



Minutes for the July 27, 2021

RSC Representatives present: Anne Slugg, Chair (Sudbury), Emma Lord (NPS), Amber Carr (SVT), Ron Chick (Framingham), Christine Dugan (Lincoln-Alt), Bill Fadden (Framingham-Alt), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Tom Sciacca (Wayland)

RSC Representatives absent: Linh Phu (USFWS), Joseph Piantedosi (Bedford-Alt), Trek Reef (Billerica-Alt), David Witherbee (Concord)

7:05 pm

Ms. Lord and Ms. Slugg announced changes in membership to the Council. Mr. Chick is now the main Framingham representative, Mr. Fadden is the alternate Framingham representative. Eric Simms has been named as the alternate Wayland representative, and Mr. Buell is no longer on the Council for Lincoln.

7:21 pm Minutes

Ms. Henderson and Ms. Field-Juma suggested edits to the June minutes. Ms. Henderson motioned to accept the minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously with 2 abstentions.

7:05 pm

Community Grants, Request for Proposals

Ms. Slugg and Ms. Lord discussed the Community Grant RFP application process. August 2022 marks the end of the current 5-year funding cycle for the Council. All funds for community grants must be paid out by August 1, 2022 as they cannot be rolled over into the 2022-2023 budget. Language was added to specify that all requests for community grant reimbursements must be made by July 15th, 2022. The RFP will be released and publicized in August. A vote on which community grants to fund will be held at the RSC's October meeting.

7:12 pm Internal Projects

Ms. Lord said that the draft job description for the two River Ambassador positions will be circulated to several local colleges and universities to help recruit candidates. Ms. Carr offered to send Ms. Lord contacts she has within local universities to expand publicity efforts. Ms. Lord said that our focus should now shift to orientation and training for the positions. Consideration should be given to the starting date, the length of the internship, and whether a weekend orientation would be the best approach. She said that it could be useful if RSC members took the new River Ambassadors on the river. Mr. Chick and Mr. Sciacca thought this would be helpful and offered to work on the river with the new hires.

Ms. Lord said that the RSC could fund installation of up to 10 interpretive panels in member towns. The next step is to identify the top 10 locations and to determine which landowners we will need to approach for approval. Ms. Slugg said that the signs need to be created and paid for by July 2022. If installation of any sign needs to be postponed, such as waiting for the completion of the Cochituate Rail Trail, we can set aside money for that in the following year's budget. Ms. Lord shared a spreadsheet on which she had highlighted suggested locations which may not be ready to accept a finished sign by the July 2022 deadline. Ms. Carr wondered about adding accessibility features, such as text in braille accompanied by a ball and rope that would alert the visitor to the presence of the braille script. She thought that a QR code would be helpful as well. Ms. Lord said that we could choose to add a QR code that would have audio capabilities. Ms. Slugg asked town representatives to get approval from landowners for possible installation of the interpretive panels before our September meeting.

Ms. Slugg reminded the group that we have \$30,000 for community grants this year.

7:45 pm Other Topics

Dragonfly Mercury Project:

Ms. Lord said that water levels were extremely high at all 3 sampling sites earlier in the month. The team found just 4 larvae at Ice House Landing on the Assabet in Maynard and none at MMNHP or Sherman's Bridge. They will try to sample again in September when water levels come down.

OARS Updates

Water chestnut removal: In July OARS staff pulled water chestnuts at Fairhaven Bay in Lincoln and Concord. OARS volunteers pulled them on the Sudbury River. OARS also removed water chestnuts in Hudson and Stow and worked with CISMA on Concord land. Ms. Field-Juma said that Billerica allocated funds for 3 days of pulling and made substantial progress on clearing the river in that town.

Mr. Sciacca said that PFAS contaminants legislation was recently introduced in Congress. Ms. Field-Juma noted that Rep. Lori Trahan is working on that proposed bill and that fish tissue sampling is planned for the next round of research.

Ms. Henderson said that the DOT did not agree to fund a mural on the Route 3 bridge in Billerica but that it might be looking more favorably on the project. She thought it might be possible to hire a mural artist in the future. Ms. Field-Juma suggested that Billerica apply for a 2022 community grant for that project.

Mr. Chick said that he did some water chestnut pulling from his house in cooperation with the Framingham Conservation Commission. He said that the work was relatively easy because it was done later in the season and he was hand-pulling isolates and not masses. He concentrated on the periphery, the shallows, and on material intermingled with water lilies.

Ms. Slugg asked about interest in an August RSC paddle. Ms. Lord said she would send out an email poll listing possible dates and locations.

8:28 pm. Meeting adjourned.