

UNRBA Board of Directors September 23, 2008 Meeting Summary

Prepared September 24, 2008

UNRBA mission: To preserve and protect the water quality in the Upper Neuse River Basin through innovative, cost effective, and environmentally sound strategies and to create a coalition of local governments and stakeholders in a water resources partnership.

Introductions and Meeting Objectives

The Board of Directors of the Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) held a lunch meeting at 11:30 A.M. on Wednesday, September 23, 2008 at the Pergamon Restaurant in Butner. The City of Creedmoor hosted the meeting.

Meeting attendees are listed below (* denotes UNRBA Director or Alternate Director).

Name	Organization	Contact
Thomas Marrow*	Town of Butner	tmarrow@butnenc.org
Tom Mercer*	City of Creedmoor	tmercercityofcreedmoor.org
Becky Heron*	Durham County	beckymheron@nc.rr.com
Tom Stevens*	Town of Hillsborough	tom.stevens@hillsboroughnc.org
Jimmy Clayton*	Person County	jimmyb60@embarqmail.com
Dale Crisp*	City of Raleigh P.U.D.	Dale.Crisp@ci.raleigh.nc.us
Lindsay Mize*	SGWASA	Lmize@sgwasa.org
Robert Rosenthal*	Soil and Water Conservation	rosenthal@mindspring.com
Ellen Wilkins*	Stem	Rejwilkins@aol.com
Margaret Stinnett*	Town of Wake Forest	mstinnett@wakeforestnc.gov
Melissa Hodges	Town of Butner	planning@butnenc.org
Dave Roesler	City of Creedmoor	planningdirector@cityofcreedmoor.org
Helen Youngblood	Durham City/County Planning	Helen.Youngblood@durhamnc.gov
Nancy Newell	City of Durham Water Mgmt.	Nancy.Newell@durhamnc.gov
Barry Baker	Granville County	Barry.baker@granvillecounty.org
Ed Buchan	City of Raleigh P.U.D.	Edward.Buchan@ci.raleigh.nc.us
Mike Schlegel	KCI Technologies	mschlegel@kci.com
Sarah Bruce	UNRBA	sbruce@tjcog.org
Shelby Powell	Kerr-Tar COG	spowell@kerrtarco.org

Meeting agenda:

- Introductions and Announcements
- UNRBA Updates
- Board field trip
- UNRBA relationship to local planning

Introductions and Announcements

Meeting attendees introduced themselves and Tom Mercer said a brief welcome on behalf of the City of Creedmoor.

Sarah Bruce announced that the next UNRBA Board meeting would be Nov. 19, hosted by Orange County. The next Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy Stakeholder meeting will be Oct. 16.

Updates

Sarah Bruce presented updates on several UNRBA projects:

- UNRBA has contracted with the NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program to contact landowners and implement projects in 4 Upper Neuse watersheds plus Swift Creek in Wake County.
- The Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy Stakeholder Process was underway and encouraged Board members to participate or at least follow the process in the UNRBA newsletter. The first meeting reviewed existing standards for and conditions in the Lake. The second meeting focused on process and how decisions would be made by the Stakeholders. Dale Crisp asked if the schedule change would affect the project cost. Sarah reported that Sydney Miller TJCOG takes such things into consideration with scheduling revisions and was very cost-conscious, so she did not foresee a problem with the budget. She further reported that DWQ is requesting an extension of the July 2009 deadline for implementation of the Nutrient Management Strategy.
- Sarah completed the TJCOG BMP Maintenance & Enforcement Survey, which found that many programs are in their infancy and most local governments are not taking advantage of the tools and enforcement mechanisms available to them to help fund their stormwater management programs. The report is available on the UNC School of Government website at <http://www.efc.unc.edu/projects/stormwater.htm#research>.
- UNRBA's Project Implementation contract was underway with the NC Ecosystem Enhancement Program. Sarah and Heather Saunders are reviewing local watershed restoration plans and convening teams to update and implement them. Field work was conducted in October in Ledge and Ellerbe Creeks to identify potential projects to reduce nutrient pollution.
- Heather Saunders is overseeing the UNRBA project to plant trees in Lick and Little Lick Creeks with funding from the Home Depot Foundation via the Center for Watershed Protection. UNRBA hired an intern to coordinate volunteers and planting days, which have been scheduled for November 22 and December 13. Many materials and supplies are being donated.
- TJCOG has started its own green development initiative and applied for a grant to fund the work, including an award to recognize "greener" developments, so Sarah is coordinating with those staff on the "Greater Triangle Stewardship Development Award" that UNRBA was spearheading along with Cooperative Extension and Jason Doll with Stantec Consulting.

UNRBA Board Field Trip

Sarah Bruce proposed that the Board take a field trip to see see buffers and impacts to them up close. She suggested bringing newly elected officials along to help further their knowledge about watershed functions.

The Board agreed that a field trip would be beneficial and decided to hold it in lieu of the November Board meeting. [Addendum: The field trips will be held in Spring 2009 to better coordinate the events and allow the UNRBA Board to discuss FY10 budget and dues at the November Board meeting, before cost information needs to be submitted for local government budget cycles.] The Board suggested having more than one field trip to minimize travel time.

UNRBA and Local Planning

Sarah Bruce presented the activities that the UNRBA currently uses dues to fund: implementation planning, promoting the SET, outreach at the Eno Festival and other events, promoting green development, serving on local water quality advisory groups, preparing and sending the newsletter, and developing grants and projects to produce future UNRBA income. She reviewed the Technical Advisory Committee's 2006 strategic planning discussion, which centered around the need for UNRBA to act as a hub for information and communication on activities in the basin.

Board Member Lindsay Mize suggested that UNRBA could distribute relevant sections of important documents such as the Neuse Basinwide Plan to each local government to facilitate their consideration. Dale Crisp agreed, and further suggested that the UNRBA coordinate with the Lower Neuse River Basin Association (LNRBA) on reviews. Sarah agreed to look for opportunities to coordinate with the LNRBA, such as a joint board meeting.

Sarah reminded the group that they had directed her to promote the Site Evaluation Tool (SET) (www.unrba.org/set) within local governments, so she had met with member staff to review and discuss the SET. She has noted the need for work to incorporate local regulations into the SET. Many recommendations in the SET could carry over to the NMS regulations. Wake and Orange Counties had agreed to do pilot SET projects. Sarah will report on the results of those projects at a future Board meeting.

Recently some planning issues have arisen in East Durham that raised issues of how Sarah should be best using her staff time to carry out UNRBA's mission. The Board and other attendees voiced the following thoughts on the issue of UNRBA involvement in local planning:

- UNRBA should remain a technical organization, and not an advocacy organization.
- UNRBA should offer technical assistance to anyone in the basin, but should not offer opinions.
- The staff of a city makes a staff recommendation to the elected officials. The elected officials do not always hear the discussions involved in making those recommendations, and may not even know what questions to ask or issues to raise if UNRBA does not point them out.
- UNRBA should advocate for watershed protection by advocating for their plans to be implemented.
- The UNRBA should be advocating in favor of protecting Raleigh's drinking water since Lick Creek drains into Falls Lake.

- A difference between the UNRBA and the Lower Neuse Association is their members are accountable to one another. If one of them approves something that adversely impacts the basin, they have to answer to the rest of the members. UNRBA only has goals right now. Those goals may be codified in the future within the context of the NMS, but right now these are only goals, not laws or ordinances. The members of this Board should be responsible for bringing these type issues forward in their local meetings. That is why they are appointed to serve on UNRBA.
- Any information that Sarah can pass on in an impartial manner could help make decisions.
- It is not feasible to ask a regional employee who answers to so many different governing boards to review individual developments to see if they mesh with the plans that were done locally. All the individual watershed plans are done in cooperation with the local staff, so they should know what is in the plans and should incorporate that into any staff recommendations. The UNRBA Board member knows the plans are in place and can monitor that way.
- Sarah should look to the elected officials within the UNRBA to call on an as-needed basis. It can't be institutionalized because of political issues that Sarah or any staff should not be involved in.
- There is not enough participation by elected officials on the UNRBA board. It is wonderful having all the staff at the meetings, but participation by the elected leaders is the way to get things implemented.
- The UNRBA newsletter was started to inform all members of all local government boards of what was going on at UNRBA and with water quality in general. All elected officials should be aware of the issues and educated about what is happening to deal with them. No staff member wants to be politically involved in the decision-making process. We are all technical advisors.
- We need better communication techniques to get that newsletter to all the Commissioners and Council Members. Sarah should send the newsletter to all the clerks to give to the Boards.
- Sarah should contact the Board member before becoming involved in any local community group or non-staff group so she will know the background of any situation before getting into it. If the UNRBA wants to send staff to represent UNRBA interests at public meetings or hearings, the Board members should be prepared for other members of their local boards to call them and complain if the advice from UNRBA is not necessarily what they want to hear, especially if the UNRBA position appears to be against an economically desirable development.
- We as a Board may not be clear on the purpose or mission of the UNRBA. The Board needs to do some strategic planning as we move forward.
- A discussion between the TAC and the Board might be needed, but that may be illegal due to public meeting laws. Strategic issues need to be discussed thoroughly by both groups.
- Tom Stevens volunteered to assist Sarah and others with the creation of a vision or mission statement for the group.
- Some recommendations in our plans will become rules, and we need to mitigate demands made on local governments. The UNRBA should advocate for the protection of the watershed, and Sarah should contact the local Board member before becoming

involved with other community groups. She should also notify the Board member of any activities she becomes involved within the local member communities.

- The local governments need to stay informed and involved and give input into the process.
- The question of the means by which UNRBA staff gets involved in these activities should be carefully considered. In open meetings or quasi-judicial meetings, the staff will go on record and would not want to appear to be giving advice or opinion beyond a technical advisory capacity. Also, with emails as public record, email advice could become an issue in a court of law. We need to make sure we protect the staff interests of UNRBA just as we would our local staff.
- All media inquiries requesting opinions should be referred to the Board. Staff should not state opinions on behalf of the organization.

Sarah expressed thanks to the Board for helping her think through these issues and said that this guidance was very helpful to her. Sarah will follow up with Tom Stevens to plan a discussion to clarify the Board's positions on the subject.

Adjournment

Sarah Bruce reminded the group of the upcoming Falls Lake Stakeholder meeting on October 16. There being no further business to discuss, Chairman Heron adjourned the meeting.