



Minutes for May 31, 2022 Meeting

RSC Representatives present: Anne Slugg, Chair (Sudbury), Emma Lord (NPS), Ron Chick (Framingham), Christine Dugan (Lincoln-Alt), Alison Field-Juma (OARS), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Linh Phu (USFWS), Tom Sciacca (Wayland), Eric Simms (Wayland-Alt), Katherine Sorrows (River Ambassador)

RSC Representatives absent: Amber Carr (SVT), Bill Fadden (Framingham-Alt), Trek Reef (Billerica-Alt)

7:02 pm Ms. Lord opened the meeting. She asked for comments on the April Minutes. Ms. Henderson and Mr. Chick offered edits. Ms. Henderson motioned that the April Minutes be accepted with the suggested edits, Mr. Chick seconded and the Minutes passed 9-0.

Internal Projects

7:05 pm Ms. Henderson gave an update on the Bartlett's Landing interpretive panel. She said that it would be shipped soon and that there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony at the site on June 19th, during Riverfest.

7:15 pm Ms. Dugan said that Pannier Graphics mentioned the possibility of making a two-sided interpretive panel for Lincoln. The Conservation Dept. agreed to that idea of a large SuAsCo map as the back panel. She shared a new graphic on floodplains which she believes will improve with input from a graphic artist at Pannier. Mr. Sciacca suggested that the Fairhaven Bay text include a reference to the fact that Thoreau spent much more time on the rivers than he ever did at Walden Pond.

7:26 pm Mr. Chick spoke about the Old Danforth Street Bridge interpretive panel. He met with the Conservation Department who suggested ideas on changes to the framing and fonts. Ms. Field-Juma said it might be possible for Framingham to use a portion of OARS' new recreation map on this panel. Mr. Chick said he has reached out to a Nipmuc contact to look over items he would like to include on the panel. He has added a QR code for the self-guided historical tour of Saxonville. Mr. Chick noted that he has included a photo of an axe head estimated to be about 4,000 years old which was found by a student of Mr. Hammond's on a school field trip. Ms. Sorrow said that depictions of indigenous people from hundreds or thousands of years ago should be avoided and that museums such as the Concord Museum are careful to note that these peoples are still part of communities in the present day. Ms. Field-Juma noted that the text suggests the dam is still being used for flood control although it is not.

Riverfest Update

Ms. Lord said that there were 21 events scheduled for Riverfest with more to be added later. The two hub events will be at the Old Manse on Saturday, June 18. There will be several family friendly activities, including arts and crafts and animal exhibits. There will be a solstice celebration at the same location on the evening of June 19. Some of the scheduled paddles will be RSVP and others will be open to drop-ins. Ms. Lord said that she could update last year's poster and include a QR code which could be added to the website. Representatives discussed local newspapers and websites where they could promote Riverfest and locations where they could post Riverfest lawn signs.

River Ambassador Report

7:51 pm Ms. Henderson and Ms. Sorrows shared a presentation they created about their first month as River Ambassadors. Ms. Henderson first gave an update on a Billerica homeowner who recently tried to install a large, illegal dock on the Concord River. He has instead installed a much smaller dock, probably in response to a visit from the Billerica police and the notice of a possible Conservation Dept. violation. She then showed slides of a field trip she led to a herring run in Plymouth, of a visit she took to the bridge on the Carol Getchell trail which needs repairing, and of Mill Brook Look Out in Bedford, formerly known as the Bridge to Nowhere. Ms. Henderson discussed a paddle she led from Lowell Street to the North Bridge and another one on Mother's Day. Ms. Sorrows said that she led multiple paddles from Bedford Road and the Lincoln boat launch. She observed that the Lincoln landing was very muddy and that she saw at least 3 people fall there due to slippery conditions. The Ambassadors paddled at Bartlett's Landing. They asked several people in the area how many times they had paddled the Concord River and learned that it was the first time for many of them. Ms. Henderson showed slides on the process of sediment testing at the canal. She also showed a photograph on OARS' dissolved oxygen study being conducted a few feet below the water intake. Those measurements will be taken years before the dam is removed and then afterwards for comparison.

8:02 pm Ms. Sorrow discussed a list of questions she asks people she meets at the river and the answers she receives, plus relevant comments about any other river-related experiences that come up in conversation. The topics have mainly been about the type of boats being used and ways that people are using the river. She said that she and Ms. Henderson will expand those topics and get a better sense of who is using the river and how to make sure that everyone has access. She was surprised by the amount of fishing in Bedford and Billerica and did not see as much in Concord. She said they hope to get more recreation maps from OARS to restock signposts. Other ideas being explored are River Ambassador business cards, perhaps with QR codes that could be used to get more information on the river and link to SuAsCo. They are discussing River Ambassador shirts and pins as a way to identify themselves. They have been taking images and making documents on things such as conditions of the landings and conditions of the river. They will help with the Dragonfly Mercury Project later in the summer. They are documenting the organizations they have contacted to learn about issues such as water quality and dam removal and have shared any relevant information they learned with the Council. Ms. Sorrows said that she is starting to take more detailed notes to share on the river trips she takes, such as distances traveled, where to eat, etc. Ms. Henderson shares some of that information on Facebook now. Ideas were proposed on how to share that knowledge more widely.

8:20 pm FY2022 Finances Update and Remaining Funds

8:20 pm Ms. Lord brought up the \$25,000 that had previously been set aside for a flow study project that was not carried out, making that funding available. She contacted all community grant applicants from this year that were not fully funded to see if they could use additional funding but none of them needed it. She asked Mr. Chick for an update on the improvements to the Carol Getchell trail that he proposed at the April meeting. He said the bridge replacement might require a NOI, that a trail assessment by Conservation Works could be completed in a timely manner for \$3,600, and that remediation for work on a stairwell to the middle school is being discussed. He has spoken with wetland scientist Susan McArthur about future work examining the full length of the gas trail in Framingham which runs through the Carol Getchell. That step would open the door for future grant applications to pay for the remediation work.

Mr. Sciacca asked about more immediate solutions, such as buying lumber to store at a staging area and implementing the project later. Mr. Chick said the Framingham Conservation Department was amenable to that idea. Ms. Field-Juma said she liked the idea of funding a comprehensive plan which would be helpful for future grant applications. Mr. Chick said that Susan McArthur and Dick O'Brien from Conservation Works could collaborate with the Conservation Department to create a master plan. Ms. Lord thought the trail assessment and purchase of lumber could be completed before July 15 but that the engineering drawing could not be completed by that date. Ms. Slugg said that she and Ms. Lord would try to reach out to Council members by mid-June with timetables and enough information to vote on funding some of this work. Ms. Lord said that it is likely we will still have unallocated funds after the Framingham work is funded and she will reach out to partners to see if they have projects that could be completed by July 15 that could use some additional funding.

8:34 pm Ms. Sorrows thought that the Lincoln landing would benefit from boat launch improvements for its muddy conditions. Ms. Slugg said that the Council has previously discussed funding one project a year, separate from community grants, which is related to recreation projects in member towns and that the Lincoln Boat Launch idea could go on the list of possible future projects.

8:38 pm Ms. Lord asked if there were any other topics that Council members would like to discuss that were not on the agenda. Mr. Chick asked how he would receive notice about RSVP's to his Riverfest paddles. Ms. Lord said she would contact him when she had the final numbers of participants. Ms. Field-Juma said that OARS had recently held a Weed Warrior Training which was filmed and had many attendees. The film will be part of the certification process which will include an in-person field visit. She also said that there will be a presentation of the dragonfly project at the OARS Annual Meeting on June 27th. She shared that there will be a public meeting at the Billerica Town Hall on June 29th on the status of the Talbot Mill Dam removal project. It will be held in person and also available to watch remotely.

8:45 pm Ms. Lord said that the Council does not normally have a June meeting but that we should plan to have one because of the funding that still needs to be spent.

8:47 pm Ms. Field-Juma motioned to adjourn, Ms. Henderson seconded. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Christine Dugan