

ROCHESTER RIVERWALK COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 24, 2023

City Hall Annex, Cocheco Room, ROCHESTER, NH 03967

MEMBERS PRESENT – Jon Batson, Maggie McConaghy, Barbara Murphy, Stacey Purslow, Esther Thompson, David Walker

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE – Brian Hettrick of Sunshine Initiative, Jennifer Marsh of Rochester Economic Development, Renée McIsaac of Rochester Planning & Development, Nathan McConaghy

ABSENT - Peter Bruckner, Jennifer Gullison, Kerrie Landry, Trish Prescott.

A. CALL TO ORDER — David Walker called the meeting to order at 6:04.

B. APPROVAL —

Motion to accept the minutes of regular meeting June 22, 2023, was made by Maggie, seconded by Stacey, and approved by all.

C. DISCUSSION —

Update on Hanson Pines Project

The benches were painted and heavily coated with polyurethane in one day between rainstorms. Visitors to the park that day expressed appreciation for the work being done. The protective coating is already proving its worth in the removal of recent graffiti.

Kayak Launch Mishap

The launch was detached from its mooring. A volunteer put it back together. **Jenn** is writing him a thank you. A surveillance camera will be requested for the launch site by **Jenn**.

D. DISCUSSION —

Overlook

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in the amount of \$200K were approved for design and installation of an overlook pad on the North Main Street side of the dam immediately downstream from the three-arch bridge. The project will need to be completed in 2024. City staff, professional engineers, and construction experts are providing information for the project.

Update to Master Plan

Changes to the 2018 Master Plan will include design guidelines, easements, and project elements that are being added to Riverwalk. The update is funded for up to \$30K for completion by the spring of 2024.

Discussion is underway on how to work with the Fownes Mill Project to install a pedestrian bridge across the Cocheco and to extend to Gagne Street or thereabouts. Also under discussion is the construction of an amphitheater between River Street and the Cocheco River.

D. DISCUSSION —

Vision Statement

Vision Statement of the Rochester, New Hampshire, Riverwalk is maintained on Google Docs for committee members to read and to comment on. The committee read the purpose and the committee competencies list with intent to provide feedback at a subsequent meeting. Also in the works and posted online are underlying beliefs and values.

This document along with the master plan supports the story being expressed to tell others about Rochester Riverwalk. **Renée** volunteered to participate on the Story Committee.

E. DISCUSSION — Other

David presented the suggestions written by community members attending the Lilac Family Fun Festival. The flipcharts attracted many ideas, including a splash pad along the Riverwalk and drinking water availability. The later initiated a discussion of public toilets. Public toilets are available at city hall, the police station, and the public library when those buildings are open. This does not serve the full extent of time and location that Riverwalk is welcoming the public. **Brian** will get information on Manchester’s Cedar Swamp Preserve and on parks and trails in other states and countries as models for in-town trails in natural settings.

Jenn displayed an information placard that would be one of many installed by the city and which Riverwalk could also provide for communicating and educating at a variety of sites in the city. Committee members noted the difficulty of font which is too small to read with ease.

Brian advocated for the development of a communication strategy—a communication master plan—identifying all the stakeholders and providing for their participation.

Monday, September 25, at 3:00 and at 4:00pm, a downtown accessibility study by Strafford Regional Planning Commission and Healthy Living Coalition invites groups of two to go on walking tours and take notes on accessibility issues.

The popular outdoor Riverwalk Dinner will be planned for the spring of 2024.

Foster’s is interested in doing a piece on Riverwalk connections between Barrington, Rochester, and Farmington.

Coming this fall, Forward Foundation is putting together a 4-session program on the Cocheco River watershed. “Great Bay Changemaker Bootcamp” will run each session in a different community—Barrington, Dover, Farmington, and Rochester—every other Thursday evening, starting September 28th.

F. Adjourn — Motion to adjourn was made at 7:12 by Maggie, seconded by Esther, and accepted unanimously.

Next meeting to be a walking tour Thursday, September 29, 2023, 5:30pm.

—Respectfully submitted by Esther Thompson