



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

TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 2019, 7:00 PM
MINUTES

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

Meeting notes prepared by Malik Drayton

Commission Members in attendance: Rachel Borgatti (Chair), David Turin, Cristina Kennedy, Aladdine Joroff, Owen Wartella (arrived at 7:12pm)

Commission Members absent: Michael Fager, Mathias Neuber

Others in Attendance: Kara Sliwoski (Solitude Lake Management)

Staff: Vanessa Boukili (Conservation Agent), Malik Drayton

Rachel Borgatti called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm followed by introductions.

New Business:

1. OOC extension request Aquatic Management Program (in-water, mechanical), DEP #287-0043 (7:09pm)
 - Kara Sliwoski – Solitude Lake Management
 - Manages the river for DCR and MyRWA
 - Harvesting for water chestnut control
 - Success by hand harvesting and mechanical removal of water chestnut
 - Reduction
 - 2 efforts mid-summer and late summer (since 2017)
 - Harvest end → Treatment beginning – pg. 4-5 referenced in materials
 - *Charts displayed to show reduction of water chestnut (reduction table referenced)*
2. OOC extension request Aquatic Management Program (chemical, phragmites), DEP #287-0053 (7:16pm)
 - Water chestnut reproduces by dropping nutlet structures
 - Harvested before they can reproduce
 - Not idea what seed bank is still in the river
 - Seeds can remain viable for over 10 years



- Same area being treated for Milfoil → Blessing of the bay area is the only area that overlaps with a treatment area.
- Extension request of three years for the in-water management mechanical order
 - Will plan to continue to submit reports
 - Also reporting for DCR and MyWRA
- Last year Phragmites wasn't treated as it was treated aggressively in 2017
 - Not enough regrowth that warranted treatment
 - Regardless interested in extension on the chemical order for phragmites
 - Phragmites treatment was primarily in the DCR Park in Medford
 - Waiting to see what comes up in the spring
 - Glyphosate – particular chemical under scrutiny (herbicide)
 - Should its usage be reevaluated?
 - Slated for discussion during annual meeting with DCR and Patrick
 - Are other options available?
 - If any changes are made there would have to be an amendment to the order
 - Other options have a significantly higher price tag
 - World Health Organization listed chemical as a possible carcinogen
 - Canada has done studies and found no reason to unregister it or make it unavailable for use.
 - Mixed reviews on both side, people are concern
 - Will proceed however DCR and MyRWA deems fit
- What areas in Somerville were heavily infested with Phragmites?
 - Huge stands in Medford more scattered in City of Somerville
 - Mechanical control is preferable
 - Commission to be involved to make more of an informed decision
- 3 year extension vs.1 year
 - Do 1 year extensions and then assess
 - What are the limits to the extension? 3 years max per extension
 - This is the first extension request
- Conservation commission wants to be able to weigh in before a treatment
 - Cant require and thing new or add new conditions
 - Order of conditions expires May12th 2019
 - Extension must be made before conditions expire
 - Can Conservation Commission be invited to the discussions?
 - Meeting or conference call?
 - Make them aware of concerns
 - The debate the and evolving science
- Should Conservation Commission just get an update on the outcome of the discussion?
- No extension request on the in-water part for the Milfoil
 - They have to provide their treatment plan for the year
 - Because the annual meeting haven't taken place yet
- Last year sonar treatments were successful
 - More success than anticipated
 - Mid to late may areas will be survey for milfoil
 - Diquat herbicide treatment
 - Contact herbicide
 - Kills active growth of the plants

- Doesn't kill roots
- SePRO Corporation → New herbicide ProcellaCOR EC
 - Liquid herbicide
 - Few ounces to the acre
 - Hydrophobic
 - NH herbicide residue sampling
 - No product found at any of the site after 3 days
 - Works similar to SONAR
 - 3 year guarantee
 - Variable milfoil treated → within 7 days
 - Doesn't affect natives
 - Coontail and lilies affected if they are in direct treatment area
 - Yellowing and wilting; recovering after 6-8 weeks
- Can we change chemical treatments under the conditions?
 - Plan is to file a minor change request
 - It was amended last year to change the type of herbicide from contact to systemic
- Within MDAR (Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources), finalized documents are being sent to the DEP and MDAR crop and pest services to get the language into the GEIR (Generic Environmental Impact Report)
- MassDEP already issuing permit with the chemical registered already
- Finalized plan with phragmities detail will be distributed
- It would be helpful to have the minutes of the meeting
 - Justifying the use of Glyphosate
 - Cost issues don't outweigh other priorities (Protection of water)
- Working to develop an integrated management plan whereas chemical treatments are not the end-all
- Conditions for denying an extension include:
 - Whereas new information is not available at the time the order is issued, has become available and indicates the order is not adequate to protect the interests identified in the Wetlands Protection Act.
- Order ends at the end of May (phragmities)
- 1 year extension with the courtesy copy of the minutes
 - Phragmities treated in the fall
- Conservation Commission Due diligence
- Property owner DCR
- Property owner Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Vote: to approve the OOC extension request Aquatic Management Program (in-water, mechanical), DEP #287-0043 for a 3 year Extension unanimously approved at 7:42pm [motion – Kennedy, second –Turin, vote: 5:0:0].

Vote: to approve the OOC extension request Aquatic Management Program (chemical, phragmities), DEP #287-0053 for a 1 year Extension unanimously approved at 7:43pm [motion – Turin, second – Wartella, vote: 5:0:0].

- **Action item:** ConCom to send letter to Patrick Herron and DCR asking for details of milfoil treatment plant and meeting summary from discussion of chemicals to be used.
- (7:45pm) Commission members sign WPA Form 7 – Extension Permit for Orders of Conditions.

Updates and Discussion:

1. Community Gardens forms and manual (7:46pm)

- Approval of forms?
- People choosing top two or top three
 - Is there a ranking order? - Volunteer information
- No ranking → Easier to be managed
- Centralized wait list?
- Organized by time stamp?
- Community garden location preference
- Discussion ensues about proximity and success
- Automatic reply after forms are filled and submitted online
- What of the Garden fees?
 - Standard Rate – not based on size
 - Should cost be based on square foot?
 - Fee is paid when you get the plot, not when you fill out the application
- Per plot cost
 - Disparity in plot sizes → Some plots are twice as big as others
- Should coordinator self-rule? Best to left up to coordinators
- Discounts
- City gets \$5 per plot fee → Water fee
- Garden Agreement
 - Email address shared for clean-up days
- Minor text changes are made to garden agreement
 - Garden agreement subject to change by Conservation Commission
 - Agreement valid for one year
 - Removal of Tara's phone number subsequently replaced by her email
- The Draft renewal agreement is reviewed
- Changes on these document will be updated and sent to Erica Satin-Hernandez and then disseminated to the gardeners
- Advocacy discussion ensues
 - What are our thoughts on advocacy for the Community Gardens?
 - Why does the Conservation Commission regulate the garden sub-committee and not advocate for them?
 - Open Space vs. Community Gardens
 - How do community gardens pair with open space? Community Gardens are not open Space as they are closed off.
- Conservation Commission has a clear mandate to oversee the community gardens
- Should term limits be stipulated in order to receive advocacy from the commission?
- What is the scope of advocacy for community gardens?
 - Re: Bikeway Community Garden tried to expand, but could not.
 - Do we have a responsibility to advocate for community gardens?
 - Re: Lincoln Park community garden
- What is our mandate with gardeners?
- Should gardens be their own entity?

- Separate Garden Committee
 - Give them agency?
 - They had no representation at Somervision
 - How can we better support gardens?
2. Ongoing Projects (8:19pm)
- Review ongoing projects spreadsheet
 - Extension request
 - Commissioner in-charge Project list discussed
 - Commissioner Wartella to get in touch with someone at DCR and get them to file a COC and close out project
 - Could not find order of Assembly Square Block 2A (TBD)
 - Commissioner Turin to make sure area is growing properly and can close project after tree plantings
 - Water Quality Testing? Recently heavy rains
3. Letters/ Notifications (8:24 pm)
- Letter to DCR regarding Draw 7 Park – *tabled*
4. Committees & Task Force Reports (8:24 pm)
- Somervision 2040 Committee
 - Somerville 2040 Committee Co-Chair Rachel Borgatti
 - SomerSupper → Topics: Open Space, Housing, etc.
 - Two day Conference
 - Working group discussions
 - SV2040 Committee Lists
 - Get together and update Somervision2030
 - Idea is to represent values and focus on implementation
 - Climate change, sustainability, etc.
 - Surveys and information gathering for public feedback/ input.
 - Draft to be complete by September 2019
 - 125 acres of Open Space as a goal
 - Open Space Land Acquisition Task Force
 - Summary of 2 meetings
 - Goals
 - Definition of open space
 - Definition is not the same as the definition in the zoning code
 - Publically owned space
 - Next meeting on Thursday
 - Refining of goals
 - Is the goal of 125 acres of open space realistic?
 - Transformational areas provide an extra 61 acres of open space
 - 1 Acre = \$6,000,000 to transform into open space
 - i.e. – inner belt; cobble hill
 - Balance of priorities
 - Question/ comments:
 - Creation of a program in which can partner with businesses to beautify spaces
 - Coordination

- Classification of the definition of Open Space
- People value tiny pocket parks (as well)
 - Small spaces are valued/ appreciated → provides a feeling of ownership
- Valuing more intimate greenspace as opposed to “destination areas”
- Bioswales → Multi-functional greenspaces

5. Somerville Stormwater Assessments (8:36pm)

- Municipal vulnerability preparedness
 - Flood risk
 - Green infrastructure
 - Communication materials
 - Project to be done in a few months
 - Report will be requested
- Policy/ Design needs
 - Will be in upcoming plans for the year
- Storm water Enterprise fund
 - MS4 July of this year
 - Separation of sewer
- Tax imposed for impervious areas on land
 - Conservation Commission suggestions?
- FEMA to change numbers in 2020 for elevation risk insurance
 - Will address concerns and pass along to the city
 - Joint municipality
 - Proactive with being in the loop of things that impact

6. (8:41pm) Associate Commissioners

- People voluntarily to join the Conservation Commission
- Have no voting rights
- Do we need mayoral permission to have associate commissioners?
- Medford has associate commissioners
- Associate commissions could have the potential to fill a vacant position
- 3 associate commissioners? → Job description
 - Generic job description to fill gaps in expertise
- Will the addition of more people make meetings longer?
 - 2 people?
 - What are the expectations of associate commissioners?
 - Monthly attendance?
- Additional Expertise
 - Engineer
- **Action Item:** Commissioner Borgatti to craft Associate Commissioner job description.

7. (8:49pm) Action Item Review

- Agent Boukili runs through the action items that have been completed:
 - **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:** contact Medford Conservation Commission to inform them of the joint jurisdiction of this property [Boston Ave and Mystic Valley Parkway].

- **Action:** Agent Boukili to send assigned OOCs to Commissioners Turin and Neuber [in google drive folder]
- **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:** Boukili to put more information on the website, such as the community gardener agreement, coordinator responsibilities, etc. [no longer applicable]
- **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).

Other Business:

1. 2019 City Nature Challenge (8:53pm)
 - Earthwise aware → Partnership
 - How many people Advertising → Social media
 - Weather windy? Rain?
 - Attendance – Partial okay?
 - Pictures for Sustainville
 - Branded as Bioblitz in Draw 7 Park
 - Send pics to Commissioner Borgatti
2. Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA) (8:57pm)
 - Commission in 2008-2009 sent letters to support PLPA
 - Conservation Commission is on the list of supporters
 - Questions? → MACC → Should we write letter of support?
 - Draft letters
 - What is the Conservation Commission signed onto?
 - Two page summary
 - City to take public land and repurposing it
 - State Legislative to be more cognizant of the underlying issue and not rubber stamping proposals
 - Article 97 put into legislation
 - Parts of the city won't be happy
 - That doesn't prevent us from supporting it
 - Preservation of public space in perpetuity
 - Somerville ordinance pending with City Council
 - More stringent? Spaces can be developed as long as equal or greater amount space is created
 - No net loss policy
3. Incoming Correspondence (9:01 pm)
 - MBTA Yearly Operational Plan - *Tabled*
 - MBTA Vegetation Management Plan - *Tabled*
 - DEP Waterways Draft License Draw 7 Pathway Extension project - *Tabled*
 - Keolis Commuter Services 2019 Yearly Operational Plan - *Tabled*
 - ENF Form for Pedestrian Bridge
 - Pedestrian bridge across the river
 - Is the commission interested in writing a letter?
 - Letter is due in 20 days
 - MyWRA involved with casino

- pdf of form to be sent to Conservation Commission
- **Action Item:** Agent Boukili to provide comment letter regarding ENF for Pedestrian Bridge to Conservation Commission.

Approval of minutes:

- 1) Vote to approve March 26th, 2019 minutes with no amendments at 9:07 pm [motion – Kennedy, second – Wartella; vote: 4:0:1].

Adjourn:

- 1) Motion to adjourn meeting unanimously approved at 9:07 pm [motion – Turin, second – Kennedy, vote: 5:0:0].

Outstanding Action Items:

2019

March:

- **Action:** ConCom to send letter to Patrick and DCR asking for details of milfoil treatment plant and meeting summary from discussion of chemicals to be used.
- **Action:** Commissioner Borgatti to craft Associate Commissioner job description.
- **Action:** Agent Boukili to provide comment letter regarding ENF for Pedestrian Bridge to Conservation Commission.

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 26th ConCom meeting.
- **Action:** design and price out signs to add to Medford's outfall poles.
- **Action:** Commissioner Fager to review results [of Draw 7 sediment sampling results transmittal] and follow up.

2018

November:

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

October:

- **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 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:** Commissioner Joroff to revise ConCom Policies document, then Commissioners to read though it again to make sure everyone is willing to follow it.

List of Meeting Documents (located here K:\OHCD\Shared\Conservation Commission\Agenda + Minutes + Legal Notices 2019\2019_04_23_Meeting_Documents):

- Agenda (2019_04_23_Agenda.pdf)
- March Meeting Minutes (2019_03_26_Minutes_Draft_MHD.docx)
- Ongoing Projects spreadsheet (Ongoing Project Data.xlsx)
- Community Garden Documents: 4a. Draft Application with cg agreement apr 13 2019 CK.docx, 4a. Draft Renewal with cg agreement apr 13 2019 CK.docx
- 287-0043 & 287-0053 Extension request documents from Applicant: MysticRiverSomerville.harvesting19_ext letter.pdf, MysticRiverSomerville.phrag19_ext letter.pdf, Mystic River18 _annual report_complete.pdf
- 287-0043 & 287-0053 Extension request documents from Commission: OOC 287-0043_signed_recorded.pdf, 287-0043 extension request form.docx, Phragmities Mystic River OOC#287-0053.pdf, 287-0053 extension request form.docx
- DEP Waterways Draft License Draw 7 Pathway Extension Project
- MBTA Vegetation Management Plan.pdf
- MBTA Yearly Operational Plan.pdf
- Mystic River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing Environmental Notification Form (hard copy only).

