

Brookline Conservation Commission Meeting
Tuesday, May 14, 2019, 7:00 PM
Denny Room, Brookline Public Health Building

Commissioners Present: Marcus Quigley (Chair), Roberta Schnoor (Vice Chair), Pam Harvey, Werner Lohe, Pallavi Kalia Mande

Commissioners Absent: Benjamin Wish, Deb Myers

Staff Present: Tom Brady (Conservation Administrator)

Staff Absent: Katie Weatherseed (Conservation Assistant)

Guests: See attached

AGENDA REVIEW/MINUTES

M. Quigley called the meeting to order. No amendments were made to the Agenda. The Commission reviewed the minutes from April 23, 2019.

W. Lohe made a motion to approve the minutes of April 23, 2019, with minor modifications. R. Schnoor seconded. All in favor.

DISCUSSION OF RESTORATION OF 325 HEATH STREET CONSERVATION RESTRICTION

T. Brady informed the Commission that the Applicant has asked for a continuance to the June 4th, 2019 meeting. The Commission discussed and decided that since they will be attending the Select Board meeting on June 4th, 325 Heath Street should be discussed at the following meeting on June 18th. T. Brady will notify the Applicant.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT PRESENTATION

Michael Cherkasky, a Brookline teen who is working to become an Eagle Scout, appeared before the Commission to propose a work project to address erosion in Halls Pond Sanctuary in the northeast corner near the Chilton Street access gate. He has designed, with input from T. Brady, a series of 17 trenches along the path to manage storm water flow down the slope. Logs will be set to operate as check dams. Trenches will be filled partially with crushed stone.

The project also includes as an improvement to the accessible path the restoration of cedar logs along path.

The proposed time frame is between July 18 and August 1, 2019. M. Cherkasky has estimated that the cost will amount to approximately \$1000. He stated that he will fundraise and will organize a group to help him with the work.

P. Harvey made a motion to endorse this project. W. Lohe seconded. All in favor.

DISCUSSION OF OPEN STREAMS IN BROOKLINE

Commissioners W. Lohe, R. Schnoor and P. Harvey reported on the site walk they recently took on the Holy Transfiguration Monastery property, along with T. Brady

and K. Weatherseed, as part of the Commission's effort to understand and map open streams in Brookline.

P. Harvey raised the question of whether it might be appropriate for the Commission to add a "historic streams" category in the Town wetlands regulations. She observed that there is a great discrepancy between how perennial and intermittent are handled under the law, which puts pressure on the definitions of these two alternatives. Yet in Brookline, we have some long-time open streams, such as the one on the Monastery property, which was engineered by F.L. Olmsted. It has both historic and environmental significance and adding a category to the Town's regulations would recognize their importance. The Commission noted the parallel to historic mill streams under state law. The Commissioners stated that they would look at existing Town regulations and see whether this or other changes might be warranted.

M. Quigley noted that he has also been thinking about the "waters of the US" issue. He stated that particularly since the climate is changing (affecting wet and dry), and development pressures are increasing, laws and regulations must provide more protection to protect these resources from more impacts. M. Quigley suggested the idea of adding a new approach for historic streams which could also be extended to reservoirs and artificial impoundments.

OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE

The Commission agreed that we will all attend the Select Board meeting on June 4, 2109 to present the Plan there for approval.

MUDDY RIVER REVIEW

T. Brady reported that the pre-construction walk with potential bidders will happen in early June. All seems to be proceeding on schedule.

STAFF UPDATE

60 Sargent Beechwood: The construction of a home on the wooded lot is on appeal. T. Brady met with neighbors onsite regarding the tree plan review, but had to leave due to a medical issue.

Princeton Rd/LaGrange small isolated wetland: Neighbors have noted that the water levels in the wetland are 8-10" higher this spring and are wondering if something is wrong. T. Brady has asked the property owner who recently did work in their backyard to provide an as-built. They are also preparing a NOI for a new outlet structure to address a further rise in the wetland water levels to protect homes. The Commission noted that heavy rainfall this spring has likely affected the situation.

Larz Anderson Townhouses Conservation Restriction: A resident called recently wondering if there's a broken pipe responsible for the high water levels. The Commission noted that this may also be affected by heavy rainfall.

Sargent Pond: Hancock Associates has submitted a new planting plan on behalf of the Sargent Road Trust. T. Brady concurs with them that it includes an appropriate mix of native species. The Commission accepts his recommendation that this is a minor change - it doesn't alter the bank or land under waterbodies, and is not part of the wetland replication area.

Brookline Reservoir: The water in the Reservoir has been drawn down so the masonry walls can be repaired. The water goes into a drain line under Rte 9 and ultimately discharges to Leverett Pond. T. Brady added that they have had to remove lots of debris. The whole park is closed to the public. Path reconstruction and some tree removal will also be happening. T. Brady states that he believes this portion of work will be completed by November of this year.

Hall's Pond Workday: Will take place this Sunday from 11 to 2 PM. Hall's Pond has vandalism issues, boardwalk issues, and illegal dumping issues. The forebay is also under review.

25 Sears Road: The Commission reviewed the draft Order of Conditions.

P. Harvey moved that the Commission issue the 25 Sears Road Order of Conditions as drafted. P. Mande seconded. All in favor.

Municipal Vulnerability Plan for Climate Change Resiliency: T. Brady informed the Commission about this project which would be grant funded and is being spearheaded by the Planning Department. The consultant, Weston and Sampson, has reviewed the Town's wetland regulations and has made recommendations. T. Brady has given preliminary feedback. The full Commission should review these recommendations.

Town Tree Canopy: P. Harvey mentioned an article which says that Cambridge's canopy coverage has shrunk by 18% in 9 years. T. Brady notes this is likely tied to teardown and rebuilds. Brookline will be doing a Forestry Master Plan, which will include an analysis of canopy coverage.

Willow Pond dredging: The DPW is working on a cost analysis for this project so that it can be included in the CIP.

ADJOURN

W. Lohe moved to adjourn the meeting. P. Mande seconded. All in favor.

Minutes prepared by R. Schnoor