



## Minutes for April 26, 2022 Meeting

**RSC Representatives present:** Anne Slugg, Chair (Sudbury), Emma Lord (NPS), Amber Carr (SVT), Ron Chick (Framingham), Christine Dugan (Lincoln-Alt), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Marlies Henderson (Billerica and Lead River Ambassador), Linh Phu (USFWS), Tom Sciacca (Wayland), Eric Simms (Wayland-Alt), Katherine Sorrows (Assistant River Ambassador)

**RSC Representatives absent:** Bill Fadden (Framingham-Alt), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Trek Reef (Billerica-Alt)

7:00 pm Ms. Lord opened the meeting and asked for edits to the March minutes. There were none. Ms. Henderson motioned to pass the minutes as circulated, Mr. Chick seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

7:05 pm Ms. Lord introduced Marlies Henderson and Katherine Sorrows as the new River Ambassadors for the 2022 season. Ms. Sorrows is currently teaching at Concord-Carlisle High School, and she obtained a master's degree in Education last December. The Ambassadors began their work on April 25th and their season ends on August 21st. Mr. Sciacca offered to show them important and interesting spots along the river in Wayland. Mr. Chick made a similar offer to show them a variety of sites along the river in Framingham. Ms. Lord said that she will be meeting with Ms. Henderson and Ms. Sorrows weekly to plan events and their work schedules. She will write a press release about our new River Ambassadors and circulate it to key contacts in member towns and our partner organizations in the spirit of collaboration.

### RSC Projects 2022

#### 7:17 pm Interpretive Panels: Billerica, Lincoln, Framingham

Ms. Henderson said that the interpretive panel on Bartlett's Landing was approved as a municipal sign by the Select Board. The DPW removed the asphalt parking area at the landing and raked and seeded the soil. Ms. Phu commented on the OARS QR code placed on the sign. A brief discussion followed on deciding which QR codes to use, how to update QR codes in the future, and alternate options for placement.

7:28 pm Mr. Chick said that he had been in contact with the MIT Sea Grant office which is helping him to design the Old Danforth Street Bridge interpretive panel. He sent them photos and he is working on the text. He is including language on the WSR. He walked some Framingham trails with the personnel

from the Conservation Department and they selected sites for future interpretive panels to potentially be funded by the RSC. Elements of these signs will most likely include a map of the WSR, an educational section on the water cycle, and historical notes on the Framingham section of the Knox Trail. Ms. Carr asked about including information on heron rookeries. Mr. Chick said that there are two within a mile of each other, and he was considering including a section on them.

7:42 pm Ms. Dugan gave an update on the choice of photographs for the Lincoln sign and said that she had begun communicating with Pannier about the specifics of the interpretive panel.

7:46 pm Ms. Lord said that there are 18 confirmed Riverfest events over June 18-19. The event hub will be the Old Manse in Concord where Mass Audubon will have their events and a snake demonstration by a different partner will be offered. She said that a Juneteenth event at the Robbins house may be added as a Riverfest event but the word wasn't final on it being included. Ms. Lord said that she will place an order for promotional Riverfest postcards and posters, each of which will include QR codes.

### **Review of FY22 RSC Finances**

7:56 pm Ms. Lord began a review of the current year's finances. She said that in FY 2021 the Council had set aside \$25,000 for an instream flow study. That money needs to be reallocated. One option could be contributing to the acquisition of the Assabet Bluff property in West Concord. Concord recently learned that it would be receiving a \$500,000 Land and Water Conservation grant from the state which will cap off the fund raising for that acquisition. RSC money is no longer needed for the purchase but could be given to SVT for stewardship work on the parcel, possibly including an ADA trail that will link to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

Mr. Chick said that the Carol Getchell trail had several dangerous spots that needed work. There are 3 bridges crossing little inlets that are all in need of repair/replacement. He spent a few hours walking the Carol Getchell trail with staff from Conservation Works, an organization that does trail assessments. The cost of repairing the 3 bridges could be \$80,000 and it may be another \$5,000 to work on walkways to the two schools on the trail. Mr. Chick is applying for grants for this work from the Salomon Foundation and the Friends of Saxonville. He has also applied for Community Preservation Act funding. If none of his proposals receive outside funding, then he thought some portion of the Council's \$25,000 to be reallocated could go to repairs for the Carol Getchell trail or contribute to rebuilding the bridges.

8:07 pm Ms. Slugg said she believed much of the work Mr. Chick was proposing was extensive and it would not be feasible to approve it by our July deadline. Mr. Sciacca said that he would rather put our funds toward repairing the Carol Getchell trail which has needed repairs for at least 10 years rather than spending it on stewardship work for the Assabet Bluffs property. Mr. Chick said that multiple ideas for the bridge work had been considered, including a fiberglass bridge that could be ready to purchase by mid-July and could be assembled and installed by volunteers. He estimated the cost of that project to be between \$18,000-\$23,000.

8:24 pm A discussion followed on other options for reallocating the \$25,000. It was generally decided that no other project than the Carol Getchell trail work could be funded by the July deadline. Ms. Slugg said that she and Ms. Lord had previously asked Council members to suggest ideas for the reallocated \$25,000 but only Mr. Chick recommended a project. Ms. Phu suggested that in the future we keep a list of potential projects for those times when we find ourselves having to reallocate funds at the end of the

year, as this has happened before. Ms. Lord will reach out to all of this year's Community Grant recipients that did not receive full funding to see if any additional funds could be used on their projects.

8:38 pm Ms. Lord said that the Partnership Rivers Program has received additional Congressional funding for next year. The RSC's budget will increase from \$165,000 to \$210,000 for FY 2023. That year will run from September 2022 to August 2023. She referenced the FY 2023 budget she sent out by email. She highlighted the proposed increased line items to account for the additional \$45,000 we only just learned we would receive. She asked for comments on the changes. Mr. Sciacca said that he would like to see more money set aside for scientific studies. Ms. Lord said that she thought there was enough flexibility in the proposed budget that we could use additional funds for scientific studies if needed. Ms. Lord asked for approval of the draft FY23 budget, which was unanimously approved.

8:50 pm Ms. Lord asked if Council members would like to continue meeting remotely or if they wanted to start meeting in person again. Several people said that remote meetings worked better for them and no one said they wanted to return to in-person meetings just yet.

8:55 pm Ms. Henderson mentioned that a homeowner was building a large dock on a Billerica property along the Concord WSR. This is likely a Conservation Dept violation because the permit to build was issued in 2002. Ms. Henderson said that she wanted the Council to know about the massive dock and that the Billerica Conservation Department is looking into it. Ms. Lord said she would follow up with Marlies and Billerica on that issue.

9:02 pm Ms. Slugg asked for a motion to adjourn, which passed unanimously.