



Minutes for June 25, 2024

RSC Representatives present: Anne Slugg, Chair (Sudbury), Emma Lord (NPS), Elissa Brown (Lead River Ambassador), Matt Brown (OARS), Ron Chick (Framingham), Dan Cook (Carlisle), John Drobinski (Sudbury-Alt), Christine Dugan (Lincoln), Ralph Hammond (Bedford), Carlene Hempel (Concord), Stephanie Koch (USFWS), Tom Sciacca (Wayland), Ellie Sablak (River Ambassador),

RSC Representatives absent: Bill Fadden (Framingham), Marlies Henderson (Billerica), Eric Simms (Wayland-Alt), Frank Richichi (Bedford)

Welcome and May Minutes

7:02 pm Ms. Slugg opened the meeting. She welcomed Mr. Drobinsky as the new Sudbury representative and asked Council members to introduce themselves. Mr. Drobinsky then introduced himself as a geologist, a former Sudbury Selectman and Sudbury Planning Board member as well as having previously served as RSC Chair for 10 years.

7:05 pm Ms. Slugg motioned to accept the May Minutes with one edit from Mr. Chick on Framingham funding. The motion passed 10-0 with one abstention.

7:11 pm Ms. Slugg said that a new slate of RSC Officers had been nominated. Those candidates included Marlies Henderson for Chair, Matt Brown for Vice Chair, Christine Dugan for Secretary and Ron Chick for Treasurer. Ms. Slugg asked if those names were acceptable to the Council. Hearing no objections, Ms. Slugg announced that the motion to accept the new slate of candidates had passed.

River Ambassador Update

7:13 pm Ms. Brown said that she exchanged emails with the MBTA because the South Bridge Boat House has posted a sign on leased MBTA property stating that river access is not allowed. The boat house has also parked a trailer in front of that sign to make river access even more difficult. The dispute over river access is ongoing. Last month the River Ambassadors conducted tabling events in West Concord, Billerica, the Acton-Boxboro Farmers Market and at PorchFest. Ms. Brown provided the SuAsCo's perspective on Warner's Pond at multiple Concord events. She attended the last Warner's Pond Task Force meeting where Joseph Gould shared a strong argument about why the DER believes in dam removals. Ms. Brown displayed photos of the pond taken recently. She said that it is difficult to paddle there now due to significant invasive vegetation.

7:18 pm Ms. Brown spent many hours over the past month working with Julia Khorana who is organizing RiverFest. The River Ambassadors have been distributing RiverFest flyers to various locations in SuAsCo towns, as well as to the neighboring towns of Acton and Maynard. Ms. Sablak is taking the lead in promoting the SuAsCo and RiverFest on social media. The River Ambassadors did some fish monitoring at Centennial Dam in Lowell. Ms. Brown spoke with Jane Calvin from Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust about why there aren't migratory fish in the Concord River now but why there is great potential for them in the future. The River Ambassadors helped OARS in clearing some dangerous obstructions in the Assabet. They worked with OARS on bacteria sampling and water quality sampling. They collected a few isolated

water chestnuts in Fairhaven Bay before they grew into infestations. The River Ambassadors continue to talk with as many paddlers as possible, and to collect trash from the rivers.

Ms. Brown said she encountered multiple jet skiers near the Bedford boat launch who left large wakes around paddlers. She put in an enforcement notification with the Dept of Environmental Police but was not optimistic that they would patrol that part of the river. Mr. Sciacca asked Ms. Koch about the Environmental Police that used to patrol Great Meadows. Ms. Koch said that, practically speaking, Great Meadows has gone from having 2 full-time officers stationed at the Sudbury office to just one part-time officer.

Warner's Pond Subcommittee Update

7:40 pm Ms. Hempel said that the promotional buttons have been delivered. Mr. Cook is still looking for a higher resolution photo of the pond for the promotional magnet and for a vendor. Ms. Hempel said that the Subcommittee is requesting \$7,850 from the RSC to hire Reel Quest Films to create the RSC's 2-4-minute informational video on dam removal at Warner's Pond. The Subcommittee may later request more funding for add-ons such as professional narration. Ms. Lord moved that the Council approve a budget of \$7,850 for the 2-4-minute movie, with the caveat that future money may be requested later for add-on features. Mr. Hammond seconded and the motion passed 11-0.

Updates

7:58 pm Mr. Sciacca asked if anyone knew about progress being made on the Talbot Mill dam removal. Mr. Brown said that OARS is acting as project manager. A consultant is submitting the 404 and Army Corps of Engineers permits. The next step will be talking to the Billerica Conservation Commission. He noted that local opponents of the dam removal recently seemed to accept that the dam removal was inevitable. He anticipates that the next meeting will produce some tangible items for the historical mitigation list.

8:00 pm Mr. Chick said that the Framingham Community Preservation Committee (CPC) approved spending \$10,000 to research an easement that is needed for a conceptual design to build access from the Stapleton School to the Carol Getchell Trail. The CPC also funded \$650,000 to replace 1,000 feet of boardwalk on the Carol Getchell Trail. In total Framingham has approved \$1.1 million to make two-thirds of the Carol Getchell Trail accessible.

8:04 pm Mr. Brown said that OARS has had grant money for about 10 years that it has not been able to use yet. Part of that grant is for water chestnut removal and part is intended for building a docking-accessible canoe launch in Framingham. He has been exploring docking locations with the help of Mr. Chick and others. Two spots under consideration are at Simpson Park and Little Farms Road. He would also like to explore kayak and paddle board rental lockers such as those offered at Ice House Landing in Maynard.

8:16 pm Ms. Lord said that planning is underway for sampling dates and logistics for the Dragonfly Mercury Project. She invited anyone who is interested in participating to contact her so that she could add their names to the sampling project working group.

8:19 pm Several Council members expressed their appreciation for Ms. Slugg's many years of service and most especially for her long tenure as RSC Chair. They wished her well on her move from Sudbury.

8:23 Ms. Slugg adjourned the meeting.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Christine Dugan