

May 21, 2026 - Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

(Hybrid Meeting – Remote, In-person)

Submitted by David Kaplan, September 17, 2026

Approved: September 17, 2026

Advisory Board Members in Attendance:

In-person: Janice Snow (Chair), Candace Young, Susan Agger, Rob Vandenabeele, David Kaplan, Adam Corbeil,

Remote: Jennifer Letourneau

Others in Attendance:

In-person: Patrick Barton (Resident), Amy Waltz (Public), Vincent Falcione (CWD),

Remote: Amanda Garms (CWD), Liam Spratt (CWD), Lindsay VanFossen (CWD), Omar Mejia (CWD), Elizabeth Wylde (Public), Jean-Pierre, Catiana (Public)

Meeting opened 6:00 PM

Meeting Minutes: D. Kaplan

Item 1: Review Agenda

Agenda reviewed, no changes

Item 2: Meeting Minutes

C. Young - Motion to approve minutes as presented, R. Vandenabeele second, approved unanimously.

Item 3: New and Departing Members

J. Snow thanked Kathy Hess for serving on the Board and welcomed Rob Vandenabeele who is taking her place as the Conservation Commission representative. Rob explained he is a newly appointed associate member to the Cambridge Conservation Commission and also a member of the Committee on Public Planting, and Zero Waste Committee. He is a wildlife advocate, founder of and active in grassroots efforts protecting raptors and other wildlife. He has reviewed the Master Plan and reviewed Fresh Pond Reservation History. J. Snow has shared many reference documents.

Item 4: Golf Course Landscape Report (A. Corbeil)

A. Corbeil discussed landscape management including greater attention to soils, more precise irrigation, grass mixes and wildlife protection and golf course programming including usership, accessibility and special events. View and download the presentation here https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/freshpondreservation/advisoryboardagendasandminutes/Minutes/2026/2026_FPGCLandscapeReport.pdf

In 2025, the golf course hosted 54,000 rounds of golf, higher than many surrounding courses, priding itself on accessibility. The golf course accommodates a number of programs including youth and women's programs/leagues, PGA Hope (a veteran's program), and charity tournaments. Golf course staff are working with Fresh Pond Rangers and public safety officers to deter unpermitted use including, most recently, motor bikes damaging turf.

Wildlife sightings at the course include eagle, deer and fox. The golf course promotes wildlife habitat and educates golfers that they are guests in this area. Meadow, the golf course dog encourages geese to find alternative feeding grounds.

To support youth engagement, Jo-Anna Krupa (the Golf Course Pro) meets Cambridge children at their schools or host them at Glacken Field or the Golf Course to teach them about the sport. The Fresh Pond Jr. Golf Program engages 40 Cambridge youth between 7 and 16 years old at Fresh Pond Golf Course. The course also hosted 3 teams, totaling 44 PGA Jr. League golfers. The golf course hosted 50 Cambridge Rindge and Latin School golf team members and a number of veterans participating in the PGA HOPE (Helping Our Patriots Everywhere) program.

Landscape management goals are promoting environmental health, maintaining a dense turf stand, outgrowing disease, and maintaining course playability. An updated Soil Program ties soil sample analysis to better inform management decisions. For example, pH levels were increased on greens to promote grass growth while being cognizant of naturalized transition zone areas which require lower (more acidic) pH levels. Aggressive cultural practices have been introduced to reduce disease damage to the course including aerating, topdressing, overseeding, increasing cut heights and smarter irrigation. The golf course has bought autonomous GPS mowers to reduce soil compaction and promote stormwater infiltration.

Discussion ensued around the need to remove Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven) at North Pond and the course boundary edge below Grove St. to manage invasive spread and spotted latternfly. V. Falcione stated that removing any tree with a diameter of 6" (dbh) requires a permit. J. Letourneau talked about a spring, 2026 site walk with City staff including Water Dept, Golf Course, DPW, and the Manager's Office to discuss golf course landscape maintenance practices and programming. She also mentioned that the next CPA round could potentially fund golf course initiatives.

A. Corbeil discussed complaints about light pollution from the Club House area. An investigation found a broken timer which was fixed by the City Electrical Department (CED). Currently, security lights are set to turn off at 11pm. R. Vandenabeele discussed impacts of night lighting on bird migration and suggested turning off the lights earlier to support it. A. Corbeil stated he'd work with CED to put the lights on seasonal timers, aligned with the time change to shut off earlier. S. Agger agreed that as the Reservation is a wildlife corridor, we need to be mindful of lighting impacts to wildlife. A. Garms noted that migratory season is typically 2 months in spring and 2 months in fall and asked if the timers will be adjusted to overlap those time periods. R. Vandenabeele stated that the period could be more concise, covering 2 weeks where the vast majority of species are moving, and asked if these lights are on a schedule for replacement and upgrading to be more wildlife friendly. V. Falcione stated that the Glacken backstop netting is a problem and responsible for at least one owl fatality. D. Kaplan had earlier discussions with DPW and discovered that the nets are fixed and cannot be raised and lowered seasonally when not needed for baseball. R. Vandenabeele suggested that new nets be installed that can be raised and lowered. P. Barton suggested that nets that could be raised and lowered would last longer due to less time being subject to snow and ice. D. Kaplan will pass along the suggestion for new nets to the DPW.

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

Huron Forest pilot project continues with additional sourcing and planting in the 5 test plots. Groundcovers and replacement pines will be planted later this spring, early summer. C. Young suggested we source some material from the Lusitania Habitat. She showed a picture of a small unfenced white pine in the Habitat devoured by rabbits. J. Snow suggested being mindful of the amount and location of groundcover plantings so they do not cover root flares, outcompete, or otherwise compromise the success of the planted white pines. Discussion continued around local observations and challenges to white pine regeneration, including the white pine needle cast disease and brown trunk rot, both exacerbated by climate change.

Solitude Lake Management conducted an alum (Polyaluminum Chloride or PAC) treatment in Little Fresh Pond on May 15 to reduce available phosphorus in the water column. The treatment should improve circulation by reducing floating aquatic plant densities and reduce the risk of toxic cyanobacteria blooms and excess algal blooms. Due to contract and permitting, the treatment happened later than recommended and a fair amount of benthic aquatic plant and algae growth had already occurred, filling the water column prior to treatment. Discussion continued on causes, and anticipated results. J. Snow asked if this will be done in Black's Nook also the following year. D. Kaplan stated that Ken Wagner (Water Resource Services) will conduct a similar assessment of Blacks Nook and offer recommendations for alum and other aquatic weed management techniques.

D. Kaplan stated that Hatch is advancing the Pine Forest Phase 1 design including access pathway improvements from the Strawberry Hill neighborhood.

C. Young asked about spraying poison ivy along the fenceline with the organic, salt-based spray. She noticed there was no educational signage and asked if we had any complaints or concerns about the activity. V. Falcione stated that a new, smaller electric backpack sprayer was used and given its non-toxic makeup, did not require a sign. Applicators on site answered any Reservation users' questions when they were asked. V. Falcione noted that in the past, even with signage, some concerned residents called the police reporting the spraying. To address any concerns, contractors will bring appropriate signage next time poison ivy plants are sprayed. Discussion ensued on the challenges of safely managing the native poison ivy plants reseeded by birds surrounding a public water supply.

V. Falcione mentioned an osprey sighting and the possibility of installing a nesting stand on the golf course side of Little Fresh Pond. Proposed sites would have to be assessed for golf conflicts.

No updated deer census or numbers to report but deer are consistently observed at the Reservation. D. Kaplan mentioned Cambridge Public Health Department conducted a community Tick Hunt event in April with unknown results. A professor from Bridgewater State University is conducting an ongoing study on ticks using Fresh Pond Reservation as one of their study sites. Results will be shared when available. O. Mejia reported that in the three years he's been here, he has found no ticks after routinely patrolling all the wooded areas surrounding Fresh Pond.

Item 6: Fresh Pond Day Plans and Sign Up

J. Snow passed around a sign-up sheet to staff the Advisory board table. She discussed volunteering, hand-out materials, and the table location. C. Young asked if anyone had any recent, pre-Master Plan implementation photos we could collate and share to educate the public on what Fresh Pond Reservation looked like before 2001. J. Letourneau shared the Cambridge open GIS website <https://www.axisgis.com/cambridgema> to demonstrate the historic map and orthophoto basemap overlays/visualizations.

Item 7: Preliminary Agenda for September 17, 2026

Watershed Manager's Report; Huron Forest Update; Budgeting; Master Plan Projects Update; Status of designating Joe Harrington Way; Fresh Pond User Report (D. Kaplan will follow up on this).

Item 8: Public Comment

A. Waltz asked about volunteer invasive removal activities prior to Fresh Pond Day. O. Mejia says Thursday events have been sparsely attended, but corporate "day of service" groups have been picking up

the slack and pulling garlic mustard. A. Garms spoke about past events and current attendance and will make updates in promoting, scheduling and executing future garlic mustard weed-out events. A. Waltz asked about the Lusitania honeybee hive and questioned the benefit of having it in a restored habitat for native species. V. Falcione explained that two hives were permitted about 20 years ago, one in the Lusitania Meadow and one in the Butterfly Meadow. The one at the Butterfly Meadow is gone, but the Lusitania Meadow hive has been consistently kept by Peter Byerly. The sites were chosen for safety purposes. J. Snow stated that she thinks that if the request to keep non-native honeybees at Fresh Pond were to come before the Board today, they would not recommend it due to potential conflicts with native bees. J. Letourneau recommended that we have a future conversation to discuss pros and cons. R. Vandenabeele recommended we invite Peter to the next Advisory Board meeting to have that discussion. D. Kaplan will extend the invitation to Peter for September.

A. Corbeil motion to adjourn, C. Young seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:53pm.