



Minutes for March 29, 2022 Meeting

RSC Representatives present: Anne Slugg Chair (Sudbury), Emma Lord (NPS), Ron Chick (Framingham), Christine Dugan (Lincoln-Alt), Bill Fadden (Framingham-Alt), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Linh Phu (USFWS), Tom Sciacca (Wayland)

Representatives absent: Amber Carr (SVT), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Joseph Piantedosi (Bedford-Alt), Trek Reef (Billerica-Alt), Eric Simms (Wayland-Alt)

7:02 pm Ms. Slugg opened the meeting and welcomed participants

7:03 pm Ms. Slugg asked for comments on the February minutes. Ms. Henderson motioned that they be accepted with a correction submitted by Mr. Sciacca. The motion passed 8-0.

7:05 RSC Projects

Ms. Lord spoke about approving the purchase of a second Enviroscape model for Lincoln with Community Grant funds. The Council was especially appreciative of Lincoln's offer to make a reservation system in order to share their two models with surrounding towns. The possibility of adding the Framingham and Mass Audubon Enviroscape models into a centralized reservation system was considered. Ms. Henderson's motion to fund this project for \$1,580 carried unanimously.

7:12 pm

Interpretive Panels: Ms. Henderson, Mr. Chick, and Ms. Dugan updated the Council on their progress working on interpretive panels for Billerica, Framingham, and Lincoln. The Billerica panel is largely complete. Ms. Henderson noted changes suggested by the Billerica Conservation Commission and is considering adding both SuAsCo and OARS QR codes. Ms. Henderson said that she had several discussions with Pannier Graphics to ensure that the photo quality and technical details of the interpretive panel would be correct.

7:32 A discussion followed on whether to include a Land Acknowledgement on each interpretive panel. This issue was left unresolved. Some members thought that it was too difficult to properly acknowledge which First Peoples were on the land for the 8,000 years prior to pre-Colonial settlement. Other members thought that the language used to honor the First Peoples is often considered damaging in multiple ways by Native Americans.

Ms. Dugan presented a draft of the Lincoln interpretive panel containing text and photos relating to Fairhaven Bay, an early photo of Lee's Bridge, and area wildlife. Members offered suggestions on layout and content.

8:10 pm Mr. Chick said that individuals from the MIT Sea Grant Program were continuing to work on the design for the Framingham panels. He is interested in adding an educational component on the water cycle and a historical photo of the “hot dog bridge” being built using draft horses near the Weston Aqueduct where the bridge crosses the SuAsCo.

8:15 pm **River Ambassadors**

Ms. Lord said that 5 applications for River Ambassador positions were received. Interviews would be continuing over the following week and hiring decisions would be made shortly after that. It is anticipated that the Ambassadors would start in late April.

8:22 pm **Riverfest 2022**

There have been 11 confirmed Riverfest events. Events at Great Meadows NWR will be curtailed this year. The new Visitor Services Manager was recently hired and is immersed in her new duties, making it difficult for her to be involved with planning Riverfest events this year.

Mr. Chick and Mr. Sciacca discussed possible Riverfest events in Framingham and Wayland. These included several guided river paddles, including a history paddle and demonstration on water chestnut pulling. Other ideas included a talk on climate change and one on the Greenways Conservation Area. The new River Ambassadors will participate as event leaders or provide event oversight for Riverfest this year.

8:29 **FY22 RSC Finances**

Ms. Lord spoke about the Assabet Bluff property currently for sale in West Concord which has been discussed at previous meetings. She wondered if the Council would consider approving RSC funds to help with the necessary due diligence work or contributing to the acquisition cost. It was agreed by the Council that a decision on this funding would be taken after the Concord Town Meeting vote in May to approve spending Town funds on the purchase and after all internal RSC projects were either completed or found necessary to postpone for another year.

Ms. Lord said that she would inform Christa Collins from SVT about the Council’s decision to wait on possible funding for the purchase.

Ms. Slugg said that last month the Council approved a 2022-2023 budget for \$165,000. It now looks like Congress may add increased funding for WSR programs. We may get an additional \$45,000 for projects for the coming year for a total of \$210,000. Ms. Slugg said that she had done some preliminary work in looking ahead to how we might spend this additional money. She suggested adding \$15,000 for the River Ambassadors, \$5,000 for interpretive panels or another outreach initiative, and \$10,000 for a watershed or water quality study. We could spend \$7,500 to hire a Riverfest coordinator to help with planning, organizing, and helping us build capacity to Riverfest’s pre-pandemic strength. She suggested adding the remaining funds to Community Grants, raising the possibility of raising the maximum funding to \$15,000 for each Community Grant awarded.

8:50 pm Ms. Phu noted that our current website is probably not federally compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act which requires that we make our website accessible for all. She thought we may need to set aside future money to build that work into the new website design. Ms. Henderson voiced concern that future funding may not always remain at the 2022-2023 level and noted that extra funding for future for River Ambassadors should not be relied upon.

9:02 pm **Framingham sewage spill**

Mr. Fadden said that on March 4th there was a break in a pressurized sewer line coming out of a pump station in Framingham. About 36,000 gallons of untreated sewage spilled into the wetlands just east of the Sudbury River next to Route 9. He was not sure how major the spill was as it was located 100 feet or more from the river. Framingham DPW did sprinkle lime on it. Ms. Field-Juma and Mr. Fadden noted that a new Massachusetts sewage discharge law will go into effect this July which will require operators of sewer systems to notify the public of spills into rivers and other waterways. Mr. Fadden suggested submitting an RSC email address to the new system, choosing an email address that will remain constant and which will not be specific to any current RSC representative.

9:07 pm Given the lateness of the hour it was agreed that updates from Ms. Field-Juma and Ms. Phu would either be shared by email or delivered at the April meeting.

9:09 pm Ms. Slugg asked that any further comments on the River Ambassador program or on ways in which to spend the expected \$45,000 in increased spending be sent to her or Ms. Lord. She then adjourned the meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Christine Dugan