



## **Minutes for the September 29, 2020 meeting**

**RSC Representatives present:** Anne Slugg, Chair (Sudbury), Emma Lord (NPS), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Bill Fadden (Framingham), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Tom Sciacca (Wayland), Laura Mattei (SVT outgoing), David Witherbee (Concord), Amber Carr (SVT incoming)

**RSC Representatives absent:** Christine Dugan (Lincoln), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Ron Chick (Framingham-Alt), Mary Antes (Wayland-Alt), Joseph Piantedosi (Bedford-Alt), Trek Reef (Billerica-Alt), Linh Phu (USFWS), Christa Collins (SVT-Alt)

**Location:** Zoom Video Call

7:06 pm

Ms. Slugg opened the meeting and the RSC welcomed Amber Carr, who will be representing SVT. Ms. Field-Juma moved to accept the July minutes. Mr. Sciacca seconded and the motion passed unanimously with corrections.

### **RSC Updates**

**Mussel Study Update:** Ms. Lord said \$4,500 was set aside last year to complete the study but river conditions were not conducive. The drought this fall made it possible. Ethan Nadeau of Biodiversity finished the study and will be writing it up and can present at one of our upcoming meeting. He should be ready by the November or December meeting. Emma will ask him if he can present in December.

**2020 Partner Grant Reports:** Partner reports were attached to email. Partners did really well in completing their projects despite the Covid restrictions. Presentations will be made at the October and November RSC meetings. Mr. Sciacca noted that the Audubon report stated that brook trout live in the Sudbury River and they taught the children that this was so; they do not. Ms. Henderson noted that Billerica does not appear in any of the reports and wondered how that could be remedied. Mr. Sciacca was very impressed by the OARS report that they were able to achieve all the work despite the pandemic. Ms. Slugg said she had asked for some clarifications in the SVT report and is waiting to hear back.

Many Community Grant recipients asked for extensions and were granted until the end of the year, including the Middlesex Canal Assoc.

### **FY2021 RSC Projects**

**2021 Community Grant RFP:** This year there is \$14,000 set aside, and in the past the range allowed was \$250-10,000. It was agreed that range is suitable since it worked well last year. Agreed on continuing the policy that an applicant can apply two years in a row if applying for a different project or taking an existing project to a new level. Ms. Lord will send out the RFP by beginning of next week. The first projects submitted will be considered at the October RSC meeting, with rolling acceptance until June 2021.

Website Upgrades: The budget has \$1,000 for website upgrades. Ms. Lord asked who would like to be involved in design and content discussions. She will send out email to ask for interest and then a meeting will be set up for those interested in participating in the discussion.

### **Navigable Waterway Discussion**

Ms. Lord noted that the question of definition of our rivers fall under Sec. 404 CWA or Sect 10 of Rivers and Harbors Act arose with the Fenn dock discussion. Also relevant is Ch. 91, the Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act which to docks in the SuAsCo rivers, regulated by MassDEP. Ms. Henderson asked ACOE and they said this is determined by the law. She is concerned that when dams are removed the river restoration be designed to accommodate navigability by flatwater paddlers, not just class 3 or class 4 rapids. In Andover they placed rocks that are not good for the paddlers, although good eel habitat. She suggested that perhaps new regulations are needed regarding navigation.

### **Other topics**

OARS' River "Team Up Clean Up" was a success, with Ashland participating for the first time, and 11 towns total.

### **Riverfest 2021**

Ms. Lord suggested that starting early to plan for a virtual Riverfest would help ensure it will be a success. This year they had little time to adjust but learned a lot. There were no in-person events. There was not much use of the virtual content, although it was fun to make. But with revisions it can be improved. Holding it virtually could be an efficient and effective option for next year. Mr. Sciacca said it would always be preferable not to have to do virtual, but will know better in the coming months. Ms. Henderson said she has been doing Shawsheen paddles once per month all summer with 10-12 people with social distancing with no problem. It should be possible to do a paddle at Riverfest, or other inherently socially-distanced activities. Ms. Henderson noted that the "Merrimack River at Risk" movie will be shown by LPCT this Friday, has very good content about watersheds and open space protection for clean water.

OARS Grant Update: Ms. Field-Juma said that OARS received an AMC grant to clear recreational river passage in the W&S Assabet in Concord; work will be completed either this year or next. OARS also received a grant to fund sampling at 5 sites along Hop Brook. It is a source tracking project and the source is unknown as yet. OARS will be able to report the results in November. Also a team collected dragonfly larvae in the Sudbury and Assabet Rivers for the Dragonfly Mercury Project with the National Park Service. We don't know when the results will be received from the NPS lab. Channel 5 News did a piece on the eutrophication of the Assabet River and climate change with Ms. Field-Juma and Ms. Vernegaard.

The next RSC meeting will be on Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Henderson moved to adjourn, Mr. Sciacca seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Alison Field-Juma.