



City of Cambridge Conservation Commission

147 Hampshire Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
Ph. 617.349.4680

Jennifer Letourneau, Director

jletourneau@cambridgema.gov

Public Meeting – Monday, November 16 at 7:00 PM 147 Hampshire Street, Main Conference Room MEETING MINUTES

The following meeting minutes were taken by Tracy Dwyer and are respectfully submitted.

Present Commission Members: Jennifer Letourneau (Director), David Lyons (Vice Chair), Erum Sattar, Kathryn Hess, Elysse Magnotto-Cleary

Absent Commission Members: Ted Pickering, Kaki Martin, Purvi Patel (Chair)

Attendees: James Wilcox, Cambridge Public Works; Matt Donovan, FDC Engineers; Clary Couto, Keolis; Marissa Valentino, BSC Group; David Biancavilla, BSC Group; Jacob Vance, Cabot Cabot and Forbes; Betsy Frederick, Kleinfelder; Rob Kenneally, Kleinfelder

David Lyons opened the meeting.

7:00 – Request for Determination of Applicability

MBTA Right-of Way Vegetation Management Plan
Fitchburg Main Line and the Grand Junction

Clary Couto Director of Environmental Compliance for Keolis Commuter Services. Clary explained to the commission that she was there for a renewal of BMP for January 2021 – December 2025, there s 3.5 miles of track and back in 2013 the commission approved a negative determination. Matt Donovan from FDC Engineers reviewed the maps submitted to the commission. Matt also referred the commission to the website where there is a link to the Request of Determination. Matt explained that this is a five (5) year vegetation management plan for a safe railroad for the train. The annually operations plan is more for outlining the yearly activities. Matt explained that these maps are updated from USGS and MASSGS and that they always have an environmental monitor on hand. Matt explained that outside of the tracks never received herbicides.

Jim Wilcox of the Department of Public Works noted that the map of the Fitchburg lines near Danhey Park and changed to a blue zone. The wetland area was within one hundred (100) feet at Danhey Park. Jim stated that the website was very useful that Matt had mentioned.

David Lyons ask if the pesticides are still being determined?

Clary stated that they have gone to communities because they didn't understand the BMP process. She stated that they limit amount of spraying at tracks in spray areas which include the

bed of the track. There is no spraying in overly populated zones and no spraying on bridges, such as bridges over the Charles River like the BU Bridge, instead they use mechanical means. David asked if Jennifer Letourneau or Jim Wilcox had any issues in prior years? Jen stated that there have been no issues in the past. Jennifer however did ask about the liability of the bridge near the BU Bridge, is it safe and stable?

Clary stated that they have removed the homeless population from the area which is easily accessible.

Jennifer stated it was not safe that there is a lot of access, but she was also referring on whether or not it was structurally sound and would there be any rehab in future plans?

Clary would ask for a comment on the question of structurally sound comment to the railroad operations staff. She stated it did not look pretty but it is safe, and she was only involved in biohazard management and homeless activity.

Elyse Magnotto-Cleary asked if they have been to other Conservation Committee's?

Clary said they would be meeting with 102 city and towns.

Elyse asked if page 2 was the same in the last five years and Clary agreed.

Kathryn Hess asked if the new zone/the limited spray zone would be permanently marked in the field.

Clary said that those areas would be marked out before May.

Erum Sattar asked what the schedule looked like? How frequent would the spraying happen?

Clary stated that a yearly operations plan would be submitted to the City and Conservation Commission, they would list what chemicals were selected and time of year that the spraying would happen, this would get posted in the Boston Globe. They would start the chemical application in the second week of May, but it's also determined on the last ice melt. They are limited to the times when tracks can be used. They would do an application in the second week of August – second week of September for the fall. They only have a weeks' notice ahead of time of when they can use the track. They use chemicals on the track beds because they can't use a mechanical means. Over time spraying is less and railroad tracks that are built with pesticides in the railroad ties help.

David Lyons asked if the numbers on the maps mean anything.

Clary stated they are mile markers.

David also asked if the area around Blair Pond needed to be larger? Extended to the east?

Jennifer stated that there are underground culverts near the track bed and that it's lower than the track bed. She said that the distance between Blair Pond and the track is large.

Clary asked if the yellow area on the map should be extended.

Jennifer agreed it should be.

Matt stated he didn't think it would be a problem to extend the area, to a yellow zone.

Jennifer felt that the distance was far enough away.

Clary said they always like to save money and not spray so there wasn't an issue to extend if needed.

Kathryn stated that the scaled of the maps are hard to understand, she thought it might be helpful for smaller areas to be zoomed in.

Jennifer asked about scheduling a time to photograph areas in question for the Conservation Commission with permission from Keolis.

Clary agreed that would be a good idea but it probably wouldn't be able to happen yearly, and especially not this year with COVID restrictions.

7:44 – The commission unanimously approved a negative Request for Determination of Applicability. Jennifer to review the delineations and exceptions of 10.03, 10.05, and 10.58.

7:45 – Notice of Intent – Continued from October 19, 2020

Mooney Street Redevelopment
DEP File# 123-304

Marissa Valentino from BSC Group opened up the discussion, she first wanted to answer a question that was raised by the public at the October 19, 2020 meeting regarding stormwater and what stormwater would affect the Highland neighborhood area? She stated that about 6400 square feet would be, and the rest of the stormwater water would be going into catch basins and into pipes. She stated that they're was a minimal amount of shedding to the west and that all water will be retained under the building, held and then released slowly into Mooney Street. Building B there would be no infiltration but there was lawns and landscaped areas with flow to Mooney Street.

The other point she wanted to make was that the distance to Blair Pond was about 320 feet and that it was out of the 200 feet from the end of the cul-de-sac.

Marissa stated that they provided responses to the review memo from Kleinfelder in regard to Hydro CAD, stormwater report, operations plan and SWIPP Plan.

Marissa stated that with construction phasing they would provide a flood storage table and would always maintain existing flood storage onsite. They would work with the contractor and the commission to update them on the flood storage and would provide updates as needed when construction starts.

Jennifer Letourneau stated that this was just a proposal and she has had no meeting or discussion with them regarding flood storage.

Jacob Vance stated that they discussed in the last meeting that a good method would be providing a flood storage table.

Jennifer stated that there was no follow up with her regarding using this method and it was just a suggestion from Kaki Martin and herself.

Betsy Frederick along with Rob Kenneally from Kleinfelder were the ones to provide a technical review of the submission. Rob spoke to several points; first point was there was no water quality units on Mooney Street, no stormceptors and asked why not.

He asked about the TSS removal and how they determined 77% removal rate for the stormceptor, that information should come from a third party and there was no information regarding that. Also, the stormceptors that they pick should be terminal types and follow the fine sand/soil because it's the end of the treatment train. They might want to go with a different particle separator. Did not provide figure 2 for record. There were seven calculations, but he was unable to identify which one is which. They should provide what drainage area is going to which water quality unit. The stormwater pump is not in the narrative, how it operates, what happens with loss of power will the stormwater back-up? In regard to pipe calculations the comparable flowrate you should use the large flowrate pipe size with the hydro Cad model. Rob pointed out that they have a fairly complex drainage system and the is still questions how this will function. He suggests using the hydro CAD model to get a more realistic system. He noted that on the southern side of the property on the drainage plan there is no run on onto Fawcett Street, the existing grading leads to run on into Fawcett Street.

Marissa stated that there is an existing wall along the property line in on the southern side of the property.

Jim Wilcox from the Department of Public Works asked about drain area 7S and drainage point, that the City a few months ago flagged an isolated piece of land subject to flooding. Jim wanted to know if someone verified the flags.

Marissa stated that 7S goes directly west and that the retaining wall there would be dismantled but that it was not retaining anything

Jim also stated that the area of Mooney Street that a public way is in a 1% flood chance area, are they proposing flood storage in that area? He said that Planning Board will be looking for if they are filling in the area and streetscape, but FEMA encourages streets that are in the flood plain to remain with the City. They wouldn't mind private storage but that an agreement would need to be made between the applicant and the City and this would be a concern for Public Works.

David Lyons asked if the City would do anything the treatment system on private property.

Jim stated that the end on Mooney Street closes to Smith Street is private and that they have had no discussions with the applicant. For the City to accept private ways the City will need to review specs of stormwater facilities, the City has standard protocols and standard specs.

David asked about the wall on the southern property line and would it come down and what the slope is?

Marissa stated that the grade to the south is at a 12, and that they would meet the grade of 12 or 13 along the property line.

Kathryn Hess commented that the design of a stormwater system and good hydrologic connection is out of the jurisdiction of the commission but was concerned about them leaving out the construction phasing of the property. She suggested that Jennifer maybe should have a discussion with BSC or contractors. She said that scenarios would be helpful of how storage would work if they are not building one of the buildings with the storage underneath.

Erum Sattar stated that when it comes up for a stormwater control permit the questions will be answered.

Jacob asked how the City and commission had handled a master plan project or PED project when things weren't 100% been figured out? Examples Cambridge Crossing, Discovery and Acorn Parks.

Jennifer stated Cambridge Crossing was not part of the Wetland Protect Act. With Discovery and Acorn Park they discussed all the buildings and two garages there was a full phasing plan developed and compensatory storage planned out with a proposed table that was phased. She stated that with each Certificate of Occupancy the table was updated, construction was discussed before a new building was built.

Jennifer asked the applicant if there was a discussion from DCR about Blair Pond?

Jacob said that they had a discussion with DCR and that they would like for them to leave it "wilder", rather than hardscaped. DCR preferred a "light touch and preserved" area leaving more of a wildlife sanctuary rather than a park or dog park.

David asked if they needed to talk about access to clean out systems.
Jim stated that they did not need to talk about that at this time in was too soon in the permit process.

Jacob stated that they were going to Planning Board on December 8th, the City Council Ordinance Committee on December 16 for a Zoning Petition for a bicycle Bridge across the train tracks as well as an increase of height up to eighty-five (85) feet.
David asked if the Conservation Commission permit was conditional? Jacob said no.

All parties agreed to continue the hearing till the December 14th meeting. Jennifer would meet with Jacob and Marissa to talk about construction phasing.

8:35 – The Commission unanimously agrees to continue the hearing.

8:36 – Request for Order of Conditions Extension

Lechmere Canal Park
DEP File# 123-278

Jennifer Letourneau Director of the Conservation Commission was able to provide the commission with an update as the applicant was not present.
Jennifer stated to the commission that the permit was pulled in 2017 for a new stormwater outfall in Lechmere Canal. On November 10 they reached out to request an extension of their Order of Conditions. Jennifer did a site walk on November 4th she said that everything was in place, restored, the sod was in place and that the only thing that remained was some work with tree planting and some hardscape. The applicant was seeking a one-year extension and would come to the commission in 2021 to close out.
Jim Wilcox added that this project was closed for two months due to COVID from about April through May. He stated to the commission that the City has had an engineer from STV, Inc. their everyday check on the site.

David Lyons asked why did it take them 2 years to start the work? The permit was from 2017 and they didn't start till 2019.

Jim stated that this outfall was to take water from the Monsignor O'Brien Highway from the area of Gore Street to the intersection of Cambridge Street to the canal and there were delays with the work because they were unable to secure permits from MassDOT.

8:39 – There was no public comment. Public comment was closed.

8:40 – The commission unanimously approves the extension on the Order of Conditions.

8:40 – Administrative Topic

Meeting Minutes from October 19, 2020 were approved.

The next meeting will be December 14, 2020

8:51 – Meeting Adjourned

