

**Brookline Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, July 20, 2021, 7:00 PM**  
**Zoom Virtual Conference**

**Commissioners Present:** Marcus Quigley (Chair), Roberta Schnoor (Vice Chair), Sam Burrington, Pam Harvey, Werner Lohe, Will Corrdin, Marian Lazar (Associate)

**Commissioners Absent:** Pallavi Kalia Mande

**Staff Present:** Tom Brady (Conservation Administrator), Katie Weatherseed (Conservation Assistant), Alexandra Vecchio (Director of Parks and Open Spaces)

**Guests:** See attached.

**AGENDA REVIEW/MINUTES**

M. Quigley opened the meeting. He modified the agenda to include a discussion of the Brookline Conservation Land Trust under Staff Update.

The Commission reviewed the minutes from May 11, 2021. R. Schnoor stated that a Conservation Commission representative is required to be a member of the CPA Committee.

*P. Harvey made a motion to accept the minutes from May 11, 2021 with minor modifications. W. Corrdin seconded. All in favor.*

**OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN QUARTERLY UPDATE**

T. Brady introduced John Shreffler, a representative from the Greenspace Alliance. T. Brady noted that as things begin to return to normal, implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan's action items will become easier. He noted that there has been a lot of change within the Department of Public Works and the Town at large, including a new Director of Engineering, changes in the Select Board and in Town Counsel. 60%-70% of Department of Public Works staff are now back in the office.

J. Shreffler asked if any progress has been made in regards to the greenway on Washington Street. T. Brady responded that a commitment has been made to do a Complete Streets project for Washington Street, and funding will soon be determined. J. Shreffler stated that he is still interested in a committee to review the complete streets project. T. Brady commented that a lot of Open Space and Recreation Plan action items involve the Engineering Division, and he is excited that a new director is now in place.

T. Brady inquired about the Commission's thoughts on asking the State to extend the deadline for the Open Space and Recreation Plan by a year. M. Quigley replied that he thinks a year extension is a great idea, and noted that he has seen a lot of processes across the country being extended by a year. P. Harvey agreed that it makes sense to ask for a year extension. J. Shreffler and W. Lohe agreed. T. Brady

stated that he will consult with the Commissioner and the Director of Parks and Open Spaces before going to the State.

### **DISCUSSION OF PERENNIAL STREAMS IN BROOKLINE**

T. Brady stated that the next steps for this project are to input the perennial streams into GIS. He said that he ultimately would like to incorporate the map into the local ordinance and utilize language similar to that of the Town of Burlington, MA. He stated that K. Weatherseed will send the Commission the perennial stream map for their final review before inputting the data in GIS. He added that the modification to the bylaw does not require a vote at Town Meeting and will be a public hearing. W. Corrdin asked T. Brady how he anticipates the modification will be received by the public. T. Brady responded that he anticipates some attorneys will attend the public hearing, but the bylaw has a very small regulatory footprint in Brookline. P. Harvey stated that the MACC has supported communities mapping their own rivers and streams in the past, and she feels this is appropriate. M. Quigley discussed some landscapes designed by Olmsted in which streams were designed with plugs, and noted Brookline's interesting hydrology.

### **MUDDY RIVER UPDATE**

T. Brady stated that the Muddy River flooded, and noted that there is a new Project Manager for Charter Environmental. He stated that the project was originally anticipated to have impacts on both riverbanks, however the footprint has been smaller than expected, and the executed work has only impacted one riverbank. T. Brady stated that he has been in discussions with the contractor and they have agreed that this does not mean that the restoration footprint can also decrease by 50%. T. Brady discussed upcoming work, including landscaping efforts. He noted that the recent flooding did affect some of the equipment on site. He stated that most of the dredging work in Brookline is complete, and that landscaping is to come next. He added that knotweed and phragmites have come back in full force, and more mitigation work is needed.

M. Quigley asked why the flood control structure is still in place. T. Brady responded that upstream of the structure there is more area for storage, and the contractors have not finished dredging downstream. If the structure were to be removed, there would be significant downstream flooding.

T. Brady stated that there was a fairly significant oil release at Leverett Pond. He stated that DEP has been chasing the leak and changing oil absorbent booms.

P. Harvey inquired about whether there are any homeless populations on the Boston-side of the Muddy River, and voiced concern about their safety in light of the recent flooding. T. Brady and A. Vecchio discussed the matter. A. Vecchio stated that she met with Brookline's Homelessness Task Force and the new Director for Emergency Preparedness and discussed the impact of climate change on homeless populations. She added that she recently had an introductory call with the Boston

Parks and Recreation Department and stated that it is very much at the forefront of the Director's mind.

### **STAFF UPDATE**

T. Brady stated that he is scheduling a time to do a walkthrough at 88 Cottage Street due to recent flooding. He stated that a Conservation Restriction will likely come before the Commission for 100 Cottage Street. T. Brady proposed that the Commission issue a 6-month temporary Certificate of Occupancy so that the applicants can move into the house, but the Commission can still have leverage to get the Conservation Restriction finalized.

T. Brady stated that at the rear of the Monastery property, a bridge that went over a stream failed and he has been on site and discussed the necessary bank reconstruction work with the appropriate parties. He added that some of the Monastery land has been sold, and he has had some informal discussions regarding potential Conservation Restrictions with the buyer's attorney. R. Schnoor asked if the buyer has any connection to the Brookline Conservation Land Trust. T. Brady replied that he was uncertain, but stated that he will find out.

W. Lohe stated that he has been serving as the Conservation Commission's representative on the Brookline Conservation Land Trust for 15 years and has decided to step down from this role. He briefly discussed the requirements of the position, and stated that this is a great opportunity to introduce some new perspectives to the Land Trust. W. Lohe stated that he would be happy to assist the new representative as they transition into the role, and answer any questions anyone may have about the BCLT. W. Lohe stated that he would like to have a new representative selected by mid-September.

T. Brady stated that two letters were shared with the Commission – one pertaining to the CPA, and the other to the PLPA. W. Corrdin suggested a change of language in the CPA letter to reflect the fact that it is required that a Conservation Commissioner serve on the CPA Committee. R. Schnoor inquired whether it is necessary to write to the Select Board regarding the CPA. T. Brady responded that he thinks it is a good idea, particularly since there are new Select Board members. W. Lohe agreed with T. Brady. R. Schnoor suggested some modifications to the language of the CPA letter.

*P. Harvey made a motion to send out the CPA letter with the modifications discussed. W. Lohe seconded. All in favor.*

T. Brady stated that the Open Meeting Law extension is valid through April, 2022. However, some Commissioners have voiced interest in resuming in-person meetings. T. Brady noted that there may be an opportunity to do so in the Fall. He noted, however, that he is respectful of anyone who is unable or not interested in meeting in person. M. Quigley agreed and stated that if there is any concern, Commissioners should let T. Brady or M. Quigley know and the Commission will accommodate. A. Vecchio noted that there has been discussion about Zoom meetings continuing long-term (in conjunction with in-person meetings), since Zoom meetings are more accessible than in-person meetings. She stated

that the Town, however, is not prepared to accommodate both platforms simultaneously at the moment.

T. Brady stated that the Park School retention basin had a significant structural failure during the most recent weather event. He noted that emergency repairs were successfully completed.

T. Brady stated that The Country Club's ponds are holding up well, even with the recent weather events.

T. Brady stated that Hall's Pond has many visitors, and the Sanctuary is seeing a great deal of wear and tear because of it. He stated that the Friends of Hall's Pond have been doing great work. P. Harvey noted that, unfortunately, no wood duck chicks have been seen at Hall's Pond.

T. Brady stated that the ongoing project at Larz Anderson Park is moving along. He stated that the dredge work that the Commission permitted was a success.

T. Brady stated that the Putterham Meadows Golf Course inquired about installing pumps inside streams located on the golf course property. He stated that he declined their request, as it would result in flooding downstream.

T. Brady stated that Staff have put together an application to hold a workshop on the Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan at the upcoming MACC Fall Conference.

The Commission discussed the drafted PLPA letter of support. M. Quigley suggested a minor modification.

*R. Schnoor made a motion to approve the PLPA letter with a minor modification and proposed that the Chair sign the letter on behalf of the Commission. P. Harvey seconded. All in favor.*

T. Brady noted that a Notice of Intent will be coming before the Commission on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Commission confirmed that a quorum will be present for that upcoming meeting.

T. Brady asked that any Commissioner who would like a hard copy of the Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan please email K. Weatherseed. Otherwise, a PDF will be available on the Town's website. P. Harvey suggested that several copies be shared with the Town Library.

## **ADJOURN**

*P. Harvey made a motion to adjourn. R. Schnoor seconded. All in favor.*

Minutes prepared by K. Weatherseed