

March 19, 2026 - Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

(Hybrid Meeting – Remote, In-person)

Submitted by David Kaplan, May 21, 2026

Approved: May 21, 2026

Advisory Board Members in Attendance:

In-person: Janice Snow (Chair), Susan Agger, Janet Burns, Sophia Emperador, David Kaplan, Louise Weed (Emeritus Member)

Remote: Jennifer Letourneau, Kathy Hess, Adam Corbeil

Others in Attendance:

In-person: Amanda Garms (CWD), Liam Spratt (CWD), Stephen Humphrey (CWD), Lindsay VanFossen (CWD), James Tague (Public), Elizabeth Wylde (Public), Patrick Barton (Public)

Remote: Jamie O'Connell (CWD)

Meeting opened 6:00 PM

Meeting Minutes: D. Kaplan

Item 1: Review Agenda

Agenda reviewed, no changes

Item 2: Meeting Minutes

S. Emperador - Motion to approve minutes as presented, S. Agger second, approved unanimously.

Item 3: Thanking Janet Burns on her Retirement from the Board

The Board and those attending all expressed their deepest thanks to retiring member Janet Burns for her 25 years of service and dedication to Fresh Pond Reservation. Louise Weed took the lead offering a comprehensive oral history of Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan development and Janet Burns' critical role in its success. Discussion continued around keys to the plan's implementation including the availability of Community Preservation Act Funds and having the right people involved. Janice Snow read the card lauding Janet's efforts to keep the planting at Fresh Pond Reservation ecological, not ornamental. Janice noted that Janet taught us that biological diversity and natural species groupings should determine plant selection and placement. Janet notably lead efforts beginning in the 1980s to study Black's Nook.

Item 4: Annual Volunteer Report (Ranger A. Garms)

A. Garms introduced herself and began presenting the 2025 Annual Volunteer report available to view and download here: [https://www.cambridgema.gov/-](https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/freshpondreservation/advisoryboardagendasandminutes/Minutes/2026/FPMPAB_2025_VolReport.pdf)

[/media/Files/waterdepartment/freshpondreservation/advisoryboardagendasandminutes/Minutes/2026/FPMPAB_2025_VolReport.pdf](https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/freshpondreservation/advisoryboardagendasandminutes/Minutes/2026/FPMPAB_2025_VolReport.pdf)

CWD-lead volunteer programs are broken into Group Day of Service, Fresh Pond Stewards, and one-off Public Events, and Partnership categories. Group Day of Service included 13 different groups accounting for ~45% of all documented manual invasive species removal hours. The Fresh Pond Stewards Program (spring to fall) is a weekly recurring program managed by Ranger Omar to pull invasives and restore habitat. In 2025, 21 volunteers worked 34 hours (down from 92 hours in 2024). Only one Public Event of note in 2025 was the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway cleanup consisting of 60 volunteers who collected over 60 bags of trash. The greenway runs through Fresh Pond Reservation. Reservation Partnerships

include Earthwise Aware (EwA) a nonprofit citizen science group who conducts recurring phenology surveys in Lusitania Meadow. James Tague discussed the organization in more detail and the interest in tracking the relationship between plants and insects in all stages, seasons. EwA is also helping the Water Department document the success of the test plot plantings in the Huron Pine Grove. A. Garms is working to reestablish the Neville Habitat Restoration Area Project initiated by the previous Ranger and to continue engaging our Neville community neighbors.

Item 5: Friends of Fresh Pond 2025 Woodland Habitat Report (E. Wylde)

E. Wylde presented her 2025 Lusitania Woodland Restoration Project report for 2025. Current and past reports can be viewed here:

<http://friendsoffreshpond.org/projectreports/woodlandrestdemprojectreports/woodlandprojectsindex.htm>

A swamp white oak and black gum were planted in the Woodland in 2025. Liam Spratt (CWD) has been clearing dead ash trees as they fall. CWD provides leaves collected during landscape maintenance activities for mulch. Deer and rabbit browse continues to be a significant problem for native plant establishment. Recurring deer deterrent sprays seem to help. Perennials and shrubs are caged; rabbits eat the violets which do bounce back. 2025 saw over 700 hours of volunteer work to restore this once degraded area. The Board expressed appreciation of this work.

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

D. Kaplan updated the Board on the Huron Forest Pilot project. Many plants failed to get established due to the drought and heat. As most of the larger pines planted did not survive, these stocks may have been weak. CWD will replant in the spring and document via the EwA applications.

Little Fresh Pond alum treatment project is in the permitting stages. J. Letourneau will present the project to the Conservation Commission. The permit request will be for the treatment of all Reservation ponds, but the immediate need is for Little Fresh. Concurrently, a Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program permit is being applied for.

D. Kaplan explained that under a Landscape Design Services contract with Hatch, Ken Wagner (WRS) will revisit his 2020 Black's Nook study and produce an implementable vegetation management plan to control Black's Nook lotus and aquatic weed encroachment in light of funding challenges for the dredging plan. Annual maintenance could reduce aquatic weed impacts and provide a short-term benefit until dredging funds are found. S. Agger commented that the lotus really is taking over Black's Nook and is a pressing problem that should be addressed. Hatch, under the same contract will help CWD cost the replacement of the Butterfly Meadow stay-lock path and advance the design for the Pine Forest Phase 1 perimeter road right of way reconstruction project.

L. Spratt presented the Landscape Maintenance report. L. Spratt explained that he passed the Massachusetts Certified Landscape Professional (MCLP) exam and is sourcing replacement plant material for the Huron test plots. The new Maher garden fence is nearing completion and construction-related damage to the irrigation system is being addressed. Grounds crews are addressing minor plow damage and gearing up for spring, including an anticipated turf lime treatment. J. Snow requested that lime not be spread too close to natural areas which thrive in lower pH soil environments. Crews will be careful not to overcast lime.

Item 7: Edited Transition Zones Addition to Sustainable Landscape Management Plan

J. Snow presented Version 5 of the proposed section 1.4 to the approved Fresh Pond Reservation Sustainable Landscape Management Plan, “Landscape Transitions Zones”. The addition will serve as an educational piece and guidance on better managing ecosystem edge environments. S. Emperador motioned, Susan Agger second, vote to approve passed without objection.

Item 8: Fresh Pond Day Plans & Sign-up

A. Garms updated the board on progress organizing Fresh Pond Day, scheduled for June 13, 2026. A. Garms discussed tabling and kids zone activities. Overflow parking options at the 186 Larch Street and Tobin School were discussed and will be explored.

Item 9: Preliminary Agenda for May 21, 2026

Watershed Manager’s Report; Huron Forest Pilot Update; Lighting at Glacken overnight affecting wildlife; Status of designating Joe Harrington Way; Golf Course Landscape Report; Fresh Pond Day Sign-up; Term Proposed Meeting Schedule

Item 10: Public Comment

P. Barton provided some information on the Tobin School campus and other volunteer partnership opportunities. J. Tague hopes we continue hosting the Moth Ball. A. Garms confirmed that we will. S. Agger discussed future volunteer opportunities with new residents anticipated from Healthpeak’s Quadrangle redevelopment.

D. Kaplan motioned, S. Emperador seconded to adjourn at 7:46 PM. Motion passed unanimously.