as it remains 'conservation and recreation". Ruling on the Dog Park is not in their purview. The Planning Board will be the next stop for permission and design approval of a dog park. Celeste spoke at the ZBA meeting to share SoRLAC concerns about water equality and open space (summarized in our April Meeting minutes.)

The property ownership or the 7.1 acres of open space will be transferred to the Town with Conservation restrictions. The ZBA and the Community Development have a long term vision of another footbridge creating access between Keyes Field, 127 Elm Street and MCAA.

No wetland will be affected, and a small portion of land will be cleared for the 1 acre fenced dog park. A footbridge from the existing parking lot at 127 Elm St. will have to be built to cross a small stream and ditch. Brookstone has requested that a small dedicated pathway be provided for their residents also. (A condition of the transfer).

Cory presented old pictures of the site. There was evidence of an old oxbow where the river had changed its course over time. The current shoreline does not look natural probably due to the construction of a sewer line in the area which was probably "armored." Celeste pointed out that Brookstone will no longer have to pay taxes on the land they have donated to the town. They will have the amity of a dedicated access to the dog park and will have no liability or responsibility to maintain the land.

Rob asked Zach and Kierstyn if they had reviewed the Nashua Dog Park plan as it has a similar setting. Discussion followed as to permits would be required. Peter noted many implications of being in a floodplain, notable the increase in cost. Nashua spent about \$800,000 to build their dog park.

Rob asked about maintenance. The Town of Milford will pick up trash and do weed wacking. No lighting is planned at this point. Perhaps a security camera will be installed but for now, lights out at sundown. Nearest lights are at the pool house. Zach and Kristyn will begin a site plan when the town takes possession of the property.

Cam voiced her opposition to the Dog Park based on its location and it is noted.

Celeste pointed out that the Town of Milford seems intent on this happening and we don't want to walk away from opportunity to have the best outcome.

Kierstyn noted that they will be planting blueberries on the site. Blueberries will mitigate the high nitrogen associated with dog urine. Discussion followed on impact of dog feces on

rivers. It will be the responsibility of the DPW to maintain the area but it is hoped and believed that dog owners will be responsible for their pets and pick up their waste and dispose of it properly. Dog owners will have to go into park with their pets. No seating is planned at present.

There will be a separation for small and large dogs. At this point they just want to get the fence and foot bridge in. The land will need some leveling. Parking will be on the edge of Brookstone and the abandoned building upslope from the dog park site. The existing sewer road will be used during construction.

Marshall asked about long term landscaping plans. They have no plans except the blueberries for now.

Discussion on substrata followed. Peter stressed that the Nashua Dog Plan would be a worthwhile read.

Rob stated that we wanted the design assure no impact the water quality of the river. We want assurances that the dog waste is removed from the site, that the site is managed properly and permitted properly and we don't want the dog waste to be anywhere else on the property. Peter suggested additional E. coli testing.

Cory would like to see more native plantings. It was noted that none of the big trees would have to be removed as it would be too expensive and their shade would be welcome.

Zach listed the public meetings he anticipated and said the lawyers needed to do their thing, then site plan and it all goes off to DES. It wasn't discussed who was doing the paperwork

and if any permits were anticipated. Marshall asked if this was going to be our only review of this project. Cory noted that we might not get notices as the park itself was just on the border of our jurisdiction, but he would ask for an opportunity to review because of the need to share expertise on plantings, E. coli testing, site reviews, sharing links and sub links on water equality and design. All of this should be shared with Planning Board and Community Development people.

Additional Links to Dog Park Information-

https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/Dog%20Parks%20best%20practices%202019_R3.pdf

<https://www.nashuanh.gov/DocumentCenter/View/22642/20210630-Dog-Park-Feasibility-Study-subcommittee-meeting-packet?bidId=>

[Dog Park Infiltration Basin - Stormwater Discovery Tours \(cob.org\)](#)

[Recommendations and Guidelines for Dog Park Site Selection, Design, Operations and Maintenance \(a2gov.org\)](#)

[Residents | Milford NH](#)

[pet_waste_brochure.png \(1200×456\) \(nh.gov\)](#)

NRCS-There was a presentation by Nels Liljedahl an Outreach Coordinator at Natural Resources Conservation District. NRCS

was formed to provide support to Conservation Districts. As Rob explained, the original purpose for inviting NRCS to our meeting was to have a discussion with local owners of property along the river of Best Management Practices (BMP) for their Riparian portions of land along the River. We have had several cases where activities have taken place without proper input or appropriate permitting. It was decided that before arranging for a group meeting, we would ask for a presentation.

Nels gave us a brief background of NRCS's beginnings and his own history. He has extensive experience in designing and installing riparian borders. NRCS is a non-regulatory organization but have written the regulations and farms have to get a permit from them before clearing land.

At this point there was discussion about one of the incidents recently in Milford where a landowner cleared a his riparian land using a Timber Harvest Permit which was obtained through the Forestry Dept which allowed him to bypass any permitting through DES . Legally there must be a 35' riparian border and 100' is generally the norm.

Nels outlines the procedure that NRCS follows when working with a landowner. They only work with private landowner but a town could avail themselves of the service by leasing a piece of property to a private landowner. First a Conservation Plan is developed, then a contract is made with the landowner. NRCS can often help with funding. They will train volunteer is necessary to help with workload. An average cost of \$70K/ Acre was current approximate cost but that doesn't take into account any grants or volunteers that might be available.

Brief discussion of a future presentation to landowners was discussed. Nelson questions the disconnect between NRCS and DES. Nels stated that permits are the responsibility of the landowner and that NRCS is not an enforcement organization.

Eric Doberstein-we have a potential new member from Amherst. Eric is a paddler and a retired engineer . We did a brief overview of what we are all about. George and Eric discussed Eric taking on the Water Quality testing that SWA has sponsored. George spoke about his goals of putting his years of data into some sort of spreadsheets that would be useful to other organizations. George would be willing to work with a new person as he is feeling the need to relinquish his responsibilities here. Emails were exchanged. We are hopeful.

Watershed Management Plan-Due to the late hour, we determined we needed to meet in a Zoom Meeting on Sunday May 22nd to review the questions of our upcoming survey to interested parties concerning our Watershed Plan. We don't have any funds and the survey could cost. NRPC has offered to use their resources on our behalf and Peter has offer to be our liaison. Celeste has offered to help Cory with cover letter.

Members need to check to see if they need to be re-upped.

Approval of Minutes -March minutes approved.

New Business

SoRLAC Membership-See Cory's list in email dated 4/20/22. Update your nomination if need be. Form can be downloaded at:

https://www4.des.state.nh.us/blogs/rivers/?page_id=81

Submit to town.

explain what their programs are and what their outreach entails. It is a starting point in educating us, and then we can reach out to the public at a later date.

.

Watershed Management Plan-Due to the lateness of the hour we postponed this discussion to a Zoom Meeting to be held on Sunday May 22 at 6:00 P.M

Zoom Meeting, May 22, 2022-In attendance were Cory Ritz (New Ipswich), Peter Howd (Wilton) Eric Doberstein (Amherst), Marshall Butterick (Greenville), Cam Lockwood (Temple), Rob Clemens (Amherst), Nelson Disco (Merrimack), and Kleta Dudley (New Ipswich). We reviewed and made changes to survey questions for our watershed survey. Peter will talk with Jay at NRPC as they have offered their services to get our survey out to the public.

There will be a 2nd Zoom meeting on Monday June 13 , 7:00 p.m.

Local Updates-

Souhegan Watershed Association- George will be stepping down from his duties here and management of the water testing project. Eric Doberstein is possibly considering taking over the water testing project. We are thankful for the many

years of volunteer service from George, and appreciate that he is willing to train Eric as his replacement.

New Ipswich- Nothing to report

Greenville-There is nothing to report. The Greenville Conservation Commission has not received any communications from the Temple Conservation Commission.

Temple- Cam passed along this from Kathy Joly who is also a member of Souhegan board representing Temple. Kathy is on the Temple Conservation Commission.

DES recently dredged the outflow from the northeast flood control dam in Temple. It is not known whether they filtered the resulting sediment going down the river.

The dredging was performed with very short notice to the town.

Temple and Wilton are preparing to update their Natural Resource Inventories. Temple is reaching out to see about possibly partnering with Wilton to reduce costs.

A partnership with other watershed towns planning this work might be helpful.

The Temple Conservation Commission has considered the possibility of working with the Greenville Conservation Commission on a drinking water protection grant for the purpose of preserving more land in the watershed. The reservoir (which is fed by Temple streams) is Greenville's water supply. However, as yet

there has been no discussion with Greenville, due to Temple Cons Com very full calendar.

Wilton-nothing to report

Milford-Nothing more to report

Amherst-nothing to report

Merrimack-nothing to report

Submitted by Kleta Dudley, Sec. May 31, 2022

Next Meeting 7:00 P.M. June 16, 2022. Milford Police Station