

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

October 13, 2020

As a result of the Walter J. Sullivan Water Purification Facility being closed to the public due to COVID-19, this meeting is available virtually on Zoom. This meeting is being recorded.

This meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. at 250 Fresh Pond Parkway, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Those in attendance via *Zoom* were:

Cambridge Water Board (CWB): Ann Roosevelt, Kathleen Kelly, James Burruss, Mike McNeley and Jason Marshall

Cambridge Water Department (CWD): Sam Corda, Fred Centanni, Jamie O'Connell, Dave Kaplan, Mark Gallagher, and Linda Vierboom

A. MINUTES OF MARCH 10, 2020 MEETING

Mr. Burress moved, and Mr. Marshall seconded the motion to approve the March 10, 2020 minutes as written. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

New Board Member: Welcoming remarks from Ann Roosevelt, to newest Water Board Member, Mike McNeley, who was appointed by the City manager and confirmed at the summer City council meeting. All members joined in this gesture.

COVID -19: CWD is deemed an essential function; as a result, we still performed all tasks and operated fully and without interruptions. Starting on Wednesday March 18, 2020 the Water Department implemented the minimal staffing plan to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The building was closed to the public and most administrative staff worked remotely. The admin, treatment plant, watershed and distribution staff were reduced to perform essential functions. Payroll, payables, receivables, as well as water billing were maintained without interruption. Distribution crews were on -call and performed only essential functions such as water main break and leak repairs. The lab continued its full operation and as such staffing was only slightly reduced. Mr. Corda commends the staff.

Mid-day cleaning and disinfection of high touch areas was added to the cleaning regimen, along with daily vehicle disinfections.

On June 22nd the building was opened to about 25% staffing with the distribution, treatment, watershed and lab staff returned to full staffing. This was doable as the distribution and upcountry watershed staff never entered the building. Also, vehicles were limited to one person per vehicle. On July 20th the Department returned to full staffing. This was possible because of the size of the building, multiple single offices, separate sections and about 20 staff never needing to enter the building. Protocols and guidelines, developed by the City, have been strictly followed. About this same time frame visitors were allowed, by appointment only, and behind a plexiglass screen; complete with sign in and cleaning protocols. The Reservation was kept open throughout. To help with social distancing, one-way directional change signs were installed, and arrows painted on the pavement. Everything has worked exceptionally well and there has been a cooperative effort between several different departments.

Key Topics: New Board Member, COVID-19, Drought/Water Conservation, PFAS Update and
Glacken Field/Slope Update

A motion was made by Ms. Kelly thanking the director and staff for keeping the reservation open. Ms. Kelly said it helped the mental health of the community.

Ms. Kelly moved, and Mr. McNeley seconded the motion to commend the Cambridge Water Department for an exceptional job keeping the reservation open to all who wanted to use it. The vote was unanimous in favor on the motion.

Drought/Water Conservation: On October 9th the secretary of environmental affairs elevated the drought status to level 3/critical drought condition – Drought conditions started in July. We are down about 7 inches of rain compared to our average through September. We monitor this on a regular basis. Due to conservation efforts since the 1980's as well as improved leak detection and repair our daily demand is down by about 50% (24 Million gallons per day (MGD) to about 12 MGD) The “good” news is that Covid-19 has dropped our average per day usage for FY20 to about 12.2 MGD. In FY19 we used about 12.9 MGD. The main reason seems to be that institutes of higher learning and hotels are not in use/or have limited use. Since we are a full member of the MWRA we follow their drought management guidelines and they currently are operating at normal levels. At capacity the MWRA water supply will last about 5 years. MWRA has a huge capacity and their demand has also been dropping over the years. As a full member we can use their water if we need to. Stuffers for indoor & outdoor conservation and a drought notice have been included with water bills since August. Drought and water conservation information is posted on our webpage and we have been tweeting daily water conservation tips.

Ms. Roosevelt said that Councilor Nolan has been questioning our water conservation “notices” and asked if there was something additional that we should be doing relating to water conservation. Ms. Roosevelt suggested we stop the irrigation of lawns. Ms. Roosevelt also suggested a letter be written to the council addressing the drought status and what measures we are taking (such as conservation tweets and speaking with colleges regarding usage). Mr. Corda mentioned that because Councilor Nolan's Water Conservation Order was answered at the September 14th Council meeting there may be no additional benefit to a letter. Mr. Corda could talk with the City Manager regarding Ms. Roosevelt's suggestion to see if there is any benefit to that.

PFAS Update: Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) are in many household products and were in fire retardant chemicals. They are now in many water supplies all throughout the country. The EPA accepted levels are up to 70 parts per trillion (ppt) while the State will be promulgating 20ppt as the limit for the combination of 6 PFAS chemicals, starting in January of 2021. Cambridge water tests at an average of 17ppt for the 6 PFAS chemicals combined. Cambridge is being proactive and is taking steps to remove as much as possible with the goal of keeping levels below 10 ppt. A pilot study, which includes the testing of different Granular Activated Carbons (GACs) for longevity and PFAS removal is starting soon. Once the study results are in, and approval granted by MADEP, a bid will be put out to obtain and replace the GAC in our filters. This will happen, ideally, by the end of the first quarter of 2021. Visit our website for public outreach and education information.

Mr. Marshall appreciates the steady efforts of our water conservation outreach and asked if we have had conversations with the colleges about conservation. Mr. Corda replied that we have specifically worked with DPW and the golf course. Colleges currently have reduced usage and we have routinely worked with them over the decades relating to water conservation. The entire

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City has been working on smart irrigation control systems that save about 20% of the water used in a typical lawn irrigation system.

Glacken Field/Slope Update: Mr. Kaplan said the slope work is coming along nicely with 95% of the phase 6 slope restoration work completed. Covid-19 protocol standards were used. There has been great success with the subcontractor. Work has been done in record time and looks great. Plants are in the ground and are being irrigated heavily during the drought so that they can be well established before winter. Coconut berms are in place and restoration of soil completed. It is hoped that the majority of construction work will be done by the end of the season and the board can get a tour.

Huron Avenue: Ms. Kelley asked if, in addition to a bike lane being placed in the street right-of-way, a sidewalk could be added, leaving the current "goat path" within the Reservation property as is. Mr. Kaplan said there wasn't the width for both of those uses in the roadway right-of-way. Mr. Marshall had concerns of inviting youth sports to Glacken Field without having a safe way to get there. Mr. Corda said a formalized land survey has been requested. The goal is to minimize the impact on the Reservation.

Ms. Watkins said the Huron Avenue full reconstruction portion of the Glacken Field project is behind schedule. The proposal is to have the bicycle lane, a parking lane and two lanes of travel within the Huron Avenue roadway right-of-way. Additionally, the proposal includes a 5' wide porous pavement sidewalk within the reservation in place of the cart path that now exists there. The roadway/sidewalk design plan is not yet complete.

The Board would like Ms. Watkins to come to a future meeting to continue the dialogue before the plans are complete. Mr. Corda will discuss this with Ms. Watkins to schedule a date to attend a future water board meeting.

C. OPERATIONS

Transmission and Distribution:

Lead water service replacement update: CWD has been replacing lead services for many decades, averaging about 100 renewals per year since the early 90's. These are often done in conjunction with DPW projects. Individual renewals are also done upon request. Currently there are about 1,500 lead services left in the City out of the original 15,000.

It was asked why the 12" pipe on Inman Street was replaced with an 8" pipe. Mr. Gallagher said the 12" was installed in 1864 and since that time utilities, such as natural gas, fiber optics and other utility lines, have crowded the pipe corridor leaving insufficient room to install a 12" water main in certain areas. The new 8" DICL pipe will be sufficient to meet demand in the area.

CWD conducted a 24-hour MWRA interconnect test to make sure of settings and that the system is in good working order. It has been two years since the interconnect was last used.

Watershed:

MassDOT Deicing Study: Mr. Kaplan said DOT is revisiting the 1985 salt study and collecting new data to develop an updated model. CWD is hoping to use the study to compel some people to use less deicing materials on all of the roadways and parking lots in our watershed.

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104 Boston Post Road: In representation of the water department Mr. Corda will attend a hearing, slated for early November. The outcome will determine whether this project will move forward (40B request) or not. The project would include the construction of an unregulated wastewater treatment facility in our Zone A. Although the treatment facility would not have a ground or surface water discharge it has all the same risks associated with wastewater treatment. The hearing is being held by the Massachusetts Housing Appeals Committee and they will determine the outcome.

Weston Zoning Board of Appeals/ARCADIS: It was asked whether it was better to cover or remove soil when remediating for toxins. Ms. O'Connell said those are just the mechanisms that are used and there is no "one better" way. The project is in the zoning Weston board of appeals for discussion.

Watershed Letters/Correspondence: "Well done, Jamie" was the consensus of the board.

ENGINEERING:

Squirrel Brand Project: This area off Broadway will be the conversion of a factory building into a condominium complex.

D. ACTION ITEMS

Veteran's Memorial Marker: At the March 2020 meeting representatives Kevin Doyle and David Holway asked for the support and the endorsement of the Water Board regarding an upgrade to the existing Michael Guzzetti's Vietnam Veteran Memorial Marker, located on CWD property at the corner of Fresh Pond Parkway and Huron Avenue. The upgrade would have included the installation of a standard 40' flagpole and a solar powered single light. The project was time sensitive to coincide with an anniversary. The Water Board decided to take the upgrade under advisement; check the Master Plan and then get back to the representatives. Since that time, Mr. Kaplan has looked at the monument section of the master plan. It prohibits stone or metal outside of the immediate area of the building. Everything else has to be naturalistic. The original memorial on site predated the master plan. The board has agreed to wait until further outreach by the representatives. This has been tabled until further notice.

E. MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

No Comments

F. NEW BUSINESS

None

G. NEXT MEETING DATES/AGENDA – Meetings via Zoom

- November 10, 2020: Approved/Fresh Pond Reservation Rules and Regulations
- December 8, 2020: Approved/Election of the President
- January 12, 2021: TBA/TBD
- February 9, 2021: TBA/TBD
- March 9, 2021: TBA/TBD

Mr. Burruss moved, and Mr. McNeley seconded the motion to adjourn the Zoom meeting at 6:30 pm. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.