

May 19, 2016 - Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Submitted: Sam Corda –September 22, 2016

Advisory Board Members in Attendance:

Janice Snow (Chair), David Kaplan, Susan Agger, Jim Barton, Doug Brown, Claudia Thompson, Janet Burns, Jenifer Letourneau

Advisory Board Members Not in Attendance:

Ann Roosevelt, Lauren McPherson-Siegrist, Deborah Masterson

Water Department in Attendance:

Sam Corda, Tim MacDonald, Vinnie Falcione, Martine Wong

City Manager's Office/Community Development Department in Attendance:

Taha Jennings, Bill Deignan

Public in Attendance: Claudia Hagen and Bibba Lerret, citizens; Dan Driscoll, DCR. DCR Director of Recreational Facilities Planning; Tracey Lenhardt, VHB; Duke Bitsko and Jason Bobowski, Chester Engineers

Meeting opened at 6:35 pm

Meeting Minutes: S. Corda

Item 1: Review Agenda

No changes

Item 2: Meeting Minutes

Jim Barton moved and Susan Agger seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2016 meeting as written. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Item 3: Meeting Schedule

September 22, 2016 will be our next meeting. The remaining meetings will be November 17 (2016), March 16 and May 18 (2017). We may schedule a 5th optional meeting to review project designs in either January or February 2017 if needed.

Item 4: 6:35-7:00 pm Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) – Chester Engineering

Duke Bitsko and Jason Bobowski gave a presentation on the Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) for Fresh Pond Reservation. The plan will be updated and the final version posted on the Water Department webpage. It was suggested that a “Soil Management Plan” should be added to the VMP.

Item 5: 7:00-8:00 pm Watertown/Cambridge Multiuse Path Presentation – DCR

Dan Driscoll, DCR, and Tracey Lenhardt, VHB, [Inc.] gave a presentation on the 75% Design of the Watertown/Cambridge Greenway. The intended schedule is to complete the design in Late Summer 2016 and have the permitting as well. The construction will start in the spring of 2017 pending state funding.

The key points presented were the greenway interconnections which are; Arlington Street, Cottage Street, Holworthy Street and the Treatment Plant Entrance. There was additional discussion about a single connection between the Fresh Pond Perimeter Road and the Greenway as a strategy to discourage users from trampling vegetated areas to get from the DCR path to the Reservation's Perimeter Road.

Many questions were raised on how the DCR's drainage and planting design would be adapted to deal with the complex drainage and ecological issues presented by a paved DCR path inside the Fresh Pond Reservation at the bottom of steep water supply lands and located at places within 100 feet of the Reservoir.

The 75 % DCR plan showed standard grass drainage swales along the DCR path. Several Advisory Board members noted that this design was not in keeping with the Master Plan that requires in such areas appropriate communities of native herbaceous plants, shrubs and trees. It was unclear as to what storm water capacities and flows the designs would be expected handle. A ten year storm (a 10% probability in a single year) was mentioned as a minimum standard. Others suggested, given increased volume and frequency of storms (due to climate change) that the standard needs to be higher.

Lighting was discussed. Bill Deignan, Cambridge Community Development Department, stated that the City policy is to light bicycle lanes and he did not agree that the Reservation should be an exception, and thus should have some minimum level of lighting. DCR's Dan Driscoll stated that with the exception of the proposed lighting inside the Mt Auburn Street underpass which is dark even during day light hours, the DCR does not fund or install lighting on its multi-use paths. He noted that within the DCR's 170 miles of multi-use paths there is not lighting except for underpasses with similar conditions as found on Mt. Auburn Street.

Mr. Driscoll further noted that DCR has "no intent to make the Greenway safe for winter biking... and that no salt is used on any paths", although pathways are typically plowed by the DCR. His experience is that for nighttime users headlamps are superior to pathway lights as the shadows created between lighted spots can conceal debris or black ice and lead to more accidents.

There was much opposition to lighting the Greenway within Fresh Pond Reservation and in particular within the Pine Forest area. There also could be negative habitat and flora impacts from the installation of general lighting.

The presentation can be obtained using the link below.

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/news/public-meetings/materials/projects/2016-6-2-watertown-greenway-presentation.pdf>

Item 6: Fresh Pond Day (June 11) Reminder and Advisory Board Signup

Everyone was reminded about Fresh Pond Day on Saturday June 11, 2016. Please sign up.

Item 7: Watershed Manager's Report

Glacken Slope Phase 5: The project was put out to bid and the contract was awarded to Argus Construction out of Bedford, MA with a construction start date of June 20th and expected completion date of September 2, 2016.

Kingsley Park Phase 1, Blacks Nook and Glacken Slope Phase 4 Projects: Working with the Contractor, Purchasing Department and our consultants to close out all of these projects.

Drainage and Community Garden Project Update: The 75% design has been updated based on comments received and will be moving forward. The plan is to bring the design to completion over the winter and to put the contract out to bid in the early 2017 with a start in the late spring of 2017.

Landscape Contract: The landscape contract was awarded to Schumacher. The contract is for three years and includes the option to perform “invasive species” work with New England Wildflower as a subcontractor.

Fresh Pond Reservation Signage:

Dave Kaplan presented the following signs for final approval of the format so that we could start posting these around the reservation:

- Butterfly Meadow
- Maher Park
- Lusitania Meadow
- Black’s Nook
- Weir Meadow
- Stream C Wetland Restoration
- Kingsley Park Forest Playscape

Susan Agger moved and Doug Brown seconded the motion to approve the above mentioned signage, the vote was 7 in favor and 1 against, the motion is approved.

Jim Barton moved and Susan Agger seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:31pm. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.