



## Minutes for the July 28, 2020 meeting

**RSC Representatives present:** Anne Slugg, Chair (Sudbury), Emma Lord, (NPS), Ron Chick (Framingham-Alt), Christine Dugan (Lincoln), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Laura Mattei (SVT), Linh Phu (USFWS), Trek Reef (Billerica-Alt), David Witherbee (Concord), Tom Sciacca (Wayland), Bill Fadden (Framingham)

**RSC Representatives absent:** Mary Antes (Wayland-Alt), Joseph Piantedosi (Bedford-Alt)

**Location:** Zoom Video Call

7:07 pm

Ms. Slugg opened the meeting with a motion to accept last month's minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Laura Mattei announced that she will be stepping down from the RSC after two years of service. SVT's main representative has not been chosen yet but Christa Collins will be the new alternate.

### MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Ms. Henderson suggested edits to the May 2020 minutes which concerned her Riverfest 2020 efforts in collaboration with Billerica Access TV. Those will be incorporated into the final version. She then made a motion to accept the May minutes. Mr. Fadden seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

7:14 pm VIRTUAL RIVERFEST WRAP UP

Ms. Lord thanked everyone involved for helping to create the RSC's first ever Virtual Riverfest webpage, which was made available from June 17-21. She reported that viewership numbered over 40,000 people, including local viewers and those from across the country. It was generally agreed that some form of online Riverfest content should be planned for in 2021. Suggested improvements included enabling the videos to be viewed from a wider range of media streaming devices, providing guidance on navigating interactive features, and working to expand our social media presence both in general and in particular to enhance the RSC's publicity efforts for gaining a larger virtual Riverfest audience.

7:23 pm PROJECT REVIEWS

### Old Sudbury Bridge Rehabilitation

Mr. Sciacca explained that the improvements to this bridge consist mainly of replacing decking and asphalt on top and pile jacketing to extend the lifespan of the bridge. Ms. Phu said that the project involves accessing the river from refuge land. A discussion followed on the use of a boom across the channel, whether erosion control is an issue, and ensuring that boat access is not lost after the project's completion as it is often the case with road work and other construction projects.

### Fenn School Dock proposal

Mr. Witherbee raised the issue of a proposed dock for the Fenn School which is currently undergoing review by Concord's Natural Resource Commission. He attended one meeting about this bridge and plans to attend the next one as well. He explained that the proposed site is in a particularly scenic part of the river about .5 miles from the North Bridge. The dock is 23' long with a 25' long aluminum ramp. He believes the dock conflicts with our scenic ORV and will be a bad precedent for future projects along the Concord River. Ms. Lord said that the Fenn School does not require a Section 7 evaluation but asked for suggestions to a comment letter that the RSC could submit. There was concern that the dock might obstruct navigation for other boaters. Several members stressed that both the scenic and historical ORV's would suffer if this project was built too large and was out of character for this important site. Ms. Field-Juma suggested that the RSC request a presentation from Fenn about the project so that we could ask questions and inform them of how seriously the RSC takes protection of both our scenic and historical ORV's. Ms. Lord said that she would contact Fenn about the possibility of having that presentation.

A discussion followed on how the RSC might be routinely notified by member towns about future projects of interest to the RSC, as this is not currently the case. More commonly the burden now falls on RSC representatives to discover if such a project is before a town board or commission. It was agreed that cultivating communications and relationships with the Conservation Commissions of our member towns is the surest way of being alerted to relevant reviews and permitting.

#### TOWN UPDATES

##### Aquatic vegetation growth in Fairhaven Bay

Mr. Witherbee looked at aquatic vegetation along the Sudbury River, starting on Route 27. He saw milfoil, naiad, and fanwort. He said that water chestnuts were not a big problem there, though once they were removed the river just fills up with a different invasive aquatic species. Ms. Field-Juma said that there are no real solutions for preventing re-growth of invasive aquatics in rivers. Ms. Phu said that in her 15 years of habitat restoration work she has found that a combination of biologic, chemical, and mechanical controls is the most successful way to treat invasives.

8:32 pm

##### Hop Brook Water Quality Sampling

Ms. Field-Juma said that OARS has submitted grant applications to help fund sampling at 5 sites at Hop Brook. This tributary is the worst, last phosphorus concentration found in the SuAsCo and contains a light level of nutrients in the water column itself. This project has already started, though there are no results at this stage. It is a source tracking project and the source is unknown as yet.

##### Dragonfly Mercury Project Update

The state is monitoring ponds, lakes and aquifers for mercury but is not looking at rivers. Some mercury was found in the Concord River at MMNHP a few years ago. Ms. Lord, OARS staff, and other partners will sample at sites in Sudbury. They will collect dragonfly larvae from the Assabet refuge and send them to an NPS lab for analysis.

##### RSC Paddle in August or Later

Ms. Slugg suggested a group email to be sent out inquiring about who is interested in the RSC paddle and which date would be best.

#### UPDATE FROM OARS

OARS' annual film festival will be held as a virtual event on August 19<sup>th</sup> and will be available until August 24<sup>th</sup> for streaming.

Ms. Field-Juma commented on the mosquito control bill recently signed by Gov. Baker. She said that it went through multiple revisions due to the large volume of comment letters received. A task force is being formed to take an ecological approach to this issue. She said that state Rep. Dykema cited this process as a good example of how to influence legislation: know what you want and know how to pressure the legislators. Ms. Phu said that this method of working with allies would be useful in affecting change for the SuAsCo. She mentioned the USFWS' collaboration with Lowell: the Lowell Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership. She said that the RSC should decide upon a nexus for just such a partnership.

The next RSC meeting will be on Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>.

8:39 pm

Ms. Field-Juma motioned to adjourn, Ms. Lord seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Christine Dugan