



City of Cambridge Conservation Commission

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Public Meeting – Monday, May 13, 2019 at 7:00PM 147 Hampshire Street, Main Conference Room

MEETING MINUTES

The following meeting minutes were taken by Tracy Dwyer and are respectfully submitted.

Present Commission Members: David Lyons (Acting-Chair), Elysse Magnotto-Cleary, Kathryn Hess, Kenneth Nugent, Ted Pickering, Kaki Martin and Jennifer Letourneau (Director)

Absent Commission Members: Purvi Patel

Attendees: Tracy Dwyer, Cambridge Public Works; James Wilcox, Cambridge Public Works, Tim McIntosh, VHB; Gene Crouch, VHB; Michael Branden, 27 Seven Pines Avenue (NCSC); Richard Clarey, 15 Brookford Street (NCSC); Mark Lamping, Eversource; Jennifer Buttarro, Eversource; Rebecca Weissman, SWCA; John Thomas, SWCA; Ken Stanley, Tri-Mont Engineering; Brendan Kearns, Tri-Mont Engineering

David Lyons opened the hearing.

7:00 - Notice of Intent

Proposed Ames Street/Memorial Drive Intersection Improvements

MIT – Prepared by VHB

DEP File #123-291

Tim McIntosh from VHB opened up the project by explaining that MIT would be hiring a contractor to install a separated two-way bike lane on Ames Street from Main Street to Memorial Drive. The goals for this project is to complete the connection between East Cambridge and the Charles River, this would make it easier for pedestrians and bikes to cross Memorial Drive. There is already a two-way bike lane on Ames Street from Broadway to Main Street. This project would also eliminate the U-turn on Memorial Drive.

Gene Crouch from VHB stated that this project would eliminate a lot of the concrete at the Ames Street and Memorial Drive intersection and would be replaced with grass. He showed the commission the buffer zone that they would be working in, which is a very small amount. The work on Memorial Drive is DCR property and just before the team came to the Conservation Commission DCR came back to them and asked to them to do a small section of mill and overlay on Memorial Drive, it would be 16,950 square feet of the buffer zone.

Jennifer had a concern that the City's culverts and outfall would be disturbed during this project but Gene stated that there would be a one square foot reduction of stormwater going to the City's system.

Jim Wilcox of DPW reviewed the project and said that VHB and MIT was working closely with the City (DPW) on this project. Jim commented that this project would increase the pervious area which will assist the City and DCR in complying with the Charles River TMDL for phosphorous. He would like them to confirm the catch basin at STA 10+90 is functioning, is said their plans show the catch basin lateral in the manhole capped. They are complying with DEP's standards. Jim would like to see them provide information on DCR's record keeping system for maintenance activities and also records of the Erosion and Sediment Control Maintenance activities.

Jennifer stated that VHB revise the form to include the mill and overlay work and that can be refilled. She asked that all catch basins be cleaned and documentation should be sent to DPW. Jennifer has also checked with DEP and they had no additional comments regarding this project. Kaki asked if other than the cleaning of the catch basins, would there be anything else that the commission should be asking for? Jennifer said with a project like this that would be the only thing they the commission would ask for.

Ken asked what the project duration would be? They would like to start the project as soon as possible and be completed by November 15th.

Kathryn asked if there would be any plantings or trees added to the project. There would be no trees planted but they will loam and seed the area. Kaki asked if there would be any maintenance with the loam and seed? Kathryn asked who would be the responsible party for the maintenance of the loam and seed? Gene from VHB said at the conclusion of the project DCR will inspect the project and then take over the maintenance of the loam and seed.

Jennifer stated this would be part of the special conditions of the permit, there would be a three (3) year certificate of compliance. Jennifer asked who would be filing for that? Gene said MIT would be filing for that. He stated that he's worked with the DCR on other projects and they will not except the project until the grass is growing.

7:21 – Public Comment was opened. There was no public comment and it was closed.

The Commission unanimously agreed to approve the permit.

7:25 – Notice of Intent

Re-Build Brookford Meter Station

Eversource Energy – Prepared by SWCA

DEP File #123-292

Rebecca from SWCA opened by the project to the commission, she explained that the building that houses there metering on Brookford Street was built in 1950 and it has deteriorated over time. She said that Eversource has made repairs to the building, but they would like to make some long-term repairs. The project would consist of demoing the current building, that would be replaced by two prefabricated buildings attached with a common roof. She explained to the commission that this property that the property sits on is subject to flooding from Alewife Brook which is about eight hundred (800') feet from the property. The construction of this project would be access from Magoun Street the access road would be crushed stone on top of a fiber mesh blanket for easy clean up at the conclusion of the project. They have thought of ways to

decrease the chances of flooding, they will be decreasing the area of pavement on the property by seven hundred (700) feet, they will replace it with crushed stone and gravel. They thought of moving the building back more on the property, but they are unable to do this because of the equipment that is located under the building that supplies the metering, gas lines that regulate the station. They also can't move it because of setbacks, since the property only sits on a tenth of an acre of land. Rebecca asked the commission if they had any recommendations for Eversource to reduce the flooding, she said that they thought of an underground storage tank, although the DEP thought the tank would not be at an elevation where there is a loss. They also thought of regrading the property and also construction a swell on the property to help mitigate the flooding. Jennifer asked if they got a variance to move the building out of the flood zone? Rebecca stated that they thought of moving it but because of the gas lines and equipment in the ground that would not be possible. Jennifer stated to Rebecca and Eversource that the commission can not offer to them what to do about mitigating the flooding on the property they need to submit a memo to the commission with ideas they have come up with.

Jim went through his review of the project and said that Eversource and SWCA needs to identify the stormwater infiltration and recharge, he said that the rooftop runoff drains should have gravel at the base of them for infiltration. Ted asked if they would be testing the access soils? Also, there would be concern about the subsurface stormwater and asked if there would be any predevelopment of the soils. Eversource stated that they would have an LSP testing all excess soils and they would be disposing of the properly but as of right now there were not plans for predevelopment. They also said all of these upgrades to the building will also include equipment upgrades and will meet all of the City's Climate Change assessments.

Ted asked if this is considered a utility and be exempt from a full review? Jennifer stated it was a utility but will be reviewed by the commission.

Jim from DPW went through his review he stated that this is an important facility for the City, it supplies gas for heating to parts of Cambridge, as well as neighboring cities. DPW is also going through a review of this project. Eversource will be making the appropriate improvements to protect the utilities in the building in case of flooding, there will be significant upgrades to the utilities for the customers. They are not meeting the standards in regard to flood storage. They also need to make changes to the plan regarding the change of elevation of the gravel access road, ground surface area reduction, show the construction limits on the plan. Jim also suggests they have cleanouts at the ends of the infiltration lines for easier cleaning. He said they are currently reviewing the building permit for this project at DPW.

7:49 – Public Comment was opened.

Michael Brandon of 27 Seven Pines Avenue representing the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee stated he reviewed the plans he is also concerned about the contamination and is concerned that the Notice of Intent does not give a sense of how vulnerable the residents are to this site. He stated the land that they are using for an access road during construction is zoned currently for a two-family residence and is concerned that it will change with the construction of this project. He also stated that W.R. Grace is under an AUL and it is not noted anywhere that there are any AUL's in the area. He asked that predevelopment of the soil take place because there have been known to be asbestos in the area. He also asked if there could be more vegetation and/or trees planted on the site of the construction access road. He is looking forward to seeing the revised plans.

Mark stated that this building is an old soda bottling plant prior to Eversource owning it. Before demo they have done some testing and it tested positive for lead paint and asbestos. He said in

regard to plantings and vegetation, he said they will restore the vegetation that was there prior to the construction but have no plans to plant trees on the property. He said they have received a variance only for construction access.

Mark from Eversource explained how this is a very important facility for the City, that is supplies homes with heating and would like to resolve this tonight with the NOI. He said that Arlington would be servicing homes while the Brookford facility is taken off line, but they said they are concerned that they can't fully supply all of its customers.

David asked how long the construction would take? Eversource stated that it would take about 6 months to complete. Jennifer stated that they next Conservation Commission meeting would be June 10th and they could get them on the agenda for that meeting. She said the commission can not approve something they have not seen on plans. She said they would need to come back to the commission with revised plans and she stated that if June 10th was too late for their construction then they could hold a special meeting.

The Commission unanimously agreed to continue this project.

Public comment was left open.

7:57 – Administrative Topics

Jennifer stated that she went out to do a site walk from 35 Cambridge Park Drive for their Certificate of Occupancy. She stated to the commission that everything is functioning, and all the plantings are growing, this is their third growing season.

The Commission unanimously agreed to approve the Certificate of Compliance.

Jennifer updated the Commission on the Acorn Park Drive project which they agreed have a negative determination. She said since their meeting the City meet internally with the property owners and they have come up with a solution to the roadway and multi-use path. They City agreed for them to have two eleven-foot lanes for vehicles and one ten-foot multi use path with a curb stop and reflective poles as a separator. They will also be doing some additional planting of trees, but they road will not be widened. Ted asked about the catch basins along the road, Jennifer stated they are deep sump catch basins that are fully functioning, so she sees no problem with them.

The meeting minutes from April 8, 2019 meeting were approved.

8:18 - Meeting Adjourned