

Brookline Conservation Commission Meeting
Tuesday, September 20, 2016 7:00 PM
Denny Room, Public Health Building

Commissioners Present: Marcus Quigley (Chair), Matthew Garvey, Werner Lohe, Roberta Schnoor, Deborah Myers, Pallavi Kalia Mande, Marian Lazar, Pamela Harvey

Commissioners Absent: Gail Fenton

Staff Present: Tom Brady, Conservation Administrator, Brittany Bonney, Conservation Assistant

Guests Present: See attached

AGENDA REVIEW/MINUTES

W. Lohe moved to approve the minutes from 9/6/16. M. Garvey seconded. All in favor.

9th SCHOOL STUDY UPDATE

Kara Brewton, Economic Development Director, introduced Philip Gray of JLA. P. Gray explained that the possible sites for a 9th elementary school in Brookline have been narrowed down to three. He showed a presentation on three individual sites:

Site 1: "Village Site"

- This site is the existing Stop & Shop on Harvard Street. As it is, this site is mostly asphalt.
- Two options were shown for this site; a base option and an expanded option which would include the abutting car wash and gas station.
- The base site would include a roof top turf field and two additional small play areas on the ground.
- The expanded site would also have a roof top turf field and one generous new play area on the ground.
- P. Gray spoke to vehicular traffic on the site and that there could potentially be traffic for the school and the Stop & Shop entering in through one location.
- P. Gray said they do not believe that there are wetlands on this site.

Site 2: "Baldwin Site"

- This site shares a border with the Soule Recreation Center, which would allow kids at the school to use the existing playing fields.
- P. Gray said there are no officially recognized wetlands on this site, but for whichever site is chosen, there would be a detailed survey conducted.
- This site is about 2.5 acres which is the same as the "Village" parcel.
- To build a school on this site would create a large amount of building (impervious cover) therefore they would need a stormwater retention system.
- There is an existing gravel parking lot on the site. There have been conversations between the School Dept. and Park & Recreation Commission about this lot being used for teacher parking during the school week and public parking for Soule use on the weekends.

- P. Gray said that by having all parking in one location would allow them to increase the size of the athletic field space.
- The Park & Recreation Commission has expressed they would like structured parking.

Site 3: “Baker School Site”

- This is the existing Baker School property, which shares a border with D. Blakely Hoar Sanctuary.
 - If chosen, this site would have a detailed survey done to delineate wetland boundaries.
 - P. Gray pointed out on a map the stream channel which comes out of a culvert, and the 200’ riverfront area.
 - This site is 11.5 acres, approximately 4 times the size of the two other sites. There is a lot more flexibility in locating the new building on the site. Once building and parking locations have been established, they can then determine where greenspace can go. P. Gray said they would need about 300 parking spaces on site, between the two schools.
 - Option 1 for this site includes surface parking, which would reduce greenspace.
 - Option 2 for this site includes structured parking underground, which would increase green/play space.
 - P. Gray said they would not build within 25’ of the wetland. They feel that because of the large lot, they can find space within the parcel to build and not disturb the wetland.
 - P. Gray explained this process as test fitting, no feasibility studies have been completed for any site.
 - October 13th is the date when a site will be chosen. Once a site has been selected by the Board of Selectmen, JLA will be able to get more details.
 - At this time, his task is to help make a determination of which of the three sites is most likely to successfully hold a K-8 school.
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- K. Brewton passed out a matrix with different criteria for each site.
 - M. Quigley asked what the wetland concerns are. P. Gray said he is most concerned about unforeseen problems and wants to be made aware of all potential issues now rather than after the site has been selected.
 - R. Schnoor asked about depth of buildings and traffic at the Baker School site. P. Gray said the intent for traffic is to keep cars from backing up on the street (in any case) but in this case it would be Beverly Rd. He explained the traffic patterns and entrances/exits on site.
 - D. Myers said her biggest concern about the wetland would be creating activity zones inside the buffer and construction impacts.
 - P. Gray said they are hoping the Sanctuary could provide educational opportunities. D. Myers said the existing school does use the Sanctuary, but not necessarily in a positive way. She said that the Commission might be in favor of removing the tennis courts or any structures from the buffer zones and leaving them more natural. She would also like to know if there are vernal pools on any of the sites.
 - T. Brady said that on a staff level they have been discussing stormwater management at the Village site with all of the impervious cover. There is also extensive ledge on the Baker School site. He also mentioned that there are unintended consequences from having the

existing Baker School in such close proximity to the Hoar Sanctuary. It acts as an extended playground.

- P. Gray said that all three sites have ledge.
- M. Garvey referenced the Commission's earlier letter to the Board of Selectmen in regards to net loss of open space. He pointed out that is not criteria listed in the matrix.
- P. Gray said the matrix came from relative comparisons to the other elementary schools in Town. He added that 'Landscape Conservation' includes the removal of trees.
- M. Quigley said when discussing wetlands and conservation issues, critical elements such as exact buffer locations, net change in impervious cover, water quality, etc. are the substantive qualities that concern the Commission. This project is not at that point yet. None of these are necessarily deal breakers up front but they are things the Commission is concerned about and will need more information on. He said you could make any of these three sites into net zero energy or water.
- P. Gray said that after a vote is taken on 10/13 they can focus on a schematic design; the feasibility will be laying out a real building on the site which will result in a cost estimate which will be very detailed.
- M. Quigley said making improvements to the environmental conditions can be done at all three sites. He would like a positive discussion about the importance of wetlands and environmental conditions of the chosen site to be on the same level as traffic and other important issues.
- He would like to see net positive improvements to the wetlands system in Town.
- P. Gray said he understands and agrees, they want to have a model project for the Town and surrounding cities.
- T. Brady said there is something to be considered about the coloring of the matrix, we tend to see green as go and red as stop.
- P. Harvey said they should also consider the permit process for building inside a wetland buffer and the added time.
- P. Kalia Mande agreed and said the matrix could be reframed to show benefits as opposed to just cost. She said potential for restoring would score higher than having no impact.
- R. Schnoor also agreed and said she would like to see this point conveyed at the meeting on 10/13. She doesn't want it to get lost in the conversation because it is very important to the Commission.
- K. Brewton said it would be very helpful for the Commission to submit an updated letter by the end of September.
- The Commission discussed the tennis courts inside the buffer at the Baker School site. P. Gray said he thought it was less risky to leave the tennis courts and not touch anything within the 200' riverfront area. He said also, the Park & Recreation Commission expressed that they liked to see the tennis courts remain because there is a lack of tennis courts and recreation space in that part of Town.
- M. Garvey said that anytime you can remove impervious cover inside the buffer will have a positive impact. He said that the Commission will submit an updated letter.

REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE FOR 69 PRINCETON ROAD, BWB 11-01

- Laurance Lee, the applicant, submitted an Escrow Agreement between the buyer and seller of 69 Princeton Rd per T. Brady's request.
- *D. Myers moved to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 69 Princeton Road, BWB 11-01. M. Quigley seconded. All in favor.*

MUDDY RIVER UPDATE

- T. Brady said that bank stabilization continues. The crews will be finishing up placing core logs in the next few days. The project should be wrapped up in the next few weeks.

STAFF UPDATE

- 34 warrant articles have come out for Fall Town Meeting.
- H. Mattison would like to present his warrant article to the Commission. We will discuss this and any others at next meeting.
- The Club: There was consideration for dredging the ponds but have decided against it. They will be filing a NOI for treatment of the skating pond and 2 smaller ponds.
- Back Landfill: Have modified calculations and are getting closer to filing.
- Driving Range: Is open and stabilized. They are in the process of making 2 corrections per their Order of Conditions.
- 47 Craftsland Rd: T. Brady reviewed new plans. The location of the wall remains the same but they have added a step down wall system with a new look, a couple of terraces with plantings added to the upper terrace. The Commission agreed they were comfortable with staff oversight for this change.
- 20 Lyon Rd: Have proposed to add a fence in addition to the planting strip in front. The Commission agreed that as long as they do both, that is okay.
- Emerald Necklace Bike/Ped Crossing: Planting of trees and shrubs will happen in the spring. T. Brady has found the material in New Jersey but it will stay healthier in the nursery for the winter. The ground here is too dry to plant.
- There was an inspection of the Muddy River for blue green algae that was negative.
- There is a great outdoor art exhibit up right now in Kennard Park next to Lost Pond Sanctuary.
- Hall's Pond: Ginna Johnson, Landscape Architect, has submitted the next piece, a guide to using the Master Plan over the next 15 years. T. Brady and D. Myers will go over the plant list. All plantings are native. T. Brady will also send a copy to Ellen Forester.
- Sanctuary Signage: Test signs were received but the colors were off.
- T. Brady said that next meeting, October 4th will be Gail's official last meeting. The Commission will need to think about a replacement. Possibly an Associate Commissioner.
- P. Harvey gave an update on the Westfield case. The Appeals Court decision has been appealed, as expected.

R. Schnoor moved to adjourn. M. Garvey seconded. All in favor.

Submitted by B. Bonney