

## Minutes for October 25, 2022

**RSC Representatives present:** Anne Slugg, Chair (Sudbury), Emma Lord (NPS), Ron Chick (Framingham), Sam Corbin (SVT), Christine Dugan (Lincoln-Alt), Bill Fadden (Framingham-Alt), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Carlene Hempel (Concord), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Tom Sciacca (Wayland)

**RSC Representatives absent:** Dan Cook (Carlisle), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Trek Reef (Billerica-Alt), Frank Richichi (Bedford-Alt), Linh Phu (USFWS), Eric Simms (Wayland-Alt)

**Guest:** Laura Mattei (SVT)

7:02 pm Ms. Lord welcomed Sam Corbin as the new SVT representative and Carlene Hempel as the new Concord representative. Council members welcomed the new representatives and introduced themselves.

7:07 pm Ms. Slugg asked for edits to the September Minutes. Ms. Henderson said that she had sent corrections by email. Ms. Field-Juma offered 2 corrections. Ms. Henderson motioned to accept the Minutes with those corrections, Ms. Slugg seconded, and the motion passed 9-0.

### Community Grant Application Reviews

7:10 pm Ms. Slugg said that the RSC had received 10 community grant applications. Those proposals were emailed to each representative to review before the monthly meeting. She suggested that Council members discuss each of the proposals individually, resolve any questions they might have, and then vote on funding.

7:12 pm Ms. Lord began a discussion on the Appalachian Mountain Club's proposal to build a new progressive trail access from the current path of the Bay Circuit Trail at the Cow Common Conservation Area in Wayland to the site of the Wayland Council on Aging. The total project cost was \$20,088. AMC requested \$10,000 in RSC funding to hire a 5 person AmeriCorps Crew for 2 weeks.

7:33 pm The Council considered the Billerica Boys and Girls Club Outdoor Exploration Program. This pilot program would provide afterschool walks exploring local history and ecology for pre-teens and teens. It would be particularly oriented towards river awareness and stewardship. The funding request was for \$2,690 for personnel and supplies. The total cost of this project was \$4,180.

7:38 pm The Council discussed a proposal from the Billerica Conservation Commission to fund the design and fabrication of two interpretive signs located at the new Katie Durand Memorial Park along the Concord River. The signs would focus on the importance of pollinators and their habitat in addition to the protection and preservation of the Concord River. The request of \$5,200 was for the full amount of the project.

7:46 pm The Council discussed the proposal from the Billerica Recreation Department to offer boat trips along the Concord River. The funding request was for \$2,050 to cover the full cost of the program.

7:52 pm The Council discussed a proposal from the Concord Conservatory of Music (CCM) for an event titled "Music & Water." It involved a staff member from OARS speaking about local rivers and musical selections performed by some CCM faculty members. The funding request was for \$1,800 to pay the performing artists.

8:04 pm The Council discussed a proposal from the Hudson Conservation Commission for the project: "Assabet River Restoration along Hudson Riverwalk." This would feature a pollinator garden and include riverbank and riparian buffer plantings. The request of \$15,000 would cover the total cost of the project.

8:06 pm The Council discussed the Watershed Landmark Project proposed by the Hudson Public Schools. This project would engage Hudson 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders in field studies of 3 locations within the Assabet River Watershed. The funding request was for \$6,222 for personnel, supplies, and a contract with Mass Audubon naturalists. The total cost of the project was \$7,182.

8:15 pm The Council considered a proposal from Mass Rivers Alliance for the stormwater financing curriculum "Protecting Our Waterways." This would be a pilot program offering technical assistance to the 8 SuAsCo WSR communities. It would increase the capacity of these municipalities to finance and implement nature-based green infrastructure solutions. The funding request was \$8,500 for content development, outreach, and implementation. The total cost of the project was listed as \$26,032.

8:17 pm The Council discussed The Umbrella Arts Center proposal "Community Earth Floats for Earth Day, 2023." Earth Floats are collectively built, biodegradable sculptures created to celebrate and draw attention to local riverine ecosystems through art. They would be released into the river. The request was for \$3,500. The total cost was expected to be \$8,094.

8:25 pm The Council discussed the Wayland Conservation Department's proposal: "Reforestation of the Sudbury River Shoreline." The proposed restoration work would replace trees that had been damaged or felled by beavers with native riparian tree saplings along the riverfront area at Greenways Conservation Area. The request was for \$3,253.06. The total cost of the project was listed as \$3,557.60.

8:30 pm The Council discussed which grants should receive funding. Several representatives had questions for specific grant applicants that they preferred to have answered before voting on those particular proposals.

8:40 pm Ms. Slugg said that she and Ms. Lord would email RSC members a list of the questions for grant applicants which had been raised at the meeting. Members should add any further questions they had. Those questions would be forwarded to the appropriate grant applicants and their answers shared with the Council.

8:47 pm Ms. Slugg said that there seemed to be agreement in favor of full funding for the Hudson Schools (\$6,222), Mass Rivers Alliance (\$8,500), and The Umbrella Arts Center (\$3,500), all of which amounted to a total of \$18,222. She motioned to approve funding those grants, Ms. Field-Juma seconded. The motion passed 9-0 with one abstention. Ms. Lord will follow up with additional information once she hears back from the Appalachian Mountain Club, Billerica Conservation Commission, and Concord Conservatory of music. The other grant proposals were not funded.

8:49 pm Ms. Lord referenced an email sent to all Council members from the Riverfest working group, which is comprised of Ms. Lord, Ms. Slugg, Ms. Henderson, Mr. Chick, with further input from Mr. Simms. She asked if the Council had comments on the working group's suggestion to proceed with planning a series of events over several months instead of the usual weekend of events which had been coordinated in previous years. There was general agreement to proceed with this proposed new scheduling for 2023.

8:54 pm Ms. Field-Juma said that there is a good webpage on the Talbot Mill Dam removal on the Merrimack River Watershed Council website. Ms. Lord posted the link: <https://merrimack.org/talbotmills/>. Ms. Field-Juma directed Council members to the OARS website which has a page on River Restoration and Dams. It includes hearing announcements on the Talbot Mill dam removal, updated FAQ's, and will soon include more features such as video clips. It will be the best way to keep up with news on the Talbot Mill dam removal.

8:57 pm Mr. Chick asked the Council to write a letter of support for a Framingham CPA application to create ADA access to over 1,300 feet along the Carol Getchell Trail on the Framingham section of the WSR. The Council approved the letter which Ms. Lord will write and submit.

9:00 pm Ms. Slugg motioned to adjourn, Ms. Field-Juma seconded, and the motion passed 9-0.