

## Conservation Commission Feb. 27 Meeting Minutes

### **Meeting opened by CK at 7:10.**

Present: Anne Phelps, Michael Fager, Janet McGowan Elisabeth Miley, John Buchheit, Martha Podren, Rachel Evans, Delia Kaye, Leslie Brayton, John Reinhardt & Cassandra Koutalidis.

Minutes for January were reviewed & amended. Rachel moved to approve the minutes, Leslie seconded, all approved.

Tonight's agenda was accepted.

### **Old Business**

#### **Budget**

Anne reported on division of funds in the revolving funds into 2 funds, a Wetlands Protection fund and a Consv. Comm. revolving fund. The Wetlands fund receives filing fees and does not have to be re-authorized each year. The Consv. Comm. rev. fund receives garden dues and any donations. Both accounts are supposed to be "spent down" each year. The Con. Comm. asked for a copy of the General Operating budget, as well. Anne said she'd send it out via e-mail, along with a copy of the FY03 draft Business Plan and Budget report.

#### **IKEA**

Cassandra requested a copy of the MEPA scope of work for IKEA when it arrives. Cassandra spent some time describing the current sewage and storm drain system for Assembly Square. She said she thinks IKEA will want to tie into the MWRA interceptor for sewage, and may also want to put stormwater into an existing stormwater outfall into Mystic. We need to know more about this....

Cambridge has required developers to mitigate for sewage hook-ups. We might follow their model, if IKEA can't use MWRA pipes and wants to tie into Somerville's. That is, Somerville could seek to have the developer increase the capacity of certain upstream pipes, via the removal of storm flow (i.e. sewer separation) or the removal of inflow and infiltration (known as I/I) from said pipes.

Does IKEA plan to tie into the MWRA interceptor? They might have to tie in upstream, into a somerville-owned pipe, because that interceptor is at (or beyond) its capacity. Does Somerville have a say in whether and where IKEA ties into the MWRA pipes? Cassandra said, that wherever they tie in they can fill the pipe so that both upstream and downstream flows are affected, and it could cause upstream flows to back up and produce surcharging. Downstream impacts include a potential increase in the amount of overflow events into the river (right now, water that overflows the pipe is routed through a chlorination system than discharged into the river. Solida, a.k.a. 'floatables,' are not removed. 90% of Somerville's sanitary system is either CSOs (sewage and storm drainage are carried in the same pipe) or common manholes (sewage and storm drainage travels in separate pipes but then discharges into the same manhole), and the city allows no new permits for hook-up unless the requirement can be met for

removal of I/I and/or storm flow. As a side note, when CSOs are separated, the downstream drain pipes must be large enough to receive the increase in stormwater flow, otherwise they might surcharge. John commented that storm water, while much cleaner than sewage, contains some biological contamination.

We should talk to Thom Donohue (Somerville DPW) and see if he'll come to a Cons. Comm. meeting (we could arrange to meet early, or possibly a separate meeting to accommodate him) to talk to us about the Somerville sanitary system re: IKEA and Assembly Square.

### **Open Space Plan**

At the first meeting, held Feb. 11, '02, Sherri Geldersma said that OHCD had ultimate responsibility for the Open Space Plan revision, and that she, Sherri, was the person at OHCD responsible. Anne met with Heather Fri. Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup> to ask what role she should have in the revision, what importance the city gave the revision and asked how to better coordinate with Sherri. Anne rec'd e-mail from Sherri just prior to this meeting saying there was some money available to hire a facilitator for the meetings and write an "Up-date". Sherri said OHCD will try to send out an RFQ next week. Cassandra asked if there is some way to keep pressure on Sherri, by getting revision committee to write letter to Heather, maybe. Elisabeth said there is master RFP (=RFQ) vendor list for that type of contractor, and she will e-mail it to me to forward to Sherri. John can't attend the Feb. 28 Open Space meeting but he urged other CC members (esp. those who worked on Open Space plan last time) to attend. He said Paul Simmons will be there. Cassandra said she thought the Con. Comm's role was to comment and advise and make sure the revision includes things we think are important, esp. since we have no control over budget and can't make major decisions about how things will get done.

### **Alewife/stormwater variance**

John wrote comment letter to DEP for ConComm., which the ConCom reviewed via e-mail. To summarize, John said DEP wants to give Alewife class B<sub>CSO</sub> status (Class B = "fishable & swimmable"). Cambridge developed a plan 3 times larger than its original plan and had to go back and re-think the issues related to sewage and flooding, and could not meet orig. target dates (hence the proposed variance to allow Cambridge to finish its plan). The present regulation expires Mar. 3, 2002; DEP's variance would extend it 18 months. But, Arlington wants DEP to force Cambridge to 'get on with it' and fix its CSOs. The 308 letters required cities to find and fix illegal hook-ups, and Phase II required reductions and mitigation in CSO discharges. DEP must respond to all comment letters.

### **New Business**

**Spring MACC conference –Janet going in Rachel's place.** We welcomed John and Janet as new Associate Commissioners and urged them to get involved, in garden

development, or other project. MACC attendees from Somerville will car-pool w/Michael. **Rachel moved:** Anne should buy 6 more copies of the Wetlands Protection Regulations, as well as copies of the handbook for John & Janet. Also, she should buy (if not given to attendees) enough copies to update all handbooks to latest update. **Leslie seconded. All approved.**

### **Garden Coordinators—CC special meeting/issues**

Anne said she is scheduling a meeting of the garden coordinators, and asked if the CC is still interested in holding a special meeting to discuss garden issues. ConComm says, “yes, but schedule it after meeting w/coordinators. Anne sent Dan Nygard an e-mail telling him to either pay his dues by this meeting or she would ask ConComm to remove him as coordinator. Still no dues received for Tufts as of today. Discussion about whether to try to remove Dan, and how to get him to pay dues followed. John suggested we ask Paul Simmons to talk to Dan before we try anything else. We will schedule Garden meeting via e-mail.

### **Arbor Day**

MA Dept. Env. Management sent letters to 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers throughout state to ask for participation in Arbor Day Poster contest. Anne sent letters to all 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers (including parochial schools not on state list). 4 teachers have called so far asking for more info. Anne will ask Arts Council member to help judge this year instead of Eagle Eye Institute. She will pick a school and try to schedule a tree-planting. CK suggested a Tulip tree to replace one recently lost. Elisabeth said she had ideas to discuss w/Anne, too.

### **Biodiversity Days**

Anne asked if ConComm wants to sponsor Bio. Days again this yr., and if so, would ConComm members help with talks/tours/etc. Michael said he'd volunteer to lead bird walks. Last yr. Some teachers didn't get tours for their classes—not enough guides.

### **Algonquin Gas at Mystic Valley Parkway, Medford**

A US Army Corps of Engineers public notice about permit to let Algonquin Gas install natural gas transmission pipeline upstream of Armory Bridge in Medford will impact habitat area of “forage fish”—herring/alewife in Mystic. Should we comment? Anne made copies of the notice for all to read later. Since not our jurisdiction, any comments would be very limited. CK noted that Algonquin Gas work in Somerville, for which the ConComm wrote Orders of Conditions should be finished, and they should call us to sign off on work. Since they haven't called, Anne should call them and check on status of work..

### **Somerville Climate Action Commission-John R.**

The Commission intends to develop an action plan from an inventory made last summer so Somerville can plan to reduce greenhouse gases involved in global warming.

### **Cassandra-rept. Re: Judith Keane @ CZM**

CK reported that Judith Keane w/CZM is trying to get ConComms from different cities with similar problems/issues together for meeting to discuss those common problems. The ConComm thinks that a great idea.

### **Cassandra- Chair-ship of CC**

CK said she has been chair of the ConcComm for the past 9 yrs and plans to step down by April. She asked that other board members think about time commitments and willingness to act as chair, and said if no one else wanted to do it immediately we could go without a chair for a while. Some members asked questions about meeting with mayor and Bd. of Aldermen. All agreed to take this up again at next meeting.

### **Committees**

Leslie, Anne, Cassandra & Delia met to discuss development of Durrell. Leslie had drawn up plans and we all agreed to help develop a budget for work and materials. Michael said Hansen is going to take longer than we thought, and a non-profit group may need to form to find funding and develop ideas for park, mainly because of combination of garden and memorial, but also because ground needs lots of work to level. Anne's had calls asking about Glen garden and is waiting to talk to Mike Foley to see whether it will be open (and where).

### **Upcoming events**

A Community Preservation Act meeting sponsored by EOEA is being held Mar. 16<sup>th</sup> (Sat. 8:30 to 12:30 in Worcester). Anne should attend. The ConComm should work with the Somerville Community Development people to promote the CPA, says Michael.

**Next ConComm. meeting** Mar. 27, 2002 at 7pm

EM won't be able to make next meeting and Rachel will be late or absent.

**Meeting adjourned 9:50 pm**

**CK moved to adjourn, John seconded. All approved.**