

Key Topics: Little Fresh Pond Shoreline Access Restoration Project Update; Drought/Water Conservation Update, PFAS Update, and COVID-19 Update

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

**MEETING MINUTES**

April 6, 2021

*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 5:00 p.m. at 250 Fresh Pond Parkway, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Those in attendance via *Zoom* were:

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

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

**A. MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2020 MEETING**

Mr. Burruss moved, and Ms. Kelly seconded the motion to approve the March 9, 2021 minutes as written. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

**B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

*Little Fresh Pond Shoreline Access Restoration Project Presentation by Dave Kaplan:*

The Little Fresh Pond shoreline project was originally completed in 2007. The intent was to restore the Little Fresh Pond shoreline, prevent future erosion and to make the access ADA Compliant. Currently the shoreline is in disrepair and redesign options are being presented for review and discussion. Please use the link below to access the presentation.

[https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/waterboardminutes/FPR\\_LittleFreshBeach.pdf](https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/waterboardminutes/FPR_LittleFreshBeach.pdf)

***Questions/Comments:***

*Ms. Kelly likes the design and said raising the permanent fence, which is located behind the bench and within the "triangle", would be desirable and make it more attractive. She also commented that there should be more boulders, plantings on the sides and the birch tree should be temporarily protected until construction is complete.*

Mr. Kaplan said there is not a planting plan at this point but there will be one. He also mentioned that we need to finish the design, determine engineer's costs estimate, obtain Conservation Commission approval of the final design and then bid out the project.

The construction timeline will ultimately depend on funding availability. With the earliest construction starting in the Spring of 2022.

*Mr. Marshall stated that this is a thoughtful design.*

*Ms. Roosevelt commented that it is a very good design and asked if there is a plan to stabilize and/or perform temporary repairs until the project is completed.*

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In the interim, Mr. Kaplan said we are looking at making minor repairs to support its summer use, incorporating some safety elements and discussing with the landscape architect how to best protect the Birch tree.

*The board thanks Mr. Kaplan and feels that this is a thoughtful design and appreciates the effort that went into it.*

The preferred design option from the presentation is depicted below:



PFAS6 Update: The PFAS6 test results are January 12.2 ppt., February 11.3 ppt, March 15.8 ppt. Levels are below the 20 ppt action level. PFAS Pilot Testing – We are eight weeks into the duration testing to our existing GAC. Expected upgrade depends on completion of the testing, approval from DEP, construction documents and bidding out the project. The goal is for the project to be completed by the end of the calendar year.

Drought/Water Conservation Update: EEA Secretary declared Level 1, Mild Drought as of April 9<sup>th</sup>. There are variations of drought within the state. Monthly precipitation predictions are above average from May thru September 2021. Hobbs Brook Reservoir continues to gain storage capacity since its annual fall shutdown. Consumption/pumped water is monitored on a regular basis and decreased this calendar year. The City continues to have a continuous drop in water usage. Harvard and MIT account for ~18% of entire Cambridge water usage. Hotels are after that. Recovery of the pandemic is a deciding factor. CWD will continue: Daily water conservation Tweets, updating webpage on a regular basis with tips, indoor/outdoor water conservation flyers will be sent out with bills in the spring and fall. Consumers alerted of drought via inserts with bills. Continue to work with Harvard and MIT regarding conservation methodologies. Completed upgrading smart system irrigation systems within the City.

Councilor Nolan has put in an order asking the water department to provide a report to the City councilors' regarding drought status and our water conservation efforts. Mr. Marshall asks that the info sent to the councilors be sent to the Board also. As part of that order, included is a



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request to update the demand study. Mr. Corda initiated discussions with our consultant about updating the demand study. The study will be dependent upon input from 2020 census, zoning changes, population statistics and population projections. With all that input, the projection that was done in 2011 can be updated. This water demand projection will be dependent upon restaurants, hotels, MIT and Harvard coming back online from the pandemic, less the long-term water conservation the businesses and residents have incorporated into their everyday practices.

*Questions/Comments: Mr. McNeley: Visibility to weekly level production report? Are we down due to pandemic shutdown or because of water conservation efforts?* Mr. Corda said we document daily the water that is pumped into the City. Water conservation has been at the forefront of all of our messaging. As time moves forward from the pandemic, we will be able to determine where any increases are from, based on the billed usage. Currently, billed usage is down by about 9% from pre-pandemic times.

*Mr. McNeley asked if preparations/system prep for increased usage are in place?* Mr. Corda said there is no need to do anything different since all of our processes are online - just at a lower production rate. The City of Cambridge is a full member of the MWRA and accordingly follow their Drought Management Plan. They are operating under normal operating conditions. They have been below their water withdrawal limit for many years. If we had to, we could purchase some portion of water from them.

*COVID-19 Update:* The City has been slowly re-opening. Based on the current rollout, we meet the requirements to be fully staffed based on the size of the building and the fact that distribution and watershed employees don't come into the building. To help slow/stop the spread of COVID-19 the vehicles are disinfected at end of each day, masks are required for all employees at all times except in their own office with a door shut, noon and end of day disinfection of high touch areas continue and each Saturday we have a full-fledged building disinfection. Last week the City offered free vaccinations to essential City workers who chose to receive it.

## **C. OPERATIONS**

### **Transmission and Distribution:**

*Questions/Comments: Larchwood Drive? Water work?* Mr. Gallagher said it is sewer work, only. No excavating/ no piggyback opportunities.

### **Watershed:**

*Questions/Comments: Right of Way Spraying in Weston and Waltham?* Ms. O'Connell said the herbicides are approved by the State and regulated by the Dept of Agriculture. Plans and restrictions were followed.

### **Water Operations:**

*Questions/Comments: Good to see that water capacity continues to increase, said Mr. McNeley. Ms. Roosevelt observed there is a lot of ongoing repair work. Some minor valve repairs. Ozone generator, Scada system, etc.* The goal is to have most of the repair work done before the summer months.

**Engineering:**

No Comments

**Business/Billing:**

Based on revenue projections and the pandemic subsiding, we expect revenues to increase in the next FY. The City Council voted a 1% rate increase in water rates in March, effective July 1st. The City proposed budget will go in front of the City Council May 18th for the budget hearings.

**D. ACTION ITEMS**

None

**E. MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST**

*Mr. Marshall commented on the letter to Mass DOT and asked if they are doing the cost analysis regarding sodium impact on the water supply as part of their scope of the study as we have requested? This is an economic analysis including open ended ancillary costs and we expect that they will. DOT is updating their study from the 80's on impacts of de-icing on the water supply. Mr. Marshall appreciates staff for the continued advocacy keeping our water quality on the forefront.*

*Ms. Roosevelt – Wade Putnam Park Expansion Letter. Site will extend slightly into the wetland outer buffer zone. Can they do that? Ms. O'Connell said this is a small dip into the 100-foot wetland buffer zone and is an improvement to the original plans. The important factor is that the project is outside of the 200-foot Riverfront Area and the Zone A of Hobbs Brook - there is no impact on the resource area.*

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

None

**G. NEXT MEETING DATES/AGENDA – Meetings via Zoom**

- May 11, 2021: Approved/Distribution System
- June 8, 2021: Approved/Capital and Operating Budget
- September 14, 2021: TBA/TBD

Mr. Kelly moved, and Mr. Marshall seconded the motion to adjourn the Zoom meeting at 6:28pm. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.