

July 23, 2003
Conservation Commission
Approved Meeting Minutes

Meeting opened at Tufts Administration Building (TAB), 167 Holland Street (in larger meeting room of Senior Center, second floor, Rm. 200) at 7:25 pm.

Conservation Commission (CC) members present were John Reinhardt, Cassandra Koutalidis, Janet McGowan, and chair, Delia Kaye, Associate member Rachel Evans and agent Anne Phelps. Also present were Tom Jones, Department of Public Works, and Brian Lawlor, PE, of Symmes, Maini & McKee Associates to talk about the new city design for Lincoln Park School.

Review Minutes

Minutes from June 25, 2003, were reviewed. Discussion followed.

Vote: Motion made by DK to accept minutes as amended. JR seconded. All in favor.

New Business

The CC agreed to hear the presentation from DPW and Brian Lawlor ahead of other business.

Tom Jones reported a high level of concern and objections from neighbors to the previous plan led to 5 additional community meetings held over approximately 5 months. In that time new plans were developed that resulted in the current plan, which provides that the new school be built on the existing site. Students will be apportioned to other schools while the old school is demolished and the new one built. The new plans have the “sweeping consensus of the neighborhood,” reported Tom Jones.

The building will be the first in a “Green Initiative”. Receipt of a feasibility study grant has allowed school planners to consult with LEEDS-certified engineers for ideas on implementation of renewable energy methods and use of natural light in the new building.

Following the presentation, Tom asked for a letter from the Conservation Commission (CC) stating

- 1) No wetlands are involved
- 2) No park land is being taken, thus Article 97 (of the MA State Constitution) does not apply

The CC agreed to handle this administratively.

Budget

Anne said the CC operating budget, presented at the June meeting has been approved by the Bd. of Aldermen with no changes, and briefly reiterated her planned expenditures from those funds.

Vote: DK moved to approve the FY04 CC operating budget. JM seconded. All approved.

Vote: JM moved to reimburse the Art Commission \$30.00 for our participation in ArtBeat 2003. CK seconded. Discussion followed. All approved.

Anne presented a brief overview of the CC (Garden) Revolving Fund.

New Business

Pay as You Throw – John said he had talked to Vithal Deshpande, the city's Environmental Officer about this program, which would take disposal and recycling out of the general fund and put it into a fee for service category. Some potential obstacles to the program were mentioned. One obstacle might be the language issue presented by the presence of a high immigrant population. Another problem might be "dumping" by or to bordering communities. Vithal told John there might be DEP recycling grants available to help with start-up costs. John said he thinks we need to design a program first. John suggested the first container might be "free", with a sticker (paid for by the owner) required for additional containers. CK asked whether there was data to show that the community really benefits financially from a higher rate of recycling. John said he would like to ask Joe Lambert of MA Department of Environmental Protection and Vithal Deshpande to attend our September meeting to present more information on this topic.

SCAT Video – Cassandra is a member of the Somerville Cable Access TV. She reported that, for \$395, SCAT will make a video on the subject of our choice and air it as a public service announcement. DK suggested a video on Storm Water (for our Storm Water Management Plan and NPDES permit). Janet suggested a public service announcement on watering trees. CK asked the Commission if it was in favor of her finding out more about teaming with SCAT to make one video about the work of the commission and a 30 second public service announcement. Both would be aired on Channel 3 (and we would own the tapes). There was general approval of the idea, and CK will report her findings to the Commission.

Old Business

Coastsweep – Anne reported she had confirmed with Coastal Zone Management that the SCC will be a local sponsor, with Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA) for the clean-up scheduled for September 20th, 9:30 am to 12:30. Anne will help publicize the event.

Take Back the Greenspace- Anne said the event has been re-scheduled to 4-7pm, and said Wendy Irvine had asked if the CC could support the August 9th event financially, or by manning an information table. The CC agreed is feels strong support for the event, but cannot support it financially right now, and no one is available to man a table. Anne will help publicize the event by distribution of a flyer via email. Delia said she could post a flyer in her neighborhood.

Committees

Durrell – Anne said she is having trouble finding someone to do the asphalt. CK suggested calling Dana Gallup, if Steve Kelly will not do it.

Quincy - Janet said she talked to Tracey Goldberg (OHCD) about the possibility of getting unspent Block Grant money from last fiscal year to pay for installation of water, and said OHCD will want a proposal with a description of how money would be spent. CK said we need a map that shows the water main (CK said we cannot use the existing service because it is likely to be damaged or disconnected). CK said she can just modify the Durrell water specifications for Quincy St., and she would give those to Steve Post.

Janet said she is also looking for a non-profit to hold money from donations for Quincy. SERV cannot take donations. Janet suggested we use GroundworkSomerville, though they would get 5 % of all the funds. It was suggested that one of the neighbors (to Quincy) might act as treasurer for a “Friends of Quincy Park” fundraising effort. Further discussion was deferred until the next meeting.

Additional – John reported that DEP is leaning toward a move to downgrade the water classification of Alewife Brook from Class B to Class B_{CSO}, and urged us all to support MyRWA and its efforts to keep the brook as Class B.

John also reported that MA Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is planning to lease the air rights in Porter Square without much, if any, input from the neighbors.

Anne handed out a memo from the Law Office/Lisa Mead, regarding recusals from Meetings and Hearings.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Phelps, Agent