

March 20, 2025 - Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

(Hybrid Meeting – Zoom, In-person)

Submitted: David Kaplan – May 15, 2025

Approved: May 15, 2025

Advisory Board Members in Attendance:

In-person: Janice Snow (Chair), Sophia Emperador, Janet Burns, Candace Young, David Kaplan

Remote: Ann Roosevelt, Susan Agger, Kathryn Hess, Adam Corbeil, Jennifer Letourneau, Deborah Masterson

Others in Attendance:

In-person: Vincent Falcione (CWD)

Remote: Timothy Puopolo (CWD), Omar Mejia (CWD), Elizabeth Wylde (Resident volunteer steward)

Meeting opened ~6:03 PM

Meeting Minutes: D. Kaplan

Item 1: Review Agenda

No changes proposed.

Item 2: Meeting Minutes

November 21, 2024 Minutes: S. Emperador clarified the location of directional signage at Linear Park. D. Masterson motioned to approve the minutes as amended, S. Emperador seconded, and the motion was unanimously passed.

Item 3: Annual Volunteer Report/Plans (T. Puopolo)

The presentation can be viewed and downloaded https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/freshpondreservation/advisoryboardagendasandminutes/Minutes/2025/032025_FP_MPAB2025VolReport.pdf

T. Puopolo gave a summary of volunteer programs at Fresh Pond Reservation for calendar year 2024. Programs include Fresh Pond Stewards, Public Events, Group Day of Service Opportunities, and Partnerships.

Stewards Program: Fresh Pond Rangers offer weekly stewardship programs April through October 10am – 12pm to manage invasive plants, maintain trails, plant native plants, and more. 2024 served over 20 volunteers for a total of 92 work hours. CWD tracks activities in the City’s Cartegraph asset management software.

2024 advertised public events included the “(Almost) Earth Day Cleanup” which cleaned up trash from Kingsley Park (12 volunteer hours, 7 bags of trash collected and removed), and the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway Cleanup, where 70 bags of garbage were collected and removed with 100 volunteer hours.

“Day of Service” events provide maximum impact to Fresh Pond Reservation (lots of hands tackling one problem at one time) while fostering a sense of community. Events totaled 185 volunteers and 424 work hours. Tasks included installing restoration fencing, spreading woodchips in trails, and managing invasive species including garlic mustard and buckthorn.

Reservation Partnerships include Earthwise Aware who document biodiversity and phenology within Lusitania Meadow, Neville Residents who have adopted, cleaned up, and restored a derelict corner of the

Butterfly Meadow, and a National Public Lands Day event which saw 32 scouts and their parents, and 8 garden group volunteer leaders planting dozens of native forbs, grasses, flowers, and trees in the new “pollinator pathway” former turf restoration area adjacent to Fresh Pond Pkwy.

S. Emperador asked if there was a total number of volunteer hours to which Ranger Tim said he could compile. D. Masterson praised Tim for his monarch butterfly work and programming and heard that monarch populations in Mexico are increasing. J. Snow asked when the National Public Lands Day is, to which T. Puopolo responded the fourth Saturday in September. She also asked about the Native Plant Community Garden Group which is a tri-town garden group (Cambridge, Somerville, and Belmont). A. Roosevelt praised Tim’s work and asked that the program be advertised at Fresh Pond Day (June 14, 2025).

Item 4: Friends of Fresh Pond 2024 Woodland Habitat Report (C. Young, E. Wylde)

With support from the Water Department, volunteer stewards have been restoring the Lusitania Woodland Habitat by removing invasive species and planting native species since 2009. Copies of the 2024 and past year reports can be found <http://friendsoffreshpond.org/projectreports/reportsindex.htm>. C. Young discussed landscape maintenance challenges faced including shifting weather from flooding to drought in the same calendar year. The area was heavily watered over the summer. Rabbit and deer continue to be a challenge and plantings must be caged. Routine deterrent spraying appears to help keeping browse to manageable levels. There was an estimated 583 volunteer hours spent in the habitat in 2024. C. Young stated that Canadian ginger was thriving, and that some ferns that weren’t on the deer or rabbit menu before, now seem to be. J. Snow suggested a Woodland Habitat tour before the next Advisory Board meeting. C. Young stated that white wood aster, christmas, and wood ferns all seem to be resilient and successful plants in that location. S. Emperador discussed the Committee on Public Planting’s working towards incorporate more native plantings.

Item 5: Huron Forest Pilot Project Status

D. Kaplan updated the Board that all (4 of 5) test plots have been fenced, and monitoring and planting is targeted for late spring. CWD needs to finalize and award a contract to Hatch for supporting landscape architectural services. Duke Bitsko, CWD’s consulting landscape architect who designed a number of Master Plan ecological restoration and priority projects, no longer works for Hatch. CWD will look for opportunities to work with him in the future. J. Snow commented that Duke had such a high level of expertise on the Reservation that he will be tough to replace.

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

D. Kaplan discussed plans to assess and recommend improvements to in-lake water quality in Little Fresh Pond. Issues include increasing aquatic weed, algae, and cyanobacteria growth, and odor. A. Corbeil confirmed that Little Fresh Pond is used for golf course irrigation and that odor is an issue. J. Snow asked S. Agger if there were sampling opportunities for her students. S. Agger said the location was too far, and that Black’s Nook did not have the same odor issues.

V. Falcione discussed DPW tree plantings numbering 20 – 30 throughout the Reservation last fall. Species included red and sugar maples, hophornbeam, red oaks, eastern red cedar, and others. CWD expressed appreciation to DPW for the trees and the work to install them. Schumacher will not bid on the Reservation’s comprehensive landscape maintenance contract and CWD is having trouble finding an interested contractor. The contract scope was discussed and suggestions made on why contractors did not seem interested in the work. V. Falcione stated that we have a candidate selected for the Working Supervisor/Park Maintenance Craftsperson and hope to have that position filled soon. The discussion

turned back to deer impacts and management options including revisiting 8' fencing and using the golf course goose dog.

J. Snow discussed speed limit and directional signage on the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway. D. Kaplan said that although CWD helps maintain the path, it has no jurisdiction over speed limit or other signage. C. Young found online that the speed limit for the multi-use path appeared to be 18 miles per hour. D. Kaplan will reach out to CDD to discuss directional signage options.

Item 7: Fresh Pond Day Plans

J. Snow stated that Fresh Pond Day is Saturday June 14th, and will provide a sign up sheet for Advisory Board tabling volunteers in May.

Item 8: Preliminary Agenda for May 22, 2025

J. Snow said that A. Roosevelt spoke with Owen O'Riordan, Deputy City Manager who will take the lead on renaming the "Tudor Park" area of Fresh Pond Reservation to Joe Harrington Way. The Board discussed advertising a planting committee meeting for April to finalize the Transition Zones section of the Sustainable Landscape Management Plan, and agenda items for next meeting including updates to the Huron Forest Pilot Project, the Watershed Manager's Report, the Upcountry Reservoir Report, and the Golf Course Landscape Report.

J. Burns motioned to adjourn, C. Young seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (7:14pm)