



City of Cambridge Conservation Commission

147 Hampshire Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
Ph. 617.349.4680

Jennifer Letourneau, Director

jletourneau@cambridgema.gov

Public Meeting – Monday, April 24, 2023, at 7:00 PM Zoom 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), Kaki Martin, Erum Sattar, Michelle Lane, Elysse Magnotto-Cleary

Absent Commission Members: Purvi Patel (Chair), Kathryn Hess

Attendees: Tracy Dwyer, DPW; Duke Bitsko, Hatch Engineering; David Kaplan, Watershed Manager, Cambridge Water Department

David Lyons opened the meeting.

7:00 – Annual Report Presentation **DEP File #123-272** Vegetation Management Plan Fresh Pond Reservation

David Kaplan opened by stating that they were before the commission to present their annual report on their Vegetation Management Plan. The main points of their vegetation management plan were the manual removal of garlic mustard, the use of herbicides for removal of invasive plant species and the use of deer deterrent, which was only for the purpose to make plants undesirable to them.

David Kaplan explained the different zones for spraying only when needed. Zone A is a no spray zone such as around community gardens, zone B is a limited use zone, zone C is further away from the resources, zone D there is no use in the reservation and is used for aquatic and zone E is the most set back.

Duke Bitsko of Hatch Engineering explained that there are some areas around the reservation that are not included in this Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) and those areas are the golf course and Glacken Field. David Kaplan explained that those areas are managed by different departments. Jennifer Letourneau stated that those areas are under the Recreation Department and are managed by them.

Erum Sattar asked if the golf course and Glacken Field are managed separately do they coordinate resources.

David Kaplan stated that the other departments are managing the grounds and that the Water Department kept coming to the Conservation Commission to do work, so they decided to save everyone's time by developing a VMP for the activities.

Jennifer stated that it was a question of size and scale and David Kaplan wanted to work with the commission and create a VMP. The Recreation Department is on a smaller scale with just watering, turf maintenance and fertilizer and when questions arise, they bring those to her.

David Kaplan agreed with Jennifer that the reservation is managing invasives and that the recreation department is managing turf. Jennifer stated that the recreation department gives one to two updates per year at the Fresh Pond Advisory meetings. Jennifer asked if the commission would like to have a presentation about the maintenance of the golf course by Adam Corbeil.

7:24 – Request to Amend and Extend Order of Conditions

DEP File # 123-272

Vegetation Management Plan

Fresh Pond Reservation

Duke Bitsko from Hatch Engineering stated that the original order of conditions was issued back in 2016 and an extension was approved in 2019 and another three-year extension was approved and ended up being longer because of COVID. The original order of conditions was for invasive species. This extension they would like to add into their vegetation management plan plant care and deer deterrent as well as the continues plant management. Duke talked about the various amendments to the VMP, where plant healthcare will be added to protect vulnerable trees to pests and diseases such as treating ash disease by injection and backpack spraying by a licensed professional.

David Lyons asked stated that Janice Snow was wondering about the glyphosate.

Dave Kaplan explained that glyphosate is a component of the VMP but not part of the healthcare program. Dave stated that this does not drift or contaminate the drinking water. The water is always tested and there was very little or no detection in the water.

Erum Sattar asked if this application applied directly into the root zone.

Dave Kaplan stated that it was used outside of zone A and sprayed at a very low pressure, it a targeted approach and there is also wiping, cutting of the stems, and drip methods.

Erum asked if this would be drifting into the Community Gardens.

Dave Kaplan stated that there is no detection of chemicals getting into the gardens.

Duke also added that the garden that is near Neville Manor has no invasives in that area and would not require spraying. Also, the garden near Fresh Pond Parkway has a lot of shrubs, low growing trees, and mulch so there is no spraying within 10 feet of that area. He stated that the spray that Dave Kaplan was referring to is mostly used in forested areas.

Kaki Martin added that the planting area for the gardens is clearly marked out and that the area around the gardens is new plants. She also asked if anyone ever tested what was grown in the gardens?

Jennifer Letourneau stated that the plant application is very targeted and used on specific plants and in specific areas. She stated that this is applied by a licensed professional. She stated that the Community Garden beds are raised beds, and some are thirty inches (30") to eight inches (8") above the ground so there would be no runoff into the garden and the soil used is sourced.

Erum asked if the software that they use to track is also tracking what is sprayed and where. Dave Kaplan stated that there is a place in the software to list the materials that were sprayed. He also stated that the licensed professionals that are doing the spraying need to track and report per state guidelines.

Elysse wanted to follow-up if the applications that they talked about were in the original VMP. Duke stated that they are listed in the appendices.

Duke went on to talk about amendment 2 which is the deer deterrent. Duke stated that there were issues in the Lusitania Woods, and they couldn't keep deer from eating plants. He stated that this material is organic and liquid. The treatment started last year and sprayed by backpack directly on plants. He stated that the spraying would only occur in zones B, C and E and the Lusitania only which is one hundred to four (100-400') away from the water source.

Dave Kaplan stated that there was a reduction after the application but there was some loss, and they couldn't tell if it was because of the deer or the drought over last summer so they would like to pilot of one more year.

Duke stated that they thought of other methods to deter the deer like a six-foot fence, motion sensors or not planting something the deer would like to eat but they wanted to create a natural habitat. Duke stated that this would only be used within the first year of planting.

Erum asked what the deer would eat if they were deterring them.

Duke stated that the deer that they see on the reservation are transient and this would not take away from them visiting.

Dave Kaplan wanted to correct Duke and stated that the application would not just occur in the first year that there would be regular spraying.

Jennifer recapped that the extension was submitted in a timely manner, and it was during COVID which is subject to extra time granted through the Governor's order. She stated that they are asking for a three (3) year extension and an amendment which will be incorporated into the current VMP.

7:52 – Public Comment Closed – no comment.

5 – In Favor, 2 – Absent, 0 – Opposed, 0 – Abstained

7:53 – The commission approves the extension for three (3) years and the two (2) amendments.

5 – In Favor, 2 – Absent, 0 – Opposed, 0 – Abstained

7:56 – Administrative Topics

Meeting Minutes from March 27, 2023 will be voted on at the next scheduled meeting.

8:02 – Meeting Adjourned

5– In Favor, 2 – Absent, 0 – Opposed, 0 – Abstained