



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

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2019, 7:00 PM  
MINUTES**

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

***DRAFT Meeting notes prepared by Vanessa Boukili***

**Commission Members in attendance:** Rachel Borgatti (Chair), Michael Fager, Mathias Neuber, Aladdine Joroff, David Turin

**Commission Members absent:** Owen Wartella, Cristina Kennedy

**Others in Attendance:** none

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

Rachel Borgatti called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm followed by introductions.

**Updates and Discussion:**

- 1) Community Gardens Program (7:05 pm)
  - Subcommittee report
    - Shape Up Somerville to manage wait list?
    - Edits to the proposed forms:
      - state the fee, allow people to select up to three gardens as well as first available, list all of the gardens and show a map of locations, include gardener agreement, state that the diversity information is optional, and remove “other” from the fee waiver section.
    - Term limits discussion:
      - Hybrid option that would not move people out, but would result in sharing plots for specified amounts of time. For example, person could hold a plot for 3-4 years, after which they would share their plot (split-plot) for 3-4 years, and then would go back to a spot on the waitlist.
      - Discussed asking community as a whole about preference for term-limits, and having a hearing about it.
  - Processing payments/ payment system



- Payment from individual garden plot holders directly to the City would be complicated. Setting up an online system for payments would somehow need to be directed into the Garden Fund. There are also restrictions for taking the money out, which would be burdensome for garden coordinators.
  - An account tracking system would be a much simpler solution.
  - Infractions
    - They need to be better defined. Unsure of how prescriptive to make them. The list is an indicator of diverse issues that need to be addressed. Could add some flexibility to the ramifications of the infractions, or provide some suggestions to avoid getting an infraction (ex. arrange plot-sitter while away on vacation).
  - Clarifications
    - Need to match manual to forms.
    - Need to clarify what information is optional and what is essential.
    - Will everyone need to reapply every year? Yes.
    - Need to do ADA plot outreach.
    - Need to clarify ADA language in document. For example, if someone is applying specifically for an ADA plot, they will be assigned an ADA plot when they reach the top of the list.
  - General Ideas
    - Discussed a garden share option for teachers. Perhaps have one plot per garden for schools. Groundwork Somerville already has plots on school grounds (at least in 2-3 schools), which the students work in.
    - Create community plot at each garden for grazing. Could do this in pots between plots, or raised beds.
      - **Action:** add this to an ongoing list of ideas for gardens/ gardeners
      - ConCom could incentivize this program through a mini-grant or giveaway program.
    - Chuckie-Harris Garden: consider partnering with soup kitchen nearby. Could use plots to plant a lot of blackberries, or something else communal?
  - **Action:** Garden subcommittee will submit a draft of all garden documents to be sent out to the ConCom and Garden Coordinators in time for the March 26<sup>th</sup> ConCom meeting.
  - **Action:** Invite Tara and Erica to March meeting
  - Allen Street garden update
    - Construction work will start this summer, so the plan is to close the garden this year.
- 2) Ongoing Projects (7:53 pm)
- Outfall signs near Boston Ave
    - There are Medford outfall signs on Somerville land. Communications with Commissioner Wartella, City of Medford Engineering Department, and City of Somerville Engineering Department confirms that the pipes are Medford's, so the outfalls are Medford's, even though they are on Somerville land. The consensus is that the outfall signs should remain, but that we can add additional signage to state that it is City of Somerville property, and thus Conservation Commission must be notified prior to completing any work in the area. Consider whether ConCom or Engineering Department would pay for signs.
      - **Action:** design and price out signs to add to Medford's outfall poles.

- **Action:** *contact Medford Conservation Commission to inform them of the joint jurisdiction of this property.*
- Draw 7 Park sediment sampling results
  - Received Draw 7 sediment sampling results from the area of the Eversource oil spill. Results show that concentrations of petroleum hydrocarbon fractions and total polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons at the sampling site are lower than location conditions (reference site is Former Everett Staging Yard Disposal Site). There are no hot pockets of contamination. Although the report does not clearly state what the next steps are, it seems logical that the cleanup efforts are complete. MassDEP will need to review this and sign off on the cleanup.
  - **Action:** *Commissioner Fager to review results and follow up.*
  - **Action:** *Agent Boukili to find and share the report listed on the first page of the transmittal.*
- Review ongoing projects spreadsheet
  - No updates on projects.
  - Commissioners have been assigned projects to help keep track of.
  - **Action:** *Agent Boukili to send assigned OOCs to Commissioners Turin and Neuber.*
- 3) Letters/ Notifications (8:15 pm)
  - Letter to DCR regarding Draw 7 Park – *continued until next meeting*
- 4) Committees & Task Force Reports (8:16 pm)
  - Somervision 2040 Committee (Commissioner Borgatti)
    - Somervision 2040 is an update of the 2030 plan; update document is online. The Committee consists of about 40-50 people, members are listed on the website.
    - Committee has met for kickoff meeting and a networking meeting. And around April 5<sup>th</sup> there will be a two-day conference.
    - All committee members have been encouraged to host one or more “Summer Supper” events, which are focus groups with guided conversation topics (open space, affordable housing, etc.). Hosts are asked to write up summary of how event went. Commissioner Borgatti will be hosting a series of summer supper events with different populations, including middle schoolers, arts community, friends, Assembly row. Anyone can host a summer supper; Commissioner Borgatti offered to help facilitate suppers hosted by other Commissioners.
  - Open Space Land Acquisition Task Force (Commissioner Fager)
    - The task force has met twice. Discussions have focused on how City can obtain open space in transitional areas (Assembly square, Brick bottom, Boynton yards, Inner Belt). There have been many detailed discussions on zoning, and whether open space areas will be public open space or privately owned open space.
    - Would be useful for task force to talk to people in other communities about how they have acquired more open space.
    - Purchasing 1 acre of open space costs approximately \$4-5 million.
    - Future meetings of task force will discuss open space acquisition for the rest of the city.
- 5) Associate Commissioners (8:44 pm)
  - Conservation Commission could use more technical expertise in certain areas, particularly engineering. Would like to consider opening up a few Associate Commissioner positions for technical people. Could recruit people by posting a job description and adding preferred technical expertise. When a formal position on the Commission opens up, having served as an Associate Commissioner with technical expertise could be more attractive to Appointments Committee. Other cities (ex. Medford) have Associate Commissioners.

- Concern that Associate Commissioners would not stick to it. Could ask them to play more of a consultant role, where they are only asked to come to meetings where we are discussing NOIs, RDAs, etc.

6) Action Item Review – *continued until next meeting*

**Other Business (9:00 pm):**

- 1) 2019 City Nature Challenge
  - Discussed preferred date and time. Will hold event in the morning on Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup> (rain date April 28<sup>th</sup>). Commissioner Kennedy to decide exact timing. Commissioner Borgatti will continue to do outreach with the schools.
- 2) Veteran’s Rink closed because of snow storage during last storm. **Action:** *Agent Boukili to follow up.*

**Approval of minutes:**

- 1) Vote to approve January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 minutes with no amendments at 9:10 pm [motion – Fager, second – Neuber; vote: 5:0:0].

**Adjourn:**

- 1) Motion to adjourn meeting unanimously approved at 9:10 pm [motion – Joroff, second – Neuber, vote: 5:0:0].

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**Outstanding Action Items:**

**2019**

**February:**

- **Action:** *Garden subcommittee will submit a draft of all garden documents to be sent out to the ConCom and Garden Coordinators in time for the March 26<sup>th</sup> ConCom meeting.*
- **Action:** *Invite Tara and Erica to March meeting*
- **Action:** *add idea of having community plot at gardens to an ongoing list of ideas for gardens/ gardeners*
- **Action:** *Agent Boukili to follow up about Veteran’s Rink snow storage.*
- **Action:** *design and price out signs to add to Medford’s outfall poles.*
- **Action:** *contact Medford Conservation Commission to inform them of the joint jurisdiction of this property [Boston Ave and Mystic Valley Parkway].*
- **Action:** *Commissioner Fager to review results [of Draw 7 sediment sampling results transmittal] and follow up.*
- **Action:** *Agent Boukili to find and share the report listed on the first page of the [Draw 7 park sediment sampling] transmittal.*
- **Action:** *Agent Boukili to send assigned OOCs to Commissioners Turin and Neuber.*

**2018**

**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).

**April:**

- **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\_02\_26\_Meeting\_Documents):

- Agenda (2019\_02\_26\_Agenda.pdf)
- January Meeting Minutes (2019\_01\_22\_Minutes\_Draft.docx)
- Ongoing Projects spreadsheet (Ongoing Project Data.xlsx)
- Community Gardens documents (K:\OHCD\Shared\Conservation Commission\Agenda + Minutes + Legal Notices 2019\2019\_02\_26\_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
- Data Transmittal for Draw Seven State Park sediment sampling (Data Trans\_DCR\_Final.pdf; email: Data Transmittal - Draw Seven State Park)