



## City of Cambridge Conservation Commission

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### Public Meeting – Monday, June 10, 2019 at 7:00PM 147 Hampshire Street, Main Conference Room

#### MEETING MINUTES

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

Present Commission Members: Elysse Magnotto-Cleary, Kathryn Hess, Jennifer Letourneau (Director), David Lyons, Purvi Patel (Chair), Ted Pickering

Absent Commission Members: Kaki Martin, Kenneth Nugent

Attendees: Tracy Dwyer, Cambridge Public Works; Laura Jasinski, Charles River Conservancy; Penelope Taylor, Charles River Conservancy; Scott Skunck, FOTA/Charles River Conservancy; Max Rume, Northeastern University; Doug Harnett, Highpoint Engineering; Tyson Reynoso, King Street Properties; Vanessa Nason, Charles River Conservancy; James Rafferty, Adams & Rafferty

Purvi Patel opened the hearing.

#### **7:00 – Information Presentation Proposed Cambridge Park Drive Project**

Doug from Highpoint Engineering opened up the project to the commission. Doug explained the location of the project and its relation to the Alewife Wetlands, bike path and other recent projects on Cambridge Park Drive. This project is at 87 Cambridge Park Drive and was purchased by King Street Project in 2014. Doug explained that this building is setback from the street with a large parking lot in front of the building. They will be expanding the development and have been working with CDD, Planning Board and DPW to make this facility into a Life Science building. Doug pointed out that there is an easement on the property for the old Alewife Brook, the drain truck runs through the property. There is also a twenty-five-foot river front and vegetation wetlands adjacent to the property. They identified the 100-year flood plain on the property and explained that they will be installing comprehensive flood storage in between the buildings in the plaza area.

Jennifer stated that he will be increasing the grass areas on the property, moving parking to the back of the property and all trees on the property are less than eight inches.

Doug stated that this building will be 146,000 square feet and 5 stores high, retail on the ground level, loading dock and a 3 level below grade parking garage. The plaza area is in between the two buildings which will become a public area and will have plantings and grass. They are also proposing a bike path from Cambridge Park Drive along their property's driveway to connect to the existing bike path. They are also proposing an alternate bike path which would require an easement from the MBTA that would be more separated. King Street Properties has already sent to the MBTA the easement paperwork. In the interest of time, knowing that they won't hear back from the MBTA, they will go with the original design of the bike path and then come back to the commission if and when they have permission from the MBTA with the alternate design of the bike path. Doug told the commission that the alternate bike path would have less impacts on trees, so they are hoping for the approval of the easement from the MBTA.

Ted asked about the man-made path that runs along their property. Jennifer explained that is it heavily used by foot track only especially from DPW and MWRA to check manholes in the area. These are only checked by foot, not by truck traffic.

Doug also explained that there are two other easements on the property for a forty-eight-inch collector pipe and a eighteen inch sewer pipe. He explained that the man-made path is used heavily as a connection to the MBTA.

Doug went into the detail about the plaza area which would be located between the two buildings (existing building and new building) where there will be comprehensive storage, stormwater retainage for the twenty-five-year storm, there will also be an eb and flow for flood waters. Jennifer explained to the commission that the chambers are between the foot increments of the flood plain. Doug said there will also be stormwater flood control in the plaza.

Ted asked about garage flooding. Doug explained that they are building this for the 2070 storm and raised the elevation of the building. He explained that they are installing a "flood barrier" which works off of the power of the flood waters, and if there is a storm the barrier will close by the weight of the water to seal the garage from getting water in and then it will be released once the water has receded.

Purvi asked if they have any evidence of the system working? Doug and Tyson explained that this is being used heavily in Louisiana and Texas and it's been successful. They will provide cut sheets to the commission once they come back for their Notice of Intent.

Doug explained that they are trying to move the project forward and would like to work simultaneously with the commission and Planning Board to get their approvals. Purvi explained to Doug that they usually wait to see what the Planning Board's decision is before they project comes to the commission. Doug explained that he would be bringing to the Planning Board both options of the bike path but would be waiting to hear back from the MBTA on the easement to bring the alternate design to the commission. Jim Rafferty the attorney working on this project stated that this would project would be a special permit and also would require a flood plain special permit. This would allow the commission to comment on this project.

Jennifer stated that James Wilcox, Kara Falise and herself from Engineering at the Department of Public Works have all reviewed this project and looked at all aspects on behalf of the Wetlands Protection Act.

## **7:29 – Notice of Intent**

### **Proposed Floating Wetland – Zooplanktin Research**

#### **DEP File # To Be Determined**

#### **Charles River – DCR's North Point Park**

Laura from the Charles River Conservancy opened up the project and explained to the commission a little about the project and introduced the staff working on the project. She explained that this floating wetland is approximately seven hundred square feet floating dock which will be floating in the Charles River off of North Point Park. This floating wetland project will be a three-year project. It will be visible from the park and hoping to gain some interest from the public. Max Rome from Northeastern University explain in depth about the project and what they hope to get out of this floating wetland. He explained to the commission as the river is getting cleaner there has been an increase of e-coli and although the river is getting cleaner the eco-system is degrading. The river is banked with rip-rap and concrete walls and losing its nutrients. With this project they would like to identify the species of zooplankton. They are going to be planting native wetland plants on the floating wetland, some flowering and some that will pollenate. They are going to putting up signage for plants, so the public can look and identify them.

Elysse asked about the public education with the floating wetland and access to it from the public. Max explained that the floating wetland would be visible from North Point Park but would not be accessible. They will be creating a website for it, they have been thinking about kayak tours to it and also reaching out to the Duck Tour companies to give an overview of the project as they will be going by the wetland regularly on their tours. They have also reached out to the Museum of Science and Cambridge Public Schools Science Department and City Sprouts. The Charles River Conservancy is trying to make this an educational piece and thought that City Sprouts would be interesting in the planting part of this project.

Ted asked about the mechanics of the project and what the plants would be planted in? Max explained about the synthetic materials that will be used to hold the plants and seeds on the float. Purvi asked about the location of the float? Max pointed out on a map where the location will be for the float in the channel of the Charles River close and visible from North Point Park.

Kathryn asked about the winter time and what would happen to the float? Max and Laura explained that they don't want the float to get iced in, although the anchor could hold the ice load, but their idea is to move or remove the float for winter. They have talked to MIT Sailing about docking the float at their facility.

Kathryn also asked about how long the plants will take to mature since it's just a three-year project? Max explained that a lot of the plants will be two-inch wetland plugs, some will be plants in gallon containers and they estimate that plants will mature in one season. They are also taking in consideration the time of year that they are going to planting.

Ted asked where the zooplankton live? Max explained that they live in the roots of the plantings but are also eaten by fish that live in the river, yellow perch and sunfish.

Kathryn asked about sampling? And the number of sampling stations? Max stated that while this floating wetland develops that there will be a lot of sampling, they will be doing grab samples from shore, they will be doing samples from a boat and also taking samples directly from the floating wetland. They will be counting the algae and tracking the algae bloom, length of the blooms and the time of year of the blooms.

Ted questioned whether this project falls under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission? Jennifer stated with the float where they will be docking it and the connection to the river it was

under their jurisdiction. Jennifer stated that this is a very interesting and educational project and they would be looking forward to a report back to how this all goes.

Laura and Jennifer stated that they have worked with DCR to get all the permitting needed from them and DEP didn't see any issues with the project as well.

Kathryn asked about the safety of the float, keeping people off of it? Max explained that there will be fencing around the float to keep people off of it and also keep geese from using it. He explained that the float can only hold one person, which would be him.

Laura stated that they have worked out an emergency plan ahead of time and their will be a hotline that someone can contact in case of an emergency and they have a response time of an hour. Jennifer also stated to the commission that they have also worked with the Fish and Wildlife and also Coast Guard.

Purvi asked if this project is successful would they think about building more? Ted asked if they would use this for a treatment system? Max explained that if the project was successful they would consider making more floating wetlands.

David asked about the anchoring system and the removal of the that? Scoot explained that the anchor is very heavy eight hundred pounds and will likely sink another fifteen feet. He said it will be a large operation to move and remove.

#### **7:56 – Public Comment Closed**

The Commission unanimously agreed to approve the permit with the standard construction mitigation and a yearly report update from the Charles River Conservancy.

#### **7:59 – Administrative Topics**

The meeting minutes from May 30, 2019 meeting were approved.

#### **8:00 - Meeting Adjourned**