

September 18, 2025 - Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

(Hybrid Meeting – Remote, In-person)

Submitted by David Kaplan, November 20, 2025

Approved: November 20, 2025

Advisory Board Members in Attendance:

In-person: Janice Snow (Chair), Susan Agger, David Kaplan (CWD)

Remote: Jennifer Letourneau, Deborah Masterson, Candace Young, Kathryn Hess, Sophia Emperador, Ann Roosevelt (joined ~6:36 PM), Adam Corbeil (joined ~6:41 PM)

Others in Attendance:

In-person: Mark Gallagher (CWD), Vincent Falcione (CWD), Liam Spratt (CWD), Ken Vorspan (Public)

Remote: Omar Mejia (CWD), Julie Greenwood-Torelli (CWD), Lindsay VanFossen (CWD), Elizabeth Wylde (Public),

Meeting opened 6:08 PM

Meeting Minutes: D. Kaplan

Item 1: Review Agenda

J. Letourneau motioned to amend the agenda to acknowledge V. Falcione's birthday. No vote taken.

Item 2: Meeting Minutes

Minutes were not available for review

Item 3: Thanking Tim Puopolo for his 8 Years as Ranger (J. Snow)

(Former) Ranger Tim Puopolo now works for the town of Needham, MA. J. Snow read the thank you card sent to Tim and Tim's response.

Item 4: FY 25/26 Budgeting & Master Plan Projects (D. Kaplan and M. Gallagher)

M. Gallagher explained the Water Department's current fiscal situation and implications on Master Plan implementation funding. Compliance for new MADEP/EPA PFAS regulations has added \$1.5 million dollars to the Water Department's annual budget for carbon filter change-outs which was not part of any prior year capital planning process. New MADEP lead and copper rule regulations set an aggressive schedule to remove and replace all lead water service lines in the distribution system by 2030 at an estimated cost of \$12 million dollars.

CWD is actively looking for grant and other funding such as state revolving fund (SRF) financial assistance program and various grants. Former Managing Director Sam Corda is working for the department on a contract basis focusing on finding, applying for, and receiving outside funding to support critical work. Fresh Pond Master Plan implementation continues to be funded at \$250,000 per year which has funded recent Little Fresh Pond shoreline and the Birch Grove seating area work. Past funds have been used primarily for planning, permitting, developing bid docs, and construction support. Historically, primarily Community Preservation Act (CPA) and water department capital funds supported large scale landscape restoration projects.

The water purification facility is now 25 years old. The treatment plant's supervisory control and data acquisition system (SCADA) is no longer supported and millions of dollars are currently being spent to replace outdated computer equipment. There are also capital needs for replacing the ozone (the drinking

water's primary disinfectant) generator. Because of this and general price increases, there is no additional funding available for Master Plan implementation projects other than the annual \$250k for the next five years.

M. Gallagher explained that the cost of Cambridge water is going up, but why switching to MWRA water would not result in cost savings for the City. At \$5,000 per million gallons, cost alone for MWRA water for Cambridge at 4.7 billion gallons consumed would be \$23.5 million. In comparison, the water department budget (for water and all other services such as infrastructure and open space maintenance) was \$20.5 million. Taking into account cost savings (chemicals, energy, etc.) from not running the treatment plant, our budget, had we purchased MWRA water, would have been an estimated \$41.5 million.

C. Young asked about CPA funding availability for Master Plan funds. D. Kaplan explained that in the past, CPA open space funds were used for many implementation projects, but nothing recent. J. Snow has been in touch with former Advisory Board member David Lyons who is on the CPA committee about exploring opportunities. D. Kaplan also explained that the Water Department has recently received significant CPA funds to support upcountry land acquisition projects to protect the water supply.

Item 5: Watershed Manager's Report (D. Kaplan)

D. Kaplan explained the five Huron Forest test plots were each planted with three, 4-5', and five smaller, restoration-grade white pines. Three witch hazel planted in the unfenced plot were quickly devoured by rabbits. Groundcover plantings are scheduled for spring, 2026. Plots will be monitored and tracked using Earthwise Aware online data forms available through the "Anecdota" citizen science platform. J. Snow asked about other damage. L. Spratt stated that insect damage was observed on some of the larger pines. V. Falcione offered that larger pines already dead or declining experienced two heat waves which could have played a role. Plants were well watered throughout the summer thanks to L. Spratt.

D. Kaplan introduced L. Spratt, the new Working Supervisor/Park Maintenance Craftsperson in the Watershed Division, and he introduced himself to the group. He explained his background and interest in ecological management. J. Snow asked C. Young about recommended understory for the Huron test plots. C. Young is willing to donate plant material or seeds to plant.

D. Kaplan discussed the scope of Ken Wagner's (Water Resource Services) now completed study of Little Fresh Pond (LFP). K. Wagner is planning to present findings to the Board November 20. J. Snow asked if LFP is aerated. D. Kaplan responded that it is not, and turnover is generated only from golf course irrigation and refilling from Fresh Pond. He discussed the valving that makes it happen.

D. Kaplan introduced Lindsay VanFossen, the new Watershed Technical Supervisor, who introduced herself and discussed her educational and professional background. J. Snow asked about climate change and increasing proportions of cyanobacteria and green algae. L. VanFossen responded with her observations at Fresh Pond.

V. Falcione discussed beech leaf disease and that CWD recently directly injected approximately 40 beech trees around the reservation with a product used to treat Dutch Elm Disease. He discussed climate change and the prevalence of many new pests and tree diseases and their management challenges. J. Snow asked about cutting the dead lower limbs of white pines to reduce the spread of white pine needle disease, which had been recommended and CWD confirmed doing.

J. Snow asked about Little Fresh Pond “Dog Stick Library” article in the Boston Globe followed by discussion around shared use expectations for the space. V. Falcione explained that we modified and reinstalled it to solve the problem of people climbing the fence to vandalize trees for “fetch” sticks at the engineered shoreline. J. Snow then asked about deer and the effectiveness of our recurring deer sprays at the Lusitania Woodland “Habitat”. C. Young confirmed that anecdotally, it seems to help, but there is no data to support it. A. Roosevelt asked about Lyme disease and the prevalence of ticks at Fresh Pond Reservation based on the deer returning. V. Falcione said that although numerous upcountry, ticks at FPR are still a rare occurrence.

Item 6: Linking Fresh Pond Reservation and Mount Auburn Cemetery Walkers (C. Young)

C. Young recently joined the Mount Auburn Cemetery Trustees who asked her to connect them to a Master Plan spokesperson. Candace arranged a meeting between Tim Puopolo and Mt. Auburn representatives to discuss FPR’s planting and ecological restoration approach and how that could potentially be applied to their work. Of concern is the ecological misalignment due to climate change on birds and their insect prey. C. Young suggested having Mt. Auburn folks coming to a future board meeting to share information. A. Roosevelt asked about feeding birds due to the observed change in migration patterns. C. Young confirmed that Mount Auburn is not proactively feeding birds. S. Agger commented that planting and taking care of native plants will help support those bird populations, but there is still opportunity for misalignment. The Board agreed that Planting Committee members will reach out and meet with Mount Auburn representatives to collaborate.

Item 7: Community Garden Updates: (J. Letourneau)

J. Letourneau updated the Board that she received \$150,000 in CPA funds to replace the fence at Maher community garden. The fence will use similar materials and match the existing aesthetic, as well as ensure the gates are accessible. Any leftover funds may be used to top-dress the pathways. J. Letourneau then proposed to remove a bench at the Parkway garden and replace it with a small wooden shed for tools. She discussed managing safety concerns, replacing the existing water fountain with a water bottle filling station, and installing new garden watering infrastructure. Discussion ensued and the Board was supportive of all proposed work.

Item 8: Proposed New Buffer/Transition Zones Section to 2019 Master Plan Plant List Update

J. Snow discussed the document and invited discussion for a vote on its adoption. J. Letourneau questioned the need for its adoption and did not completely understand goals of the document. S. Emperador commented that changes in management and increased usage highlights the importance of protecting transition zones. J. Letourneau commented that increased regulations and the specific language as proposed could have unintended consequences in terms of limiting management strategies for future, unknown climate change scenarios, and does not support adopting as proposed. J. Snow stated that this is a living document that could be amended. J. Letourneau commented that the list of transition zones was not comprehensive and could be removed and replaced with a statement that reservation transition zones should be identified, monitored and problems addressed as identified.

C. Young suggested that people who do the work review and provide suggestions that make transition zone recommendations implementable. A. Corbeil reiterated that this section conflicts with existing golf course work to improve cultural practices and soil health and would not support the document as proposed. He mentioned that the language in the document was prescriptive and that his understanding was that the document is aspirational and is concerned about the requirements imposed. A. Roosevelt supported the comments against adoption at this time if the document is in fact leaning towards regulation. S. Emperador mentioned that this is a guide, not a regulation, and suggested language that this

document can be changed over time. D. Kaplan commented that more exploration is needed in the need for creating transition zones for existing mature trees surrounding by turf/landscaped areas. Perhaps planting guidelines incorporating transition zones could be developed for new trees planted in these areas.

J. Snow explained that the Master Plan was written to create standards and identify issues to managers to avoid future problems. She reiterated that the goal of the document was to educate and provide management strategies for identified problems, but not necessarily to require. She asked that board members take a closer look and provide suggested revisions. S. Agger suggested we include existing steps the City is taking to manage transition zones to show that we are aware of their importance and demonstrate intentionality. J. Letourneau reiterated the need for managers to ground-truth the document to understand where implementation challenges will arise and suggest revisions accordingly. Also to clarify the document's intent to make sure that future stakeholders clearly understand its intent. J. Snow reiterated that this is about principles and goals and agrees that it shouldn't be a regulation.

Item 9: 2025-2026 Term Meeting Schedule Reminder

No discussion

Item 10: Preliminary Agenda for November 20, 2025

Watershed Manager's Report; Ken Wagner Little Fresh Pond Study Report; Maynard Ecology Center Report; Designating Joseph Harrington Way

Item 11: Public Comment

Ken Vorspan mentioned his enjoyment of birding and birding programs at Fresh Pond Reservation and discussed poison ivy around Fresh Pond Reservation. He claimed that stewards are protecting the land, but not sufficiently protecting the people from poison ivy, and that budgets are plentiful enough to manage it. V. Falcione explained that CWD has a new landscape maintenance contractor and could not find a two-person crew who were not allergic to conduct manual removal activities this year as in years past. (Recording ended). K. Vorspan insisted that additional poison ivy education and removal be a priority and that the Water Department needs to invest more resources to consider it successfully managed.

Motion to adjourn & second not recorded, meeting ended at approximately 8:20