

November 16, 2023 - Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan Advisory Board Meeting

Minutes (Hybrid Meeting – Zoom, In-person)

Submitted: David Kaplan – March 21, 2024

Approved: March 21, 2024

Advisory Board Members in Attendance:

Janice Snow (Chair), David Kaplan, Candace Young, Susan Agger, Sophia Emperador, Kathy Hess, Deborah Masterson, Janet Burns, Jennifer Letourneau, Adam Corbeil

Others in Attendance:

Duke Bitsko, Hatch Engineering

Meeting opened at 6:08pm

Meeting Minutes: D. Kaplan

Item 1: Review Agenda

No changes proposed.

Item 2: Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2023 Minutes: D. Masterson moved and S. Emperador seconded the motion to accept the minutes as presented. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Item 3: Huron Forest Evaluation and Proposed Phase 1 Area Restoration (Duke Bitsko, Hatch)

D. Bitsko presented information on Hatch’s investigation, findings and assessment of the Huron Pine Forest stretching from Fresh Pond Parkway to Glacken Slope. The presentation is available for download https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/freshpondreservation/advisoryboardagendasandminutes/Minutes/2023/FPAB_PineGrove_20231116_final.pdf

D. Bitsko introduced the Forest project, the phased approach to its implementation, and the project team. Site characteristics, management, circulation and access, and recommendations from past planning efforts were summarized and discussed.

J. Snow pointed out that in regard to Pine Forest pathways and their use, the Master Plan (2001) preceded the Shared Use Plan (2011) and the Shared Use Plan recommendations should not conflict with those of the Master Plan.

Discussion continued on the origin of the White Pine stand and how there is documentation supporting that some white pines were transplanted, or otherwise parented from Kingsley Park pines 80 – 100 years ago. Pine forest ecological characteristics were further discussed.

CWD will engage Nick Brazee, Plant Pathologist (UMass) to investigate and characterize the health of the Pine Forest and help explain the lack of observed regeneration. A site walk is scheduled for December 5. Recommendations will be studied with test plots to develop the best long-term solution to maintaining the area as a white pine/conifer dominated plant community.

Laboratory soil analysis from two forest test pit samples were presented and discussion continued on reasons for the lack of white pine regeneration.

The conversation turned to the project area's Perimeter Road stability, ADA issues, proposed surface (porous asphalt), drainage opportunities and alternative designs. The Board discussed buffer zones and plantings, plus access from the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway and the location and content of appropriate signage.

Finally, the Board discussed options for improving an existing trail from Huron Ave, just west of the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway. CWD will reach out to the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (DHSP) to discuss wooded path accessibility.

Item 4: Watershed Manager's Report (D. Kaplan)

The Old Field Birch Grove seating area and Little Fresh Pond Shoreline improvements will be packaged in one construction project to be bid late winter. A new wave bench constructed by Mitch Reyerson was installed in the Weir Meadow. There is an ongoing eagle scout project to replace some of the failed decking at the Black's Nook observation platform. Ranger Tim Puopolo has a new Fresh Pond newsletter to keep users abreast of Fresh Pond Reservation happenings. Anyone can subscribe via the Water Department's Public Programming web page: www.cambridgema.gov/Water/freshpondreservation/publicprogramming

Item 5: January 2024 Fresh Pond Stewardship Awards Presentation

Sam Corda and Lisa Peterson will be presented the award at a date/time to be determined.

Item 6: Proposed May 2023 formal dedication of the Norton and Pratt Groves

J. Snow would like to discuss organizing an event at the next meeting.

Item 7: Preliminary Agenda for March 21, 2024

Annual Maynard Ecology Center Report; Watershed Manager's Report; Volunteer Report, Adding Buffer/Transition Zones Section to 2019 Master Plan Plant List Update

Item 8: Public Comment

No public comment.

C. Young moved, and K. Hess seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:58pm