



City of Cambridge Conservation Commission

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Public Meeting – Monday, March 14, 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), David Lyons (Vice Chair), Kathryn Hess, Michelle Lane, Elysse Magnotto-Cleary,

Absent Commission Members: Kaki Martin, Erum Sattar, Purvi Patel (Chair)

Attendees: Tracy Dwyer, DPW; Jim Wilcox, DPW; Howard Moshier, VHB; Milan Horbaczewski, MWRA; Christine Walsh, CDW; Bryan Walsh, VHB; Mike Cunningham, Kleinfelder; Ricard Austrich, BSC Group; Chris Chandor, The Davis Companies; Kalen Koncewicz; Elisa Arriaga, VHB; James Rafferty, Adams & Rafferty; Esther Harris; Maks Groom; Candance Young

David Lyons opened the meeting.

7:00 - Notice Of Intent

DEP File # 123-312

VHB

40 Smith Place Redevelopment – Floodplain

Continued from February 28, 2022

Bryan Walsh from VHB opened up the meeting on behalf of the The Davis Companies. Bryan reorientated the commission members with the location of the site and stated that this is a four-story lab building located in the quad area and the flood plain is in the northeast corner. Bryan stated that in response to the comments from Jim Wilcox's review memo and the other commission members that tonight's presentation was just updates to the flood storage. Bryan said there was no changes to the volumes of the flood storage however they did note the existing catch basins one in Wilson Road and one on site. Bryan described how they would be providing more flood storage at each increment. Bryan stated that VHB did provide in writing a response to each comment from DPW.

Jim Wilcox stated that they addressed all his comments from the original submittal.

Kathryn Hess stated the revisions helped answer her questions about continuity with the flood storage and appreciates the changes.

Elysse Magnotto-Cleary stated she appreciates the updates.

David Lyons asked about the National Green Infrastructure Program. David asked if someone could explain why or why not this is feasible for this project.

Jim Wilcox stated that the city has a maintenance contract for the large wetland at Alewife Reservation and ten bio basins located throughout the city, which has been awarded to Essex Horticultural. When the city put the contract together, they made that certification a bid requirement. Jim stated that there are not a lot of companies with that certification but wants to point out that the maintenance of the bio retention areas needs to be done differently than the landscaped areas and he said they should be certified to do that type of work.

David asked if the applicant had comment on the feasibility of the program.

Bryan stated that they investigated the certification program and only found a handful of companies located in Massachusetts that are certified. They will be adding this maintenance plan into the O & M.

Jim Wilcox stated that this project will require a stormwater control permit from the city and part of that permit will be O & M plan for the life of the building. DPW will also do an audit of the project and so they will know if the maintenance of the bio retention is not being done correctly.

Chris Chandor of the Davis Companies echoed what Bryan and Jim stated. They want to maintain these in a proper way. Chris stated he is asking more flexibility in the program and thinks with regular DPW inspections they will meet the requirement.

Ricardo Austrich from BSC Group stated he had met with Essex Horticultural onsite and reached out to them for potential maintenance.

7:13 – Public Comment was open from the previous hearing.

No comments.

7:15 – Public Comment Closed.

In Favor – 4, Absent – 3, Opposed – 0, Abstained – 0

Jennifer Letourneau stated that this project has a DEP file number and there have been no technical comments yet. There is work in the public right of way and they asked the applicant for a signature from the city and that is with the City Manager with no issues, but we have not gotten the signature back.

Kathryn Hess asked if in the last meeting on February 28th if they had talked about any special conditions with the permit.

Jennifer said they would have the usual special conditions with this permit, which include Erosion and Sediment Controls, tree protection on-site, no work during rain events during

construction phase where rain exceeds a half inch, right to inspection of the site, inspection of plantings, close out of project and plantings are well established and alive.

7:19 – The commission unanimously approves the Order of Conditions with the special conditions.

In Favor – 4, Absent – 3, Opposed – 0, Abstained - 0

7:20 – Request of Determination of Applicability

MWRA Siphon/Junction structure Maintenance

Alewife Reservation

Milan Horbaczewski from MWRA attended the hearing along with Mike Cunningham from Kleinfelder and Christine Walsh from CDW who the consultants are representing this project. Milan stated that they are rehabilitating forty-one of its structures and this one is located in the Alewife Reservation. This is a critical project in order to perform maintenance and repair and improve flood protection in order to make sure they get another fifty years of their structure.

Mike Cunningham from Kleinfelder explained where the location of this structure is located. Mike explained that this structure is located off the Greenway in the reservation on a paved and unpaved walking trail from the access road to the MBTA T station. The structure is located just off the path in a mounded grassy area. Mike explained that the work is all being performed inside the structure itself, there will be no digging or regrading. Mike stated that when he was onsite with Jennifer Letourneau Director of the Conservation Commission, they noticed that there was some over growing of some invasives and select maples that are three to five inches in diameter. Mike explained that these will most likely need to be removed in order to gain access to the structure. Mike stated that they would be replacing a manhole cover that is more watertight, they would be applying a spray type lining to the structure as well as doing some masonry work to extend the life of the structure. Mike stated that they did receive the comments provided by DPW and they did update their drawings after a site visit with Jennifer. They also realigned and minimized the staging area which is located across the path from the structure. The contractor will have little materials and equipment, the main thing is the trailer mounted lining system. They have talked to DCR about obtaining an access permit from them for the project. They talked to DCR about accessing the site by driving down the path to the site, pulling the equipment off the path and stretching the hoses across the path with some pedestrian protection. They will be placing silt socks opposite the staging so between the staging area and the resource area. The project is expected not to take long, they said the overall project is one to two years, but any one structure could take two to four weeks of time. Once a contractor is onboard, they would work on a schedule with the contractor and will have a better understanding of sequencing they will be doing the structures in.

David Lyons asked if Jennifer Letourneau if she had any comments or questions.

Jennifer stated she had a great site visit with Mike and Milan. She stated that the raised structure is several feet higher than the path and in sound condition. She said that it is covered in Japanese Knotweed, and they talked about mindfulness of cutting that back. There is plenty of room to access the structure.

Jim Wilcox stated that MWRA stated that this is a exempt activity in the Wetlands Protection Act and Jim agrees with that. Jim said he had a standard comment about the wetland flags and since there is a significant amount of time that has passed since the flags were placed, he asks that the wetland consultant go out and recheck the flags to make sure that they are in the correct location so it's clear to Jennifer and the contractor where the wetland is located. Jim stated that the size of the staging area was different from printed version and the electronic version and said he thinks that what Mike showed this evening to the commission is the corrected version.

Mike agreed that is correct.

Jim stated that Mike referenced the detail about how the filter sock would be installed but additionally Jim is asking that there be a spill kit onsite, to make sure that if there is a spill the contractor is prepared.

Mike stated that he checked and that is a requirement of the contractor to maintain.

Jim also included a Google picture of the site for the commission to understand where they would be accessing the site as well as an ariel view where the location of the structure was so they can understand the location as it relates to the MBTA station.

David Lyons asked how closed it was to the resource area.

Mike stated that it was about twenty to thirty feet from the resource area. Mike stated that their won't be materials stored in the area it will be mostly to get the trailer off of the path and stored.

Jennifer stated that the staging area was on the left side of the path in the grassy area.

Kathryn Hess asked if the location of the structure was in the grassy mound area to the right off the path. Jennifer agreed.

Kathryn stated that Cambridge residents love their trees, so was asking if all those trees in the area would be removed.

Milan stated that the only trees that they are planning on removing are three small caliber trees in that area that are impeding on the structure and should have been removed before they reached that size. Milan stated that it's just those three small trees that are impeding on the structure and potentially having negative effects of their structure with roots. He stated that there is no excavation planned for this project and minimal work in the area.

David Lyons stated that the trees are less than six caliber inches which is below the city's threshold.

Jennifer stated that is corrected and added that these trees are located on DCR property which is exempt from the city's tree ordinance. She has confirmed that with some recent projects.

David Lyons asked about the nature of the lining that they are applying in the structure.

Mike said that has become a common wastewater rehabilitation method, it provides a structural enforcement of the concrete which can deteriorate over time and protects the structure from wastewater gases. The trailer is similar to a landscaping trailer in size and holds tanks and pump, they mix the system on the trailer, and it's sprayed into the structure to the walls and ceiling. This will also protect any patching that is done to protect against infiltration and keep groundwater out. Mike stated that this method has given forty to sixty years more life of service.

David Lyons asked if there is significant spill risk.

Mike stated that there is little to no risk. He said it's well contained he said the tank is the size fifty-gallon drum and the hoses are small as well. The mix is well contained so there no risk of spilling.

Milan stated that this project will only take a few weeks and they will always have a resident inspector onsite during the construction project. Mike also stated that the spraying is limited to days although the overall project is weeks, they are giving time for other activities.

Milan stated that they are looking at a late summer early fall notice to proceed for this project, with an eighteen-month window. Once they have a schedule from the contractor, they will notify the commission as well as DPW.

David Lyons asked if they have already done this process at other junction structures of the system.

Milan said they have done some maintenance on some of the structures, but this will be their first large scale project with forty-one in the first phase but will look into doing another forty-one in another phase. They selected these first because they are prone to being in flood areas. He said it's a large-scale project in the aspect of geography because they are in seven different communities for the forty-one sites.

Mike stated they have met most of the other communities that Milan had mention. Mike clarified that it was seventeen communities not seven.

David asked that they should include a special condition that if there are any issues with the process on any other sites and communities they are working on and the spray process that they get notified.

Kathryn Hess stated that there is an active community group that watches over this area, she thinks it called Green Cambridge now. She asked how a group like that gets notified of this project.

Milan stated that this evening was the forum for that and to talk about public outreach or any lists to do outreach to. Milan stated if she was referring to the notice of project like tonight or when the project starts.

Kathryn said she was wondering if they would notify anyone when the project starts. She stated there are no abutters to the property, but there might be an interest in what is going on to the community.

Milan stated that they do have a public affairs group however they aren't intending to do any community outreach except to notify the conservation commissions in each of the communities that they are working in. When the schedule is put together by the contractor, they will give Cambridge a months' notice prior to the start of the work.

7:41 – Public Comment Open

No comments

7:41 – Public Comment Closed

In Favor – 4, Absent – 3, Opposed – 0, Abstained - 0

Michelle Lane had a question about what the risk is for any potential contamination through the process or longer-term what's being introduced through the project.

David Lyons asked what she meant through the spray material or releases from the work itself.

Michelle stated she was meant from the spray material or from any perspective.
Mike stated that the material is like concrete, its sprayed on from half inch to inch to the walls and ceiling and cures hard like concrete.

David asked about the clarification on the curing period.

Mike said the work takes time over one to two days but the material cures with in one to two hours of applying it but depends on weather. Once it is cured sometimes with humidity it could take twenty-four hours but then wastewater can reenter the system. He said this material is applied directly into the structure and there is only a manhole opening. He said Jim had comments about a potential spill, but they would have the materials onsite to immediately rectify that. Mike said that this process is well contained, so there is no real risk.

7:46 – The commission unanimously approves a negative determination.
In Favor – 4, Absent – 3, Opposed – 0, Abstained - 0

7:47 – Notice of Intent

DEP File # To Be Determined

Harvard Weld Boathouse Maintenance & Upgrades

Charles River

This matter could not be heard at this meeting there was not a quorum to vote as Michelle Lane was recused on this item. There was a motion to continue this to the next hearing on March 28, 2022. Jennifer said Purvi Patel will also be recused from this as well.

In Favor – 4, Absent – 3, Opposed – 0, Abstained - 0

7:48 - Administrative Topics

Meeting minutes from February 7, 2022 – approved

In Favor – 4, Absent – 3, Opposed – 0, Abstained - 0

7:56 – Meeting Adjourned

In Favor – 4, Absent – 3, Opposed – 0, Abstained - 0