



City of Cambridge Conservation Commission

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Public Meeting – Monday, February 24, 2020 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: Kathryn Hess, Jennifer Letourneau (Director), David Lyons (Vice Chair), Kaki Martin, Ted Pickering, Erum Sattar

Absent Commission Members: Elysse Magnotto-Cleary, Purvi Patel (Chair),

Attendees: Tracy Dwyer, Cambridge Public Works; James Wilcox, Cambridge Public Works; Duke Bitsko, Hatch; Mark Boswell, Bicycle Committee; Jesse Aguilar, Highpoint; Hannah Loope, Wagner Hodgson; Jack Kelly, Bartlett; Tyson Reynoso, King Street Properties; Doug Hartnett; Dien Ho, Bicycle Committee, Kara Falise; Cambridge Public Works; John Rochwood, EcoTec; James Rafferty, Adams & Rafferty

David Lyons opened the meeting.

7:00 – Informational Presentation Cambridge Water Department Glacken Slope Phase 6

Duke Bitsko from Hatch was at the meeting to go over the project with the commission. Duke explained the scope of the project, there is just under an acre of land (40,000 square feet) that will be under construction. The work will be happening behind the Glacken athletic field and playground. The slope and woodland restoration will be less than two football fields long. They will be removing black locust trees and invasive species plants. The trail will be de compacted and native ground covering will be planted. They will be back before the commission on March 9th with a Request of Determination Applicability (RDA). This work is within the buffer zone but no changes will be made to drainage.

Erum asked how long each phase usual takes? Duke indicated that it's about one growing season.

Duke explained that the path that runs along the back side of the field will be removed and replaced with a path from the playground area to the pond. He said as part of the athletic field restoration project they are constructing a pervious walking path along the wooded area.

Kathryn asked about the path removal? Duke said they will be removing a steep zig-zagging path that is not very ADA complaint and constructing a path from the playground area down to the pond.

David asked how many invasive species were being removed? Duke said he did not have an exact count but there were a lot to be removed. He stated that all the trees that were being removed are being reused in playgrounds, such as Danehy Park and also some contractors have reached out.

David also asked about the fill removal and replacement? Duke said that there would be some grading away from the reservoir and repair of a gully.

Duke stated that the black locust tree removals have been receiving more positive feedback from the community, since the new tree policy's have been in place in the City.

7:20 – Informational Presentation

King Street Properties

101 Cambridgepark Drive – Offsite Bike Path Concept

Doug Harnett from Highpoint was at the meeting along with several others from his team. Doug explained to the commission that they were before the commission for the building on the property at 101 Cambridgepark Drive, at that time they had stated that they were pursuing a license with the MBTA for access to land adjacent to the property. They would be connecting to the Fitchburg Rail Trail in an effort to make a larger connection in the City to other bike paths. The first intention was to put the bike path on the property but that would dump the bikers in the driveway of their property to bike along with delivery trucks from there loading docks. They stated since this is a Life Sciences building that there would be more deliveries than a normal business. Doug explained that there is currently a footpath that is in the same location to which they would like to construct the bike path. Doug stated that there is a twenty-five (25) foot river front on this project. Doug stated because part of this land is subject to flooding that they would be creating an elevated timber board path, along with paving with pervious asphalt. There would be some tree removals with the path alignment and some invasive plant removals. They would be supplementing with native plantings to make a better habitat for animals.

Ted asked if they could see the location of the elevated walkway?

Hannah Loope from Wagner Hodgson showed pictures of the current conditions and then showed renderings of what the elevated walkway and also paved path would look like with all the new plantings that they would be installing. Doug also stated they were working with John Rochwood from EcoTec to incorporate logs and other materials into the area. Tyson Reynoso from King Street Properties stated to the commission we are trying to open the space up to make it safer for pedestrians, right now that footpath is heavily used and they are expecting as the area becomes more developed that it will get more use as times goes on.

Jennifer stated that they had been to commission for a Notice of Intent for the building and that had impacts on the wetland.

Kathryn asked where the resource area is and how it would be impacted by this project? Doug stated and showed the commission on plans that the area is at an 18.4 elevation, it has river front as well as boarding land subject to flooding.

Erum asked about the length? Doug stated it was about eighty (80) feet.

Ted asked whether the path could hug the property more? Doug and his team showed the commission where the path would be connecting with another path across Cambridgepark Drive, there for they wanted to align the two connecting paths for safety reasons. Doug stated that there is a steep slope that hugs the property and they were trying to avoid having to fill that into grade.

David asked if all of these documents were sent to the Planning Board. Doug stated yes.

David asked who would be in charge of the maintenance and up-keep of the MBTA property. Doug stated that King Street Properties would be responsible for the upkeep of the path, maintenance of the elevated walkway, snow removal and general clean-up of the area.

James Rafferty, attorney representing King Street Properties stated that it was unprecedented that King Street Properties was able to make an agreement with the MBTA so quickly. He said CDD and the bicycle committee had a very strong opinion about making a bike and pedestrian friendly path as phase two of this project.

Kathryn asked about the original plan that dumped bikes in the driveway with trucks and vehicles entering and exiting the garage. Doug and Tyson said that the bikes would be in a separate path until they get to the rear of the property and then they would be sharing the driveway with delivery trucks, which would make it a challenge. Kathryn said they also understood that the bikes would be navigating the area with vehicles entering and exiting the garage but that is not the case. James Rafferty said it was critical for the bike path to align with the crosswalk to make the connection across Cambridgepark Drive and the continuation of the path.

Kathryn stated that she assumed that when they come back before the board, they would have all of the calculations for them to review of the flooding zones. Doug stated yes.

Erum asked how close to the water was the path?

Doug stated that the water was about 2-3 feet from where the path would be constructed.

Kathryn asked where the culver was feed from?

Ted stated that the culver was from Fresh Pond itself and that the commission has twenty-five feet of riverfront to protect but it seems as though they have no other options.

David asked how long was the maintenance plan good for? The team stated that they would be responsible for the maintenance on the land for the life of the license agreement from the MBTA. David stated he still wasn't sure about the conflicts of the bikes on the roadway vs. pathway.

Tyson stated that deliveries could be every fifteen to thirty minutes during peak times. He stated it was a constant stream of traffic but probably more deliveries than normal.

Erum asked if they had a sense of how many users were on the path?

The team said the path is used now and they would expect more traffic once it's complete.

Mark Boswell from the Cambridge Bicycle Committee stated that this connection would be a connection to a network of bike paths, he stated that when they think about the users on the road they have to think about all ages (8-80). He stated to commission they need to think about sending children into the driveway to navigate the trucks to make the connection to the path. Although an adult or seasoned biker that might not be an issue. He said they look at bike paths for their recreational use, they also need to think about bike facilities for all bikers; i.e. bikes with trailers for families. He said it might not be widely used now but could see the use growing once the path is complete.

Dien Ho from the Cambridge Bicycle Committee stated that this junction is critical, that trucks are the most threatening vehicle on the road with their size as well as blind spots. He said that this would be a great family biking area with the connection to the Fitchburg line. Dien asked what the quantifiable impacts would be to the Wetlands?

Doug from Highpoint stated that their looking for the performance standards, complying with the riverfront, land subject to flooding – can't displace water. The buffer zones are important. Dien asked about the invasive species and removals? Doug stated that this would improve the native species and habitats in the area and that the program would take about two (2) years.

Ted stated that he seemed as though the commission would have to live with the impacts to the riverfront, he stated that the commission should have had more input early in the planning process.

Kathryn stated that she said when they come back to the commission that the tram would have a well design plan to show the commission members.

Kaki stated that she would like to see the tree calibers, plantings. Also, she said that they have to look at this as more value to others in the City. She said if they didn't take this route with the project there would be no upgrades to the area. She said to the team when they come back, she said they should stay focused on the project itself for the Notice of Intent.

8:13 – Administrative Topics

Meeting Minutes from February 10, 2020 meeting were approved.

8:16 – Meeting Adjourned

