



City of Cambridge Conservation Commission

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Public Meeting – Monday, December 20, 2021 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), Purvi Patel (Chair), David Lyons (Vice Chair), Kathryn Hess, Michelle Lane, Elysse Magnotto-Cleary, Erum Sattar, Kaki Martin

Absent Commission Members: n/a

Attendees: Tracy Dwyer, DPW; Eileen Piskura, Kleinfelder; Jamy Madeja, Buchanan & Associates; JP Shadley, Shadley & Associates; Howard Moshier, VHB; Jennifer Sweet, Haley & Aldrich; Betsy Fredrick, Kleinfelder; Chrissy Gabriel, IQHQ; Tom Mosely, Shadley & Associates; Anthony Galluccio, Galluccio & Watson; Brian Fairbanks, VHB; David Surette, IQHQ; Amy Kipp; Kathy Johnson; David Croce; Lisa Birk; Mary White; Suzanna Schell; Diane Martin; Greg Harris; John Doucet; Ann Tennis; Joel Nogic; Eric Grunebaum; Emerson Gagnon; Jane Bloomfield; Leonardi Array; Sue Butler; Vicki Paret; Mike Nakagawa; Jean Devine; Lewis Weitzman; Sandra Fairbank; Phyllis Pownall

Purvi Patel opened the meeting.

7:00 - Notice of Intent

DEP File #123-311

IQHQ Alewife Park – Redevelopment and Restoration

1 Alewife Center

Continued from November 29, 2021

Howard Moshier from VHB opened the meeting to explain the updates that they were bringing forward to the commission. The updates were to the compensatory flood storage and reduction to tree removal. At the last meeting they had a community led discussion about improvements to the southwest corner near Jerry's Pond and implementing a plan to add compensatory storage at the southwest corner of Jerry's Pond. This plan would involve removal of existing soils to bring it down to an elevation 17 or less to provide storage. Howard presented a table that showed that at each vertical foot there is increase in the flood storage volume, so they have checked the box on compensatory storage. With the change of this compensatory storage at the southwest corner there will still need to be tree removals, but that because of this change in plans this would save

twenty (20) trees from being removed which is equal to one hundred and ninety-one (191) caliber inches. Howard stated that fifty-nine (59) of these trees are under the Wetland Protection Acts jurisdiction, which means in bordering lands subject to flooding, that equals six hundred and seven eight (678) caliber inches. Howard stated that overall Shadley and Associates submitted a plan that would add six hundred and fifty-six (656) trees to the property, which is equal to one thousand four hundred and twenty (1420) caliber inches. Howard stated that this was a well thought out plan for planting the trees, meadows and other plantings and they will be planted in soil and well cared for to make sure they are a beneficial habitat and to allow the canopy to increase as quickly as possible.

Purvi asked what stage in planning are they are at? Howard stated that are well beyond the 75% design. Stormwater design, compensatory design as well as the southwest corner.

Betsy Fredrick from Kleinfelder was in attendance and went through the comments along with Eileen Piskura.

Eileen also spoke to the submittal, Eileen felt that the changes to the design plan with the compensatory flood storage in the southwest corner was a beneficial change to the overall development. They had not seen a restoration plan for the tree's but that came in this afternoon. Eileen noted that with the change of the compensatory flood storage they are not meeting the City's peak discharge rate, due to an existing storm drain when in design point C. She noted that Kleinfelder did not take issue with the proponent's stormwater design, and they feel as though they have met the stormwater design requirements for the development and waivers for the City's stormwater requirements are at the discretion of the City moving forward. Betsy commented and said they understand that the proponent has made considerable effort to manage peak mitigation to the extent possible. Betsy said that any of these issues would be resolved during the stormwater control permit process.

Purvi asked if Betsy or Eileen had time to review the submittal with the tree restoration plan that was submitted this afternoon and Eileen stated she was able to review it and it appears all the issues have been resolved.

Kathryn Hess did not have any questions, but she wanted to express her gratitude on how the public and the developers have been working together and appreciate the revision to the plans and having some food storage area down further south.

Erum Sattar had a comment and wanted to get a sense of how comfortable Howard is on implementing the revised plans that were submitted.

Howard stated that the design that was submitted is very well coordinated with the design team, the architects and the owners. Howard said that if the project receives approval this evening by the Conservation Commission and then at the Planning Board. They feel confident that this is an excellent design that provides a lot of benefits in terms of stormwater management, but the project does have some unique challenges given its history of development. He stated this project is demonstrating a significant reduction in stormwater rates and volumes that were raised by Kleinfelder's memo in design point C, D and E. They realize that this is probably one of the larger sites that has been developed but are confident that they can work through any minor modification that will come up.

Public Comment was opened.

Joel Nogie from Clifton Street, a member of the Alewife Study Group. The Alewife Study Group were the ones who proposed the southwest corner be considered for additional flood storage and support the plan. He appreciates all the work with IQHQ and Howard and for all of their support and will continue to meet with IQHQ and other community groups to see if there are any more tweaks can be done with the plans with reducing impacts to trees as well as contaminated soils. Joel also asked the commission if there were minor changes made to the plans (reducing impacts to trees and soil disturbance) would those changes be able to be made administratively instead of back up to an earlier stage.

Jennifer Letourneau stated that in the past if there are minor changes and net positive flood increase, they can be made in as-builts, if there is more significant change in tree removals and excavation that would need to come back to the commission for approval.

Purvi asked Jennifer what the metric or threshold for something is that a substantial change or material change.

Jennifer stated that anything greater than twenty-five percent (25%) or a complete loss in flood storage by any one-foot increment.

Eric Grunebaum, neighbor and member of Friends of Jerry's Pond. Eric supports the move to the southwest corner and depaving the southwest corner. Eric said he would support the net positive in saving more trees and would think that all would support administratively allowing minor shifts in order to save more trees. Eric also stated that he was not clear on what a restoration monitoring plan is that was submitted this afternoon and would like a brief explanation.

Jennifer stated that even if there was something that changed like a foundation of a building or alignment that would also trigger something and that the proponents may have to come back to the commission for an amendment to the Order of Conditions, but it would not trigger a new Notice of Intent.

Howard Moshier from VHB clarified for Eric Grunebaum that the restoration monitoring plan, it describes how the landscape architect, or a certified arborist will make annual site visits and during the visits the person would monitor the health and the growth of the plantings and check to make sure there are no signs of reestablishment of invasives. This would also direct the projects maintenance staff when making annual inspections on maintenance, treatment and replacement of trees that are doing well and this would go on for a five (5) year period.

Suzanna Schell of 195 Harvey Street and a Member of the Friends of Jerry's Pond. Suzanna is in support of the southwest corner being used for the compensatory flood storage. She wanted to know from Howard if they have looked at the northwest side of Jerry's Pond just below the headhouse where there is a seasonal wetland. She stated that in other maps it appears that there was an old sheet metal fabricator shed there and what looks like a seasonal wetland but is probably a basement. She wanted to know if there were any plans to explore for a potential flood storage or for reviving a real Wetland instead of a filled basement.

Howard Moshier stated that area is flagged as a wetland, and they did field evaluate it and it is BVW and bank with buffer zones. Although they didn't think they would be able to create any compensatory storage there because the storage they are trying to create was at a higher elevation in that area than the water body, so that weren't able to create any more storage that it's already providing and acts as no benefit for compensatory storage. Howard said they would investigate further the remnant foundations in that area.

Mike Nakagawa appreciates the efforts that IQHQ and their partners have made, they have taken suggestions from the community seriously and made several accommodations. Mike talked about the stormwater runoff on the twenty-five (25) to two (2) standard and believes this is because of the stormwater infrastructure usage in other parts of the City which caused street flooding with increased rain events. He noted that this sites subbases that do use the infrastructure along Whittemore Ave will meet the standard. He stated that he does understand that this will be evaluated later. He is concerned about the volume of run off, that the quality will not degrade the receiving wetland on the site and there will be some slowing down as it goes through the middle area so hopefully that will be enough to keep things clean. Mike still wanted to point out that there is still a significant loss of mature trees, although with this project they still represent a small fraction of the total. Mike said that they want to continue to save more trees or reduce runoff quantities just for protective measures. He hopes they would continue to look for opportunities and hopefully they will be allowed under the administrative changes. Mike also wanted to point out that working together with the community, took some effort but they ended up with what will be a much better project. He thinks the community involvement can make some significant improvements; it's just not about stopping the project. He appreciated how the Conservation Commission has taken such an interest in how the community was involved and the care of the site. He thinks overall they ended up with a lot of changes that made the project better then the original submission. He hopes in the future they remember there can be benefits by working with people who have lived in area for a while to be able to make suggestions that can help the developers to come up with better projects around the city.

Sue Butler she stated that she is impressed by the cooperative and respectful relationship that the project has had with the community and how they have used the suggestions of people that could be used as a model. Sue stated is see's the number of tree's they are cutting down and stated that she is working on climate, trees and soil and is a Board Member of Biodiversity for a Livable Planet and a visiting scholar at Harvard Divinity School on Climate Morality and she stated that the one thing we can do right now is to save every tree we possibly can, even if it's one, two or twelve. She stated that she recently documented in an article she had published called "Building Climate Stability". She said that trees are our greatest ally to cooling through evaporation and to really building the soils biology. She said that they haven't talked about soil biology but thinks they maybe be thinking about but strongly encourages them to pay close attention to it.

7:35 - Public Comment was Closed.

Purvi stated she really appreciates all the work from the consultants and the community on this project and she said this has been a model for future projects.

The commission and Jennifer went through the special conditions of the approval. Purvi pointed out there were a lot of points that were brought up in the last meeting as well as this meeting. Jennifer stated that these are some of the special conditions; Construction Mitigation, Planting Mitigation and Operation and Maintenance. Jennifer stated that she has standard conditions specific to Construction Mitigation, which is the setting up of the project, initial meeting with onsite staff, walkthrough the sites with the Erosion and Sediment Controls, reviewing the tree protecting as well as periodic monitoring to make sure that the construction mitigation is in fact being followed through the duration of the project. Jennifer stated that once they are at the stage for planting, she visits the site again to review the planting and review steps for mortality and goals for 100% coverage and 90% weed free for the understory and 100% living of all trees. She

stated then they have the ongoing operation and maintenance that they have for the planting plan that will outlive the construction phase of the project. Jennifer pointed out that is important for the proponents as well as everyone else that by approving the Order of Conditions tonight, this then becomes the existing conditions for the Jerry's Pond area. So, when the proponents come in before the commission for any further improvements to Jerry's Pond. The existing conditions plan will have that southwest corner gradation plan included in it. Jennifer stated that there a lot of other work to be done by others, the Planning Board will need to approve the buildings and the blue roofs. Then the DPW stormwater control permit will go through the onsite retention/detention as well as what goes into the pipes and into the stormwater system. She stated that there is still a lot of other work, permitting and reviews and these will be done by others. All of those permits and special conditions will be copied back to the Conservation Commission and are made part of our permanent record.

David Lyons asked if they needed any special condition related to the asbestos management. Jennifer stated that is typically specific to LSP's and MCP's. She said that they get copied on submittals and Jennifer Sweet as been great through the years about copying her on some materials specific to the Wetlands Protection Act, they would then get electronically attached to this record which does have an issued DEP file number (123-311) and DEP has added no comments, only noting that there is an increase in flood storage.

David Lyons had a follow-up question for the LSP, Jennifer Sweet. David wanted to know if DEP/BWSC have they responded at all to the RAM plan. Jennifer Sweet stated that they submitted a draft plan which was issued for public comment. DEP has a copy of that, but they do their review after they see their response to any comments and review the final version that was submitted. David asked Jennifer if she sees any need for a special condition in the process related to the RAM plan implementation and if she sees any changes happening from the DEP review process that would require any changes from the commission. Jennifer stated no.

Kaki Martin wanted to bring up the point about the trees. She said she understands everyone is trying to save as many trees as possible, but she wants to make everyone aware that things happen in construction and sometimes the number are worse than everyone had anticipated. Kaki wants to make sure that along the way that if something happens where a tree is lost or needs to be removed but was not anticipated being removed that there is a way that the caliber inches are tracked so that they can be replaced. Jennifer stated that they submitted to the city the Tree Study Report and was revised to include the southwest corner of Jerry's Pond and the City is reviewing that so that level of review is them being held to a specific number of inches and reporting back to the city. Jennifer stated that Howard pointed out fifty-nine (59) tree's are located within the Wetlands Protection Act so they can make sure that is in the Order of Conditions. Jennifer said if that deviated than we need to reach out to them, but that the balance of the hundred plus trees and sixteen (16) trees greater than six inches will be tracked by other DPW staff. Kaki stated that if there is a loss of a tree in their jurisdiction then it should be replaced in their jurisdiction and if it is a loss outside of the commissions jurisdiction then it should be replaced outside of their jurisdiction. Jennifer agreed.

David suggested that maybe one way to address this if Jennifer already doesn't is to refer to the City's Tree Ordinance as one that the applicant needs to comply with as well as the other local permits.

7:51 – The commission unanimously agrees to approve the Order of Conditions with special conditions. 7 approved – Purvi noted earlier in the meeting that she signed the affidavit stating she read and listened to the November 29, 2021, meeting minutes.

7:57 – Administrative Topics

Meeting minutes from November 29, 2021 – approved with corrections.

8:00 – Meeting Adjourned