

September 19, 2024 - Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

(Hybrid Meeting – Zoom, In-person)

Submitted: David Kaplan – November 21, 2024

Approved:

Advisory Board Members in Attendance:

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

Others in Attendance:

Vincent Falcione (CWD), Mark Gallagher (CWD), Jamie O’Connell (CWD), Tim Puopolo (CWD),

Meeting opened 6:02 PM

Meeting Minutes: D. Kaplan

Item 1: Review Agenda

M. Gallagher to replace A. Roosevelt for Item 6, T. Puopolo to give Fresh Pond Day and other festival report from Watershed Manager’s Report as new Item 3.

Item 2: Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2024 Minutes: K. Hess noted she was not present at the 5/16 meeting as documented in the draft minutes. C. Young moved and D. Masterson seconded the motion to accept the minutes as amended. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Item 3: 2024 Fresh Pond Day and other Festival-Style Programming Report (T. Puopolo)

The presentation can be viewed and downloaded https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/freshpondreservation/advisoryboardagendasandminutes/Minutes/2024/FPMPAB_FestivalReport2024.pdf

This year, Ranger Tim Puopolo organized and delivered four festival-style programs. In past years, there were only two, including Fresh Pond Day (6/22) and the Monarch Butterfly Release Celebration (8/18). The two additional programs included Total Eclipse of the Park (4/8) and the Cambridge Moth Ball (7/24).

Estimated attendance at Fresh Pond Day (14th Annual) was ~900. Lower than normal attendance is explained by the threat of rain. Despite the lower than anticipated attendance, the program was a success and met its goals to promote the Water Department, foster city department collaboration, promote natural resources sustainability, build community, and introduce residents to Fresh Pond Reservation.

The 10th Annual Monarch Butterfly Release Celebration was originally organized to promote Master Plan-driven restoration work and to relate meadows to water quality, habitat value, and promote pollinator awareness. Less than ideal weather may have kept numbers down to an estimated 275 attendees. At the event, ~75 butterflies were released, and another 50 – 60 later as butterflies raised at the Water Department emerged from their chrysalises later than anticipated.

The Cambridge Moth Ball was a collaboration with many organizations and a celebration of moths and their woodland habitats. The event, from 7 – 9:30 pm attracted and documented observed moths. Similarly to the monarch event, the goals were to promote Master Plan-driven restoration work, relate moth (woodland) habitats to water supply water quality, and increase pollinator awareness. Attendance was estimated at ~150.

Approximately ~2,000 attended the once-in-a-generation Total Eclipse of the Park event. Although not directly relatable to Master Plan goals, the event brought people throughout the City and region to appreciate the beauty of Fresh Pond Reservation.

J. Snow asked about any exotic moths observed. T. Puopolo replied that the interesting ones don't show up until 2-3am, well after event hours.

Item 4: Upcountry Reservoir Report (J. O'Connell)

The presentation can be viewed and downloaded

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/freshpondreservation/advisoryboardagendasandminutes/Minutes/2024/WatershedFPABupdate09192024.pdf>

Jamie O'Connell presented updates and information on CWD's Source Water Protection Program. J. O'Connell reminded the board that we now have Anna Van Dreser in a relatively new full time Watershed Technical Supervisor role and Emily Maynard as our temporary full time Watershed Management Assistant. Updates were focused on the department's water quality monitoring program of which an overview was provided.

J. O'Connell discussed the history of and recent growth in the department's algae and cyanobacteria monitoring capabilities and developing a more robust monitoring program. She then explained the division's work to better understand the scope of the watershed's Asian clam problem after observing its presence at multiple sampling sites.

C. Young asked how long Asian clams have been present in the water supply. J. O'Connell responded that they could have been present for a while and just more recently observed and identified. They have likely been present in MA since the 1970s.

S. Agger asked about the interactive Source Water Quality Report and if she's ever explored using A.I. to help break down dense content to expand the report's audience. J. O'Connell responded that she's used the Hemingway Editor application in other similar reports and hopes to use it for this one.

J. Letourneau asked about decontamination procedures for the sampling boat between multiple reservoirs. J. O'Connell responded that best practices include allowing the boat to completely dry between sampling events. V. Falcione mentioned that the boat gets power washed between sampling events.

J. Snow asked about the clam's release of phosphorus (P) and its ability to influence cyanobacteria blooms. J. O'Connell did not know the relative impact their P release is having, but would recommend considering it in a comprehensive study.

Item 5: FY24 Budgeting & Master Plan Projects (D. Kaplan and Managing Director Mark Gallagher)

M. Gallagher discussed Water Department funding, cost increases, and funding priorities including water rates, materials cost increases, and the water treatment plant's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system replacement project, replacing the ozone generator, and pushing to more quickly replace lead service lines.

M. Gallagher stated that the City/Department continues to support Master Plan implementation with an annual contribution of \$250,000/year and is raising funds for the Pine Forest Phase 1 improvement project for FY2029. D. Kaplan stated that the ~\$1.2 million project could possibly happen sooner based on the potential for grant, CPA, or other funds and setting aside a portion of the \$250,000 each year. Discussion about funding opportunities and priorities ensued.

J. Letourneau stated that \$1,000,000 (1/3 of the CPA open space budget) was awarded to the Water Department for watershed land acquisition. She discussed the on-boarding process for the new Chief Climate Office Julie Wormser and made recommendations for when to reach out to discuss the Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan.

Item 6: Watershed Manager's Report (D. Kaplan)

D. Kaplan stated that the contractor will soon install test plot fencing in the Pine Forest. Once the fencing is up, the Department will work with Earthwise Aware to document existing plant communities and plant in the spring.

Little Fresh Pond shoreline and Old Field Birch Grove seating area projects are both completed.

J. Snow asked about the gates at Black's Nook. V. Falcione stated they were continuously broken, so removed. Aggressive enforcement has helped keep that area dog-free as designated.

J. Snow asked about signage in the Watertown Cambridge Greenway. Will discuss next meeting.

V. Falcione discussed the presence of Beech Leaf Disease and the lack of white pine regeneration in the Huron Pine Grove. Massachusetts Department of Agriculture recently investigated a spotted lanternfly sighting behind Neville. It was deemed an isolated occurrence, but the opportunity for local populations to develop is great. There was brief discussion on white pine needle browning and emerald ash borer and what is being done to control them. DPW worked with V. Falcione to source and site ~30 new (2019 Master Plan Plant List-approved) trees around the Reservation. The board discussed the turf to meadow conversion at Fresh Pond Pkwy, and deer behavior and control.

Item 7: Status of Designating Joseph Harrington Way (M. Gallagher)

M. Gallagher stated that this will be addressed at the next Water Board meeting. A. Corbeil suggested connecting with the Dedication Committee.

Item 8: 2024-2025 Term Meeting Schedule Reminder

An edit was made to the next meeting date from 11/14 to 11/21.

Item 9: Preliminary Agenda for Nov. 21, 2024

Discussed agenda topics for 11/21 meeting.

Item 10: Public Comment

No public comment.

D. Kaplan and K. Hess seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:50pm.