



City of Cambridge Conservation Commission

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Jennifer Letourneau, Director

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Public Meeting – Monday, February 7, 2022 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, Kaki Martin

Absent Commission Members: Elysse Magnotto-Cleary, Erum Sattar

Attendees: Tracy Dwyer, DPW; Jim Wilcox, DPW; David Kaplan, Cambridge Water Department; Candace Young; Fred Hewet; Elizabeth Wyld

Purvi Patel opened the meeting.

7:00 - Request for No Significant Change to Order of Conditions DEP File #123-272 Vegetation Management Plan Fresh Pond Reservation

David Kaplan, Watershed Manager for the Cambridge Water Department was in attendance of the meeting. David explained to commission that they were having an issue with deer eating newly planted vegetation on the reservation. They have been trying to prevent this from reoccurring, so David is asking permission from the commission to use a product “Oh Deer” to spray on the newly planted vegetation to deter the deer. David explained that they would be using the Lusitania woodlands. Since 2012 they have been planting new vegetation in that area of the reservation and would like to use that area for a test area. David stated that they have used fencing and flagging in the past. David explained that the spray makes the leaves non-palatable to the deer and will make them move to other areas for feeding. David stated that they would start the spray in the spring with the consultant onboard Oh Deer, the idea would be that they would then take over the project inhouse to use in other areas of the reservation that are being impacted by deer brows.

Purvi asked when the order of conditions expire. David Kaplan said that they have one more year, he said that at the end of the year they would be coming back to the commission to renew

their order of conditions. David stated that it had been renewed in 2019 for three years, so he believes they have one more year.

Purvi wanted to understand what they are approving and not approving and if there are special conditions that should add.

Jennifer stated that this is like an amendment to an order of conditions, it's suggesting that there is no significant change in the resource area i.e. no dredging or filling and you are not manipulating any bordering vegetation wetlands. This not an amendment, but this is a non-significant change because it's just a change in the vegetation management plan. This would just be adding this to the VMP of record.

Purvi read into the record some comments from the City's Supervising Landscape Architect Kevin Beuttell on the proposed deer repellents.

- I've never worked with this type of product before, but these all appear to be reasonable and safe products to use. Most ingredients are natural, and the 2 synthetic ingredients (Sodium Lauryl Sulfate & Potassium Sorbate) are used in food and skin care products.
- A pilot plan is a good approach as a start. These products are most effective as a short-term solution (per several seemingly reputable web sources), and they may not be that helpful in protecting new plantings during the entire establishment period. Biggest issue seems to be rain washing the repellent away, which requires close attention to the weather and regular re-application when needed. On the positive side, the labor and material costs are low.
- I'll leave it to others to decide if the use of these repellents is consistent with current formal and/or informal maintenance policies and practices at the reservation.

Jim Wilcox did not have any additional comments.

Purvi asked Jennifer what special conditions she would recommend. Jennifer stated that she would ask Hatch write this into the current VMP, to be used as a pilot study. Jennifer said before they renewed and extended this, they would ask for it to be revisited before being allowed to be used throughout the reservation.

Purvi asked if Jennifer had any hesitation this being used as a pilot study.

Jennifer stated she did not at this time. Jennifer noted that what Kevin Beuttell stated about not overusing the product and taking the time to stop using the product to have the plant take shape she said was important. Jennifer said that she thought Kaki Martin could weight in professionally what she thought about the product.

Kaki Martin stated that she read through Kevin's comments, and she agrees with Kevin to have some level of experiment. Kaki was also wondering if we could get anymore information from the product rep, more information on use in similar conditions. Kaki thought a level of experiment needed to be done, and David Kaplan and his team have done experiments whether it was with trail paving and pavement surfaces. She said it's part of the process of figuring out what works best and protect the water resource. She understands the need for the experiment and finding out what works best.

Purvi asked Kaki what sort of information she would like to see from the product owner.

Kaki said that maybe they would want information on longevity of effectiveness or maybe information from other users. She said it might be helpful to hear from other users about how much they used the product and what worked best.

Jennifer stated that she did research and two options that have not been used yet would be to install a deer fence which would be over eight feet in height and very large in six-foot spans, which would be very intrusive. The other option would be to plant a plant palette that was not desirable to deer. Duke from Hatch explained to Jennifer that they do want to support the deer population at the Fresh Pond Reservation, just not when plants are trying to get established. He said once plants are established, they can be part of the eco system which could take a few years to be able to regenerate themselves.

Kathryn Hess asked about whether other communities are using this product at the same scale or similar setting.

David Kaplan said he was not aware of any other community using the product at the same scale as the reservation would. He said when he talked the product owner and most of his clientele were residential users, wanting to save expensive ornamental plants. David said this would be an experiment and taking lots of notes and photos would be the best method of effectiveness.

Kathryn said we could be a resource for other communities. She also asked David how this would be applied. David stated that this product would be sprayed on leaves and stems.

Kathryn asked at what time of year would be best. David stated this can be sprayed in off leave seasons. He said like Kevin Beuttell stated in his comments they may need to respray a few times after rain events.

David Lyons stated like others more information on the product and where it's been used, and its effectiveness would be helpful. David asked where the pilot program would be used in the reservation. David Kaplan stated that it was Lusitania woodlands and pointed it out on a map. David Lyons asked if that was under the commissions jurisdiction and David Kaplan stated he believed it was mostly BVW. David Lyons stated that maybe looking at an area for the pilot program that is further from water in case that was a concern, but he said from the product sheets it looks to be all relatively organic ingredients. David Kaplan stated that area floods seasonally, but they could avoid applying in areas where there is standing water to reduce contact. David Lyons stated the Fresh Pond Advisory Board also heard this at the last meeting.

Michelle Lane asked if there was a threshold for the product, if it was not working would they stop using it.

David Kaplan said they would be monitoring its effectiveness after application, he said they have volunteers on the grounds almost daily. They would be able to note any damage to vegetation. He said they would use the product for at minimum a year and then make decisions based on cost and effectiveness.

Candance Young sent in a question in the comments. "Is the idea to begin a trial run within that habit which is not a part of the master plan given the low spot." David Kaplan said he didn't quite understand the question but they have not divided the Lusitania woodland into smaller sections or test plots for the pilot.

7:27 – Public Comment Open

Candance stated she is a volunteer and a member of the Fresh Pond Advisory Board, and she understands the importance of water quality. She said she used to live in Concord and that the Oh Deer truck was seen everywhere. She stated she is a landscape designer and did a lot of design and maintenance. She said that the product was used a lot and she said they always stated that it was safe for them to be there at the time when they were applying it. Candance said she would feel comfortable working in the habitat where it was being sprayed. Candance said to David Kaplan her question was whether the habitat was the place you were using the product first as sort of an experiment. David Kaplan stated yes, they would be consulting with her and the other volunteers.

Elizabeth Wylde stated that the habitat is the most watched area in the reservation, and she stated they would be taking photographs of the area and they would know what is going on in that area.

7:31 - Public Comment Closed

Purvi asked for clarity on what they would be voting on or suggesting for special conditions from Jennifer.

Jennifer is suggesting that what David Kaplan is asking for is for the commission to approve this product to be added into the VMP for a one-year pilot program with option to renew. He would come back to commission for formal approval at the time when the vegetation management plan would need to be renewed. Jennifer would work with Duke from Hatch to add in the SMS sheets for the product into the vegetation management plan. Purvi ask that they add in also to ask for some case studies on the use of the product.

7:33 – The commission unanimously agrees to approve the amendment of the order of conditions of the one-year pilot study of the Oh Deer product with special conditions.

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

7:36 – Administrative Topics

Meeting minutes from December 20, 2021 – approved

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

7:44 – Meeting Adjourned



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CERTIFICATION PURSUANT TO G.L.c.39, SECTION 23D, THE "MULLIN RULE," OF PARTICIPATION IN A SESSION OF AN ADJUDICATORY HEARING WHERE THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBER MISSED A SINGLE HEARING SESSION

I, Elysse Magnotto-Cleary (name), hereby certify under the pains and penalties of perjury as follows:

1. I am a member of the following adjudicatory body, board or commission

Cambridge Conservation Commission

2. I missed a hearing session on the matter of

a Vegetation Management Program at Fresh Pond - one year pilot study with special conditions

which was held on February 7, 2022.

3. I reviewed all the evidence introduced at the hearing session that I missed which included a review of (initial which one(s) applicable):

- a. EMC audio recording of the missed hearing session; or (Zoom recording)
- b. _____ video recording of the missed hearing session; or
- c. EMC official transcript of the missed hearing session. (meeting minutes)

4. I reviewed the evidence on February 28, 2022.

This certification has been executed prior to my participation in the vote on the above matter. This certification shall become a part of the record of the proceedings in the above matter.

Signed under the pains and penalties of perjury this 28th day of February, 2022.

**Signature date must be prior to the date the Board votes on the matter.*

 Signature of Member

Received as part of the record of the above matter:

Date: _____

By: _____

Position: _____