



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

TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2019, 7:00 PM  
**MINUTES**

MEETING AT SOMERVILLE CITY HALL  
93 HIGHLAND AVENUE  
3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

*Meeting notes prepared by Vanessa Boukili*

**Commission Members in attendance:** Rachel Borgatti (Chair, left meeting at 9:00pm), Owen Wartella, Michael Fager (acting chair @ 9:00pm), Mathias Neuber (left meeting at 8:33 pm), Aladdine Joroff, David Turin (arrived at 7:10pm)

**Commission Members absent:** Cristina Kennedy

**Others in Attendance:** Erica Satin-Hernandez (Shape-Up Somerville), Jeanine Farley

**Staff:** Vanessa Boukili (Conservation Agent)

Rachel Borgatti called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm followed by introductions.

**New Business:**

- 1) Community Gardens reports and discussion (7:02 pm)
  - Shape-Up Somerville (Erica Satin-Hernandez) acting as internal consultant to review garden program and make recommendations for improvement. She provided the following documents to discuss and review.
    - *Recommendations Overview* – based on regional research from other community gardens program, and survey to Somerville community gardeners. Recommendations include: city staff alerting ConCom about plans for creating and renovating gardens; expanding closed (private) garden sites; formalizing application process and annual reapplication process to keep plot; one waitlist for all gardens with annual notification to stay on waitlist; annual reapplication process for current gardeners; packet of information to coordinators including infraction policy; increase content on website including Q&A. Streamline processes by shifting certain responsibilities to program manager.



- *Survey Responses* – responses from community gardeners. Many people would prefer application and waitlist process to be moved from garden coordinator responsibilities to program manager responsibilities.
  - *Draft Procedures Manual* – details of community garden policies and procedures. Includes delineation of roles between program manager and garden coordinators. Spreadsheet and google doc application to help streamline processes.
  - *Draft Application & Reapplication Forms* – google doc forms that populate a database.
  - *Garden Coordinator Responsibilities* – document clearly delineating responsibilities.
  - Ideas and discussion:
    - How to prioritize people on waitlist (based on information collected in application forms)?
    - Include document describing how waitlist is managed?
    - Add application question about interest in communal garden plot (at this time)?
    - Term limits? Varies widely in other communities. Maybe consider 5-7 years? Or no term limits but ensure gardeners are truly using plots well.
    - Policy for gardeners moving plots in same garden, or moving to another garden.
    - Online payment system to collect fees?
    - For infractions, include a printed notice placed on the plot.
    - Create form letters for infractions.
    - Official badges for garden coordinators and/or program manager?
    - Important to share final documents with program manager and coordinators and get feedback.
    - How will position on waitlist be communicated to folks?
    - Data security issue with collecting demographic information. Perhaps best not to collect this. Also, what is purpose of collecting data on number of people in household who might tend plot and if people have space to garden at home?
    - Wider reaching survey to Somerville community regarding community gardens?
    - Need to better advertise community gardens to public, such as on the website, on fliers (ex. 10 things about the city flier that goes out in elections survey)
    - On the reapplication form, consider adding statement about how long the waitlists are, and asking if they want their plot next year, and/or if they would like to share their plot.
    - Add communal growing spaces near front of garden that passers-by can pick from, may curb theft within individual garden plots.
    - Some tree trimming is needed at the gardens to increase light.
  - ConCom subcommittee created, to go through these documents in detail and make recommendations. Include suggestions about term limits, locked gardens, etc. Subcommittee members: David Turin, Aladdine Joroff, Cristina Kennedy (nominated in absentia).
    - **Action: garden subcommittee to provide suggestions at February meeting.**
- 2) Snow removal plan from DPW (8:11 pm)
- City contract this year stipulates that all stored snow will be sent to Revere. There is no designated snow storage area for Somerville.
  - Reviewed and edited draft letter created by Commissioner Kennedy. Final letter to be sent to DPW Commissioner and Superintendent of Highways.

### Updates and Discussion (8:39pm):

- 1) Ongoing Projects updates
  - a) DCR Outfall Maintenance project site visit



- Agent Boukili and Commissioner Fager performed site visit 12/18/2018. Met with Tom Valton from DCR.
- Reviewed site visit photos. Project is nearly complete (still need to plant trees) and work was done in acceptable manner.
- Outfall signs in area are labeled “City of Medford” because it is Medford’s rain water.
- **Action: Commissioner Wartella and Agent Boukili to follow up on Medford outfall signs.**
- b) MBTA Charlestown Bus Facility project site visit
  - Agent Boukili and Commissioners Borgatti, Kennedy and Fager performed site visit 12/20/2018.
  - Reviewed site visit photos. Work is being done in an acceptable manner and conditions are being met.
- c) Eversource Oil Spill Update
  - Testing shows no PTC fluid coming out of outfall, so all oil booms were removed.
  - Sediment will be tested. Fingerprint analysis will be done on all samples with sufficient amounts of material.
  - ConCom will be sent complete sediment report, which should include threshold of fingerprint analysis.
- d) Other projects
  - Agent Boukili has assigned each Commissioner 2-4 projects with open OOCs to assist with ensuring special conditions are being met and COCs are filed when necessary.
  - **Action: send annual letter to Winter Hill Yacht Club.**
- 2) Education and Outreach
  - a) Educational brochure(s) – *continued until next meeting*
- 3) Letters/ notifications
  - a) Letter to DCR regarding Draw 7 Park – *continued until next meeting*
- 4) Committees/ Task Forces
  - a) Somervision 2040 Committee – *no updates*
  - b) Open Space Land Acquisition Task Force
    - Commissioner Fager is ConCom representative. Full-day meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup>.
- 5) Action Item review – *continued until next meeting*

**Other Business (8:55 pm):**

- 1) Annual MACC Environmental Conference
  - Commissioners Wartella and Joroff are interested in going.
- 2) 2019 City Nature Challenge
  - Weekend of April 27<sup>th</sup>.
  - Conservation Commission event, and possible collaboration with MyWRA.
  - Uses app to collect data, so may be able to get high school technology program involved.

**Approval of minutes:**

- 1) Vote to approve December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 minutes with one section (*Other Business 2) CPA projects*) amended at 9:05 pm [motion – Wartella, second – Turin; vote: 4:0:0].

**Adjourn:**

- 1) Motion to adjourn meeting unanimously approved at 9:06 pm [motion – Wartella, second – Joroff, vote: 4:0:0].



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## Outstanding Action Items:

### January:

- **Action:** garden subcommittee to provide suggestions at February meeting.
- **Action:** Commissioner Wartella and Agent Boukili to follow up on Medford outfall sign.
- **Action:** send annual letter to Winter Hill Yacht Club.

### November:

- **Action:** Commissioner Fager to draft letter to DCR re: Draw 7 Park, Commissioner Turin and Kennedy to assist.

### October:

- **Action:** Arn Franzen to let Tara and the garden coordinators know about the new construction timeline for Allen Street, and to make sure Erica and Lisa (Shape-Up Somerville) are involved.
- **Action:** Agent Boukili to work with T&I staff on educational brochure formatting.
- **Action:** After reformat this brochure to be able to easily print it, put this on website.
- **Action:** Agent Boukili to ask Thomas Dalton about Checkbox for Conservation Commission permits on DCR forms and get sample DCR form(s).

### September:

- **Action:** Boukili to put more information on the website, such as the community gardener agreement, coordinator responsibilities, etc.
- **Action:** Boukili to update Garden Map to include more street names (remove walkshed circles or put on interactive map so that people can zoom in and out).
- **Action:** Invite garden coordinators to March ConCom meeting.

### April:

- **Action:** Talk to DCR about including a check box for Conservation Commission permits on their permit forms (ex. is this project within 25 feet of a wetland? If so, contact local Conservation Commission).
- **Action:** Send email to DPW, Planning, Engineering, Capital Projects, and any other departments who might review construction or development projects. Remind them of Conservation Commission jurisdiction and requirements that must be following when working near the river.
- **Action:** Talk to Garden Coordinators about accounting of garden fees.
- **Action:** Commission to start a list of suggestions for Garden Coordinators about how to be more open/ inclusive, especially to folks on the waitlist (ex. "garden-sitting" when gardeners are on vacation).
- **Action:** Commissioner Joroff to revise ConCom Policies document, then Commissioners to read though it again to make sure everyone is willing to follow it.

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### List of Meeting Documents (located here: K:\OHCD\Shared\Conservation Commission\Agenda + Minutes + Legal Notices 2019\2019\_01\_22\_Meeting\_Documents):

- Agenda (2019\_01\_22\_Agenda.pdf)
- December Meeting Minutes (2018\_12\_11\_Minutes\_Draft.docx)
- Ongoing Projects spreadsheet (Ongoing Project Data.xlsx)
- Community Gardens documents (K:\OHCD\Shared\Conservation Commission\Agenda + Minutes + Legal Notices 2019\2019\_01\_22\_Meeting\_Documents\Community Gardens Recommendations):
  - 1. Recommendations Overview.docx
  - 2. Survey Responses.docx
  - 3. Draft Procedures Manual.docx
  - 4a. Draft Application.docx
  - 4b. Draft Reapplication.docx
  - 5. Garden Coordinator Responsibilities.docx
- Letter for Snow Disposal (2019 Snow Disposal Letter to DPW\_DRAFT.docx)
- DCR outfall maintenance site visit photos (15 photos, located here: K:\OHCD\Shared\Conservation Commission\Agenda + Minutes + Legal Notices 2019\2019\_01\_22\_Meeting\_Documents\DCR outfall maintenance site visit photos)
- MBTA Charlestown Bus Facility site visit photos (10 photos, located here: K:\OHCD\Shared\Conservation Commission\Agenda + Minutes + Legal Notices 2019\2019\_01\_22\_Meeting\_Documents\MBTA Charlestown Bus Facility site visit photos)

