



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2018, 7:00 PM
MINUTES

MEETING AT SOMERVILLE CITY HALL
93 HIGHLAND AVENUE
3RD FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

DRAFT Meeting notes prepared by Vanessa Boukili, based on a recording of the meeting

Commission Members in attendance: Rachel Borgatii (Chair), Cristina Kennedy, Mathias Neuber, Owen Wartella, Michael Fager, David Turin

Commission Members absent: Aladdine Joroff

Others in Attendance: Tara Mitchell (Citywide Garden Coordinator), Eline Bakker

Staff: Vanessa Boukili (Conservation Agent)

Rachel Borgatti called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm followed by introductions.

New Business (7:03 pm)

- 1) Community Garden discussion with Citywide Garden Coordinator, Tara Mitchell
 - Tara held a meet and greet with the garden coordinators in the summer and two coordinators came. Otherwise garden coordinators have not asked much of Tara in terms of enforcing rules. Overall very little feedback. Will hold another meet and greet in February.
 - Summer was very busy in terms of requests for plots. All of the waitlists are very long – prohibitively so. Looking for opportunities to cull list.
 - When reach out to coordinators (rarely) some coordinators are responsive, others are not.
 - Most gardens have two coordinators, one or two gardens only have one coordinator and some have three. It is best to have multiple coordinators.
 - Overview of google doc organization, including garden overview and waitlist. When people request a plot, generally Tara generally provides them the contact information of the coordinators for the two closest gardens, but will provide information for more gardens upon request. She lets them know that can only hold one plot at a time and asks them to let coordinators know to remove them from other waitlists once they get a plot.

- Different garden coordinators run their gardens differently; it would be helpful to give coordinators consistent guidance on expectations and waitlist management.
- Discussed any complaints about gardens. Only one report of gardens being unkempt (Chuckie Harris). No recent public complaints about access, but would be nice to make gardens more welcoming. Perhaps have a sign on the gardens with contact information so that access/tour of garden can be arranged. Language would be welcoming so that folks who are not part of the garden can learn more about it and see it.
- Other ideas help gardens be more accessible to the public: open garden days (perhaps align with open studios or other open house events), festivals or “night gardens” events on summer evenings. Can also do tabling at Somerville events, like SomerStreets, to tell people about gardens and invite them to visit.
- Discussed ideas to manage waitlists: put time limits on how long someone can hold a plot, ask people if they would be willing to give up their plot to allow more people to become part of it, look at demographics of garden plots and see how it matches demographics of Somerville residents, add more garden plots (ex. concrete area at Dickerman Park could potentially hold 10-15 plots).
- Status of fees – garden coordinators collect fees from gardeners and \$5 per plot is sent to the Conservation Commission. Less than half of the garden coordinators have sent money to the Commission for 2017 or 2016. Unsure about how the coordinators use the rest of garden fee money or how they keep track of payments. Each garden should submit accounting form to Conservation Commission.
- Commissioner Wartella will be point person for community gardens. He will work with Tara to help formulate community garden solutions.
- *Action: send email to garden coordinators stating that attendance at February Conservation Commission meeting is mandatory.*

2) CPA proposals for Open Space

- Commissioner Fager, Conservation Commission Representative on the Community Preservation Committee (CPC), and also current CPC Chair, gave an overview of the 2018 CPA proposals.
- 2nd CPA hearing tomorrow night (1/24/2018)
- 2018 CPA budget for Open Space/ Recreation Land just over \$1.38 million. 2018 CPA requests total over \$2.2 million (not including Prospect Hill Park Renovation).
- Projects include:
 - Blessing of the Bay Park Revitalization Phase 2. \$165,660.00. Mystic River Watershed Association. Design.
 - Growing Center Rehabilitation and Restoration Implementation. \$456,932.00. Friends of the Community Growing Center. Construction.
 - Renovation of existing natural grass auxiliary field space at Dilboy to create grass soccer field. \$136,179.00. Somerville Parks & Recreation.
 - East Somerville Community School Schoolyard Enhancement. \$286,000.00. Somerville DPW. Construction.
 - West Somerville Neighborhood School & Brown School Schoolyard Design. \$160,000.00. Somerville Department of Parks and Open Space. Design.
 - Somerville Community Path. \$15,000.00. Somerville Department of Parks and Open Space. Design.
 - ArtFarm. \$1,000,000.00. Somerville Department of Parks and Open Space in collaboration with Somerville Arts Council. Construction.

- Prospect Hill Park Renovation. \$800,000.00. City of Somerville. Construction. Blended open space/recreational land and historic preservation project.
 - More detailed summary of projects provided in “2018 CPA Applications.docx” document.
 - Discussed whether or not schoolyard projects should be funded with CPA funds or if renovations should be part of the normal business of the city.
 - Full proposals are also available on CPA website. Written public comments are due in early February (link on CPA website) and all proposals will be reviewed at the February CPA meeting.
 - At the February ConCom meeting, Commissioner Fager will provide additional thoughts and comments on the proposals.
- 3) MWRA contract No. 6539 Weston Aqueduct Supply Main 3 Boring Program
- Boring program related to preliminary design purposes for rehabilitation of the Weston Aqueduct Supply Main 3 (WASM3). One boring in Somerville within 100-ft buffer zone of bordering vegetative wetlands (outside of 25-ft riverfront area).
 - Claim to be exempt based on WPA 10.02(2)(a)(2) and WPA 10.02(b)(1)(g).
 - Boring is not a maintenance, repair, or replace activity, thus not exempt from 10.02(2)(a)(2). Moreover, this exemption only applies “provided said work utilizes the best practical measures to avoid or minimize impacts to wetland resource areas outside the footprint of said structure or facility.” Insufficient information has been provided to assess whether this is the case.
 - WPA 10.02(b)(1)(g) does not exist, but wording provided matches WPA 10.02(2)(b)(2)(g). However, that exemption relies on also meeting the conditions described in WPA 10.02(2)(b)1, which cannot be determined based on the information provided. Specifically, it is unclear if the work is being performed “in a manner so as to reduce the potential for any adverse impacts to the resource area during construction, and with post-construction measures implemented to stabilize any disturbed areas. Factors to consider when measuring the potential for adverse impacts to resource areas include the extent of the work, the proximity to the resource area, the need for erosion controls, and the measures employed to prevent adverse impacts to resource areas during and following the work.”
 - *Action: Contact MWRA as they need to provide more information about the project and a plan of how they are protecting the resources.*
 - Also, let them know that borings in this area have already been done by Enbridge (formerly Algonquin). May be able to get information from them.

Updates and Discussion (6:53 pm)

- 1) Ongoing projects: Reviewed ongoing projects spreadsheet
 - Mystic River Dock Removal project - photos
- 2) Outstanding Action Items:
 - Boukili to report City’s street sweeping schedule in ASQ.
 - ASQ street sweeping is on Friday schedule (2x per month). Also, Millenium contract includes nightly sweeping but unsure about where exactly that is and if it is being done.
 - Everyone to provide comments on *Conservation Commission Policies* document to Commissioner Joroff by the end of December.
 - Continued until next meeting.
 - Everyone to review the draft of the public education brochure and provide comments and suggestions by the end of December.
 - Continued until next meeting.

- Commissioner Wartella to look for general audience brochure examples and to start working on one for Somerville.
 - Continued until next meeting.
 - Boukili to ask Gene Crouch to provide spreadsheet with compiled water quality sampling data.
 - Boukili compiled data from 4 of the sampling events, and emailed request to Gene Crouch.
 - Boukili to draft letter to Winter Hill Yacht Club and send to Commission.
 - Draft letter completed today.
 - *Action: Everyone to provide comments on Winter Hill Yacht Club letter by February meeting.*
 - Schedule DCR to come to January meeting for briefing re: Draw 7 Park
 - Continued until next meeting.
 - Boukili to find out who cleans out Vortech Units at Assembly Square, and how often it is done.
 - Asked Engineering Department, suggest that Sewer Department would be in charge of maintenance.
 - FRIT did have them cleaned out, but responsibility now falls to City now (since the time when the roads were turned over to the City).
 - Sampling may result in positive effluent if not being cleaned out 2x per year.
 - *Action: Reach out to Sewer Department to check on maintenance schedule.*
 - Invite Tara Mitchell and community garden coordinators to come to Jan or Feb meeting.
 - Tara Mitchell came to January meeting, community garden coordinators will be invited to February meeting.
 - Boukili to notify Commissioners about reappointment to Commission.
 - Notification done. Will begin reappointment process.
 - Discuss document sharing and editing options.
 - Continued until next meeting.
 - Boukili to update Commissioner list on website.
 - Made request but list has not yet been updated.
- 2) Discussion about high speed boats and wakes
- Tabled until next meeting.

Other Business: (7:04 pm)

- 1) MACC Spring Conference
 - March 3rd. Commissioners to sign up independently and submit reimbursement.
- 2) Schedule Assembly Square walk through
 - Tour of site to go through history and get feel for site and current projects there.
 - Tabled scheduling until next meeting.

Approval of minutes:

- 1) Unanimously approved November 28, 2017 minutes with three amendments at 9:04 [motion – Wartella, second – Fager].
- 2) Unanimously approved December 20, 2017 minutes with one amendment at 9:06 [motion – Wartella, second – Kennedy].

Adjourn:

- 1) Motion to adjourn meeting unanimously approved at 9:06 [motion – Wartella, second – Fager].



Complete List of Outstanding Action Items:

January:

- **Action:** Send email to garden coordinators stating that attendance at February Conservation Commission meeting is mandatory.
- **Action:** Contact MWRA re: contract No. 6539 Weston Aqueduct Supply Main 3 Boring Program. They need to provide more information about the project and a plan of how they are protecting the resources.
- **Action:** Everyone to provide comments on Winter Hill Yacht Club letter by February meeting.
- **Action:** Reach out to Sewer Department to check on maintenance schedule of Vortech Units at ASQ.

November:

- **Action:** Everyone to provide comments on Conservation Commission Policies document to Commissioner Joroff.
- **Action:** Everyone to review the draft of the public education brochure and provide comments and suggestions to Commissioner Joroff.
- **Action:** Commissioner Wartella to look for general audience brochure examples and to start working on one for Somerville.
- **Action:** Boukili to have Gene Crouch provide spreadsheet with compiled water quality sampling data.
- **Action:** Schedule DCR to come to January meeting for briefing re: Draw 7 Park

December:

- **Action:** Discuss document sharing options (ex. for document editing).
- **Action:** Boukili update Commissioner list on website.

List of Meeting Documents (located here: K:\OHCD\Shared\Conservation Commission\Agenda + Minutes + Legal Notices 2018\2018_01_23_Meeting_Documents):

- Agenda (2017_01_23_Agenda.pdf)
- Ongoing Project Data Spreadsheet (Ongoing Project Data.xlsx)
- November meeting minutes (2017_11_28_Minutes_Draft.docx)
- December meeting minutes (2017_12_20_Minutes_Draft.docx)
- Summary of CPA projects (2018 CPA Applications.docx, FY18 project presentation flyer)
- MWRA letter (MWRA Contract No. 6539 - Weston Aqueduct Supply Main 3 - Boring Program.pdf)
- Mystic Dock Removal Project photos (2 photos, DSC_0554 and DCS_0576 located here: K:\OHCD\Shared\Conservation Commission\Agenda + Minutes + Legal Notices 2018\2018_01_23_Meeting_Documents Mystic Dock Removal Project barge)
- Assembly square water quality monitoring dataset (ASQ water quality monitoring summary_VKB.xlsx)
- Draft of letter to Winter Hill Yacht Club (Conservation Commission Letter to WHYC_DRAFT.docx)
- Draft Conservation Commission policy document (Draft Somerville ConComm. Policy (Nov. 2017).docx)
- Draft Conservation Commission educational brochure (Conservation commission two-pager (11.28 draft).docx)