

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

June 19, 2013

This meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. at 250 Fresh Pond Parkway, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Those in attendance were:

Cambridge Water Board (CWB): Ann Roosevelt, Phil Weinberg, Richard Johnson and Jim Tanner

Cambridge Water Department (CWD): Sam Corda, Fred Centanni, Tim MacDonald, Mark Gallagher and Linda Vierboom.

A. MINUTES OF MAY 8, 2013 MEETING

Mr. Tanner moved and Mr. Johnson seconded the motion to approve the May 8, 2013 minutes as amended. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

475 Winter Street: Mr. Corda brought a request to the attention of the water board pertaining to 475 Winter Street, Waltham. This property is at the corner of Winter Street and Route 128 in Waltham. A brief summary of the request is that the land owner (owner of the strip mall and existing parking lot) is asking for permission to lease City property to use for additional parking. As a caveat they would upgrade their existing parking lot to meet the latest storm water runoff requirements. In the past (pre 1980) this site has been problematic and a guardrail was installed because the City property had been encroached upon. There have been previous requests to use City property which have all been rejected by vote of the Water Board. In addition, leasing this land would be a "change of use" and would likely require City Council and Legislative approval if their request was to be accommodated by the Water Board. The board inquired as to what the Watershed Manager's (Mr. Norton) opinion was and he was not in favor of the idea from a watershed protection point of view. It should be noted that if the owner redevelops the property, they will be required to upgrade the parking lot drainage to meet current storm water standards.

Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Weinberg seconded the motion to reject the proposal to "lease" a portion of watershed land to the owner of 475 Winter Street for the purpose of adding additional parking. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Overview of the FY14 Water Department Budget: The FY14 budget has been presented to the City Manager and approved by the City Council. For the third year in a row and 4 out of the last 5 years there will be a 0% increase in the water rate. In summary, debt service and electricity have been budgeted for less, salaries and wages are up as a result of cost of living adjustment and the FY14 budget is slightly up (0.77%) from last year.

Mr. Tanner inquired as to the Boards role relating to the Water Department budget. Mr. Corda stated that the City Manager sets the basis for and the City Council approves the annual budget. The Board does not play an active role in the budget process.

Ms. Roosevelt inquired as to what the "Miscellaneous Water Charges" relate to? Mr. Corda reported that those are revenues from items such as permit fees, inspections, flow tests, etc.

There was further discussion about the number of department positions (55), capital expenditures, labor, vehicles and fuel. It was suggested that we could discuss the Water Department's hiring status at the September meeting. Ms. Roosevelt was surprised that the City does not have a "buy American" policy on vehicles.

Training: Mr. Johnson indicated he thought the average of 10 hours per person for training seems low and thinks it should be higher. Mr. Corda commented that the higher grade licenses (i.e. Grade 4) have a minimum training contact hour (TCH's) requirement of 20 hours/2 years. We are working at doing a better job of tracking training hours for such items as City training. Excel, as an example, doesn't count as a training hour for the DEP licenses but should be documented as training hours for employees.

Arc Flash Study: Mr. Johnson commented about the Arc Flash Study and stated that such a study typically results in additional expenditures to make repairs on the equipment.

Cross Connections: Ms. Roosevelt inquired as to what happens after a cross connection device fails a test. The owner is notified and has to repair/replace the device and notify the Department when completed and the device must be retest for compliance.

Bike Path: The City purchased the former rail line that runs through Fresh Pond Reservation and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) purchased the rail line from the Watertown line to Huron Avenue. The intent is for DCR to build a multi modal pathway to connect to the Minuteman Trail at Alewife. Mr. Corda will make note of Ms. Roosevelt's concern to use the real estate effectively to reduce the usage of the Fresh Pond perimeter path.

Fresh Pond and Beyond Tour: Mr. Tanner attended the Fresh Pond and Beyond Tour and commented it was very nice.

C. OPERATIONS

Transmission and Distribution:

Mr. Johnson asked what a swing tie was. Mr. Gallagher replied that it is a measurement from two permanent structures (i.e. building corner, light pole, etc.) to a gate valve to allow us to locate the valve in the future (similar to triangulation).

Watershed:

None

Business:

Webpage update: The Water Department updated webpage is expected to go live on July 1, 2013. It was suggested that some of the text relating to the Water Board be updated. It was noted that we are behind schedule for the link to customer water usage information. We are working with the Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) vendor to allow for this type of functionality.

The "events" calendar will be brought over to the new webpage when we go live. This will help Fresh Pond users know when activities are going on such as road races. Mr. Corda indicated that "events" information would come from the Reservation permitting process (i.e. running groups) and other sources. Twitter will also be used to inform users of various events on the Reservation.

Another feature of the new web page will be an “alert bar” for major events, to be displayed in a prominent location on the Water Department home page. Additional information such as current projects, accomplishments, rules of Fresh Pond Reservation and other pertinent items will be within the webpage content.

The following questions from Mr. Johnson and Ms. Roosevelt were asked.

- How will the Water Department’s current construction projects be shown? There is a link to the DPW page for construction projects in the “Engineering Division” section, although, we will look at this to see if the link/status could be improved upon.
- Will the Department’s “accomplishments” be displayed on the webpage? They are not currently displayed but they will be added in the future.

Mr. Weinberg commented that it would be helpful if the watershed “master plan” for watershed protection was also available within the webpage.

The 6th Annual Fresh Pond Day was cancelled due to weather for the first time.

Water Operations:

None

Engineering Division:

None

D. ACTION ITEMS

None

E. MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

None

F. NEW BUSINESS

None

Ms. Roosevelt moved and Mr. Johnson seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 pm. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

G. NEXT MEETING DATES /TOPICS

- September 11, 2013 – Approved
- October 9, 2013 – Approved
- November 13, 2013 – Approved
- December 11, 2013 – TBA/TBD

Minutes approved by vote of the Board.

Signed: _____
Ann C. Roosevelt, President

Date: _____