

RIVER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

July 28, 2015

Present: Bill Fadden (Framingham), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Jamie Fosburgh (National Park Service), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Libby Herland (US Fish & Wildlife) Jim Meadors (Lincoln), Kate Tyrell (SVT), Cindy Delpapa (Commonwealth); Also Elissa Brown (Concord Rep elect); Jean Milburn, Bill Sterling and Ellen Tohn (representatives from the Wayland Community Center Advisory Committee)

Absent: Mary Antes (Wayland), Nancy Bryant (SUASCO Community Council) Lisa Eggleston (SVT), Betsy Gallagher (Billerica), Steve Pearlman (Carlisle), Tom Sciacca (Wayland), Anne Slugg (Sudbury)

Meeting called to order at 7:04. Introductions were made and guest from Wayland- Jean Milburn, Bob Sterling and Ellen Tohn welcomed.

Wayland Community Center:

Bill Sterling, co-chair of the Wayland Council of Aging/Community Center Advisory Committee explained the proposed Wayland Community Center project and provided handouts of the ‘municipal pad’ showing where the existing, never used building is located relative to the river and the proposed additional building (annex) and boat house. While portions of the annex and parking lot and the boat house will be in the state-defined 200 ft. riverfront area (River Protection Act), the Committee does not believe this project is in conflict with the RSC mission.

The existing building would become a senior center and the proposed annex a recreational center for the town. There will be parking for about 100 vehicles with about 12 of the spaces fully within the riverfront area and a trail to connect to the north. It is a complicated parcel because of the wetland issues and riverfront area though the buildings should not be visible from the river. A Phase I assessment has been done, Raytheon is remediating the site and the town will complete the clean up to a level necessary for this project including reclaiming some of the currently paved areas and converting them to landscaped areas. The committee would like to engage a consultant to work on the plan further.

The proposed Boat House would meet a need to increase accessibility for on-the-water recreation. Efforts to build a boat house in the past have not succeeded. The intent is to have the boat house available to residents to store canoes and kayaks and potentially borrow boats through Wayland Community Boating. They have already received a great deal of interest and support from the Wayland Recreation Dept. Parking would not be needed as there will be the parking associated with the new Community Center.

Libby reported the Raytheon Company has talked with the Refuge about donating 5 acres of land adjacent to Great Meadows. While this transfer has not happened and is not guaranteed to happen, Libby is hopeful the transaction will happen next year.

If the boat house moves forward, Libby advocates for including measures to rectify some of the issues at the existing boat launch including allowing vehicles with trailers to park in the new car park area.

There was further discussion of the possibility of reducing the amount of building and parking area in the riverfront area and minimizing disturbance. Discussions of more progressive pavement and car park design options. A suggestion was made to look at the Kettle Pond USFWS parking design for examples of enlightened and functional design. Jean invited the RSC to schedule a visit to the site to better understand the layout and dynamics. The visitors were thanked for their time and presentation.

Riverfest:

General consensus was the party was not especially well attended. The River Steward Awards went well and should remain a part of the party. Recommendation was to reach out to MA Audubon for more nominations of students, (MA Audubon was instrumental in the nomination of the wonderful Lowell TREE winner from this year). It was mentioned the effort to coordinate with the League of Women Voters required a great deal of time for the party organizers though it is nice to have the partnership with the League. The party came in under the \$500 budget thanks to generous donations of food from Stop & Shop (thanks to Mary), Concord Tea Cakes (thanks Aviva), the bartending skills of Doug and Jamie and the great generosity of the RSC reps who donated wine and beer.

Alison reported Riverfest received great coverage in local media and pictures in the *Globe*. The weather and conditions were ideal on Saturday but most of Sunday's events were cancelled because of the heavy rains with the Solstice Celebration at the end of the day when the skies cleared. Some new events and those activities providing boats were especially popular. OARS has streamlined much of the Riverfest planning and recommends the new NPS hire have computer and social networking skills.

Welcome to Elissa Brown who has agreed to be the new representative for Concord. Elissa has lived in Concord for about 20 years where she has been active on a number of town boards and committees. Elissa brings many skills to the table including being a Licensed Site Professional, a geologist, a former Conservation Commission agent and an avid boater. Elissa will become the official rep once voted in by the Concord Board of Selectmen.

Old Business

NPS Staff Hire: National Park Service hiring to replace Lee should be moving forward soon. Jamie reported he is waiting for notice stating the job has been posted. The NPS reformatted the job into a series of questions about experience. He recommends the RSC disseminate an informal job description to provide more information detailing the work expectations for this position. Jamie took the initiative to prepare a draft. The draft description was passed around the room or people to augment what was prepared. People should also email Jamie, as soon as possible, with additional suggestions.

PWSR Newsletter: The NPS has allocated staff to assist with the production of a Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers newsletter. The Partnership Rivers were asked to prepare highlights of their accomplishments. Alison worked with Tom and Jamie to draft this document which she emailed to the RSC back in June for final comments before submitting. Jamie has not seen an outline for the newsletter and knows the NPS has not received submittals from all PWS Rivers. He anticipates the newsletter will be compiled this autumn.

Bylaw Subcommittee: Jamie compiled bylaws from several W&S River committees to use as a starting point in the revision of the RSC bylaws. Anne, Alison, Mary and Cindy are interested in working on this committee. A Doodle Poll will be sent out to set up a time to talk about the revision process.

Community Grants: A draft of the Community Grants application was sent out prior to the meeting. Edits, suggestions and improvements are welcome and encouraged and should be sent to Cindy as soon as possible. Jamie mentioned the Taunton River Wild & Scenic often asks applicants to present their proposal in person. Consensus was to add to the application the caveat stating an applicant(s) may be asked to present their funding request to the RSC. Also suggested was requesting interested applicants contact the RSC or NPS Staff person before preparing an application.

This is the next iteration of our small grants with a few key decisions to be made regarding changes to past procedure. The first is the recommendation not to have one single funding round in a year but to allow applications throughout the year. The second major decision is to decide if there will be a maximum amount that can be applied for and perhaps a minimum amount as well. Suggested focus areas for the funding included play/learn/serve, get people to the river, invasive species, connecting people to parks and the river. After some discussion on these three items, a motion was made:

The RSC establishes a Community Grants Program with a rolling application process. Further grants will be awarded for no less than \$500 and no more than \$10,000. The focus area for the 2015-16 Community Grants will be connecting people with the Wild & Scenic River. (Herland/Hammond) Motion passed unanimously.

Updates:

USGS Flow Study: The USGS presented their findings in Framingham on their study of the potential impacts of the Birch Street wells on the Sudbury River. Those who attended found the presentation interesting and noted the USGS did respond to past comments (Bill's). Specifically they did study Pod Meadow Brook and concluded the waterway would be impacted by groundwater withdrawals. Part of the USGS work included modeling impact with a 10% return of flow to augment Pod Meadow. The termination of all pumping from July- September was also modeled but other scenarios were not presented at the meeting. The USGS report has not been finished and released but their conclusion to date is curtailing summer pumping may be enough to avoid impacts to the river. The work funded by the RSC had a different conclusion and predicted impacts to the mussel beds in the river. (this report was not included in the USGS study – at least to date).

As for the long term intent of the town to reactivate the well field, Bill felt the funds earmarked in the Environmental Bond are meant to reimburse the town for the money they have spent to date and will move to drop the project. Alison reported the wells should not be able to obtain Water Management Act permit approval based on the criteria of the WMA.

Jamie will request the final report of the UMass Study. Since this is a complicated issue, he will also send out a Doodle Poll to arrange for a meeting outside of the monthly RSC meeting to discuss this issue with those interested.

Westborough Water Supply Presentation: Community applications for a permit renewal of state Water Management Act permits are due by 8/31/2015 so there is a great deal of interest in this topic. OARS received funding to work with Westborough on issues related to their Water Management Act renewal request. Withdrawals adjacent to two cold Water Fishery streams have registrations and not permits so do not have to be permitted. The discharge of treated wastewater effluent is considered an offset because the withdrawals and discharges are within the Sudbury River watershed (if not the same sub watershed). OARS conclude the process they piloted in the town worked well and they have built a sound working relationship with both the town and MA Dept. of Environmental Protection.

New Business

Challenge Grant: The Park Service has a challenge cost share grant available to fund initiatives to encourage youth to use the river. This would be a good fit for MASS Audubon RiverSchools and possibly the Community Colleges in the watershed.

Assabet Recreation Map: OARS just released its new Assabet River map and it looks wonderful. People are encouraged to take copies and help distribute them throughout the entire watershed. The map is also available online. Alison also mentioned the Sudbury Boaters map is out-of-date and reserves of the map are low. It is time to begin revising and having another print run. One hope for OARS is to encourage people/groups to 'adopt' a launch area and keep it in good shape.

Billerica: Jamie was contacted by a Billerica ConComm member interested in water chestnut eradication in the Billerica impoundment.

Jamie also learned the Billerica DPW objected to the MA DOT mitigation work to create a Rte 4 boat launch area. An alternative may be to have a launch on US Fish & Wildlife land.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05