

November 18, 2021 - Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan Advisory Board Meeting

Minutes (conducted via Zoom)

Submitted: Sam Corda – September 15, 2022

Advisory Board Members in Attendance:

Janice Snow (Chair), David Kaplan, Janet Burns, Sophia Emperador, Claudia Thompson, Jennifer Letourneau, Adam Corbeil, Candace Young, Ann Roosevelt, David Lyons and Susan Agger

Advisory Board Members Not in Attendance:

Jim Barton, and Deborah Masterson

Water Department in Attendance:

Fred Centanni and Tim Puopolo

Others in Attendance:

Ken Vorspan - Public

Meeting opened at 6:15 pm

Meeting Minutes: S. Corda

Item 1: Review Agenda

Switched item 7 and item 5.

Item 2: Meeting Minutes

Claudia Thompson moved, and Janet Burns seconded the motion to approve the September 23, 2021, meeting minutes as amended. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Item 3: Maynard Ecology Center (MEC) Update

The MEC was up and running starting this fall for in-person classes with field trips. Typically, between 700-1200 students use the MEC each year.

There was continued discussion about the need for separate bathrooms for the MEC students. This process needs to go through the Cambridge Public School Department (CPSD), Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA), City Manager's Office and the Neville Leasee. This is very complicated and will take some time to get resolved. Susan will continue working with the School Department to keep it moving along. It seems at the earliest this could happen is next summer (2022).

Ann Roosevelt suggested that "portable" toilets be considered as an interim or long-term solution.

Item 4: Watershed Manager's Report

Huron Forest Inventory: Project cannot begin until DCR finishes their Greenway work.

DCR Greenway: The Greenway is scheduled to have a soft opening before winter. The City is working out the operations maintenance plan with DCR. The formal opening is scheduled in the Spring of 2022.

Huron Avenue Sidewalk: The 5-foot sidewalk and street side bike lane work, from the Pump House to Fresh Pond Parkway, will likely start in the Spring 22. DPW is not planning to add any street trees. Dave Kaplan will review any tree work with DPW.

Black's Nook: Before the dredging begins, we will need to manage the wildlife (for example temporarily relocate the turtles). Dredged sediments will be able to remain within the reservation after acquiring a DEP a permit to do so. David Kaplan will review the process that was followed at the Alewife with Catherine Woodbury (DPW).

Landscape Management Report: [Vinnie Falcione will be following] the usual winter preparations.

Item 5: Pat Pratt Memorial Grove

The oak planting area has heavy clay deposits. To boost the oak soil ecosystem, Vinnie Falcione and Janice Snow added soil from established oaks in the area to add beneficial ectomycorrhizal to the new white oaks. Other supplements such as iron and sulfur may be needed. We expect to plan a formal opening of the grove in the near future.

Item 6: Signs

The Watershed Division has expanded the size and information on the fence poison ivy signs following a request at the September 23, 2021 meeting from resident Ken Vorspan. The consensus of the Board is that these signs are the appropriate size and content. The amount of poison ivy is far less now than before restoration work along the Reservoir shoreline.

Item 7: Impact of Continued Alewife Development on the Reservation

Candace Young reported on an open space walk led by Doug Brown with the Cambridge Plant and Garden Club looking for potential additional open spaces in the now highly developed area. They did not see many opportunities between Fresh Pond Reservation, Blair Pond and the Quadrangle.

Many informational groups have developed plans/reports/studies such as the Concord/Alewife Plan (2003), updated FEMA maps (2010), Cambridge Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) (2015/2017), Envision Cambridge task force and the Alewife Preparedness Study (100+ pages including building a flood wall around the perimeter of Fresh Pond Reservation. The flood wall idea, of great concern to the Fresh Pond Advisory Board, had not been discussed with the Water Department, Water Board or Advisory Board before its appearance in the report.

Ann Roosevelt recommended that we reach out to John Bolduc to give the CCVA presentation he gave to Conservation Commission to the Water Board.

Jen Letourneau stated that there were no proposed plans for Fresh Pond and that it was a City-wide look at resilience. It is sometimes a challenge keeping everyone in the loop relating to the impacts and potential solutions to climate change. Claudia Thompson suggested that we evaluate MWRA system tie-ins and understand ground water hydrology. MWRA water costs over twice that of Cambridge water which is an additional incentive for continued use and protection of our water system.

Susan Agger mentioned that the City council order #246 proposes a moratorium on quadrangle development for 2 years until plans are considered and recommendations adopted. Sophia Emperador urged greater participation in the public process. Candace was concerned about the lack of open space development in our area which could lead to significantly increasing the use of and pressures on Fresh Pond Reservation.

Item 8: City Manager's Response to Naming Request for Completed Drainage/Community Project Area

Note: The January 20, 2020 Advisory Board letter formally recommended to the Manager that the City "officially rename the above-described restored area of the Reservation after the late Water Board President, Dr. Joseph (Joe) John Harrington, as either Harrington Way or Harrington Gateway."

Sam Corda reported no new information on this issue.

Item 9: Preliminary Agenda for March 17, 2022 Meeting

Volunteer Report, Golf Course Update, Watershed Mangers Report, Naming Drainage and Community Garden Project.

Item 10: Public Comment

Ken Vorspan recommended that the number and size of poison signs should be increased. A potential option suggested from the Board was adding a QR codes linked to further information.

His suggestion of using goats to eat the poison ivy was not workable at the Reservation shoreline for a number of reasons. These include damage to the restored ecology of the shoreline, likely damage to the fence and native plants being more attractive to goats than poison ivy.

Candace Young moved, and Janet Burns seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35pm.