



City of Cambridge Conservation Commission

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Public Meeting – Monday, September 16, 2024, at 7:00 PM Zoom MEETING MINUTES

The following meeting minutes were taken by Lena Frappier and are respectfully submitted.

Present Commission Members: Jennifer Letourneau, Director; David Lyons, Chair; Elysse Magnotto-Cleary, Vice Chair; Erum Sattar; John Leo; Kathryn Hess; Lorie Graham; Jim Gerstle, Associate

Absent Commission Members: Khyati Saraf; Sean Bedingfield, Associate

Attendees: Lena Frappier, DPW; Kara Falise, DPW; Sarah Adkins, Green Cambridge; Steven Nutter, Green Cambridge

David Lyons opened the meeting.

7:03 – Request to Extend Order of Conditions DEP File #123-307 Green Cambridge – Alewife Reservation

Steven Nutter, Executive Director for Green Cambridge, stated that Green Cambridge received an order of conditions about three years ago to extend the work being performed at the stormwater wetland northbound in collaboration with the Mayor Summer Youth Program. Each year there are about 15 mayor youth participants who get paired with an echotech who previously had the maintenance contract for the Alewife stormwater wetland area and receive professional training and experience. Steven stated the timeline is 6 weeks during the summer and the order of conditions is to extend moving west to east across the site.

Jennifer Letourneau stated that the project is doing well and displayed a map of the area as she described the different terrains of the water resource area and pointing out that the channel is a natural system to allow for sediments and plants to cleanse the storm water before reaching the main tributary. She also commented that there is a path network, including boardwalks throughout this whole area, including an overlook. The overlook was not originally part of the project but needed a lot of attention for invasives. Jennifer stated Green Cambridge has done a great job in both removing invasives as well as planting new native plants. She added that the Community Preserve Preservation Act Committee, which David represents ConCom on, voted

favorably to move to have the City Council approve funding for additional years for this project as well.

Steven stated they are stepping up their investments in the area and received a new employee through TerraCorps whose 11-month services will be devoted to the entirety of the Alewife Reservation.

John Leo asked for clarification of the ongoing work and what the focus areas look like on a yearly basis.

Steven stated they have not had to go back after the invasives have been cleared using the cut and dab method, cutting the invasive and covering it in herbicide. Most of the natives planted have fared well. He stated that they have only been working during the summer but look forward to having possible school programs down the road.

Erum Sattar stated that it is wonderful to include an educational aspect but questioned the 130-acre size of the area and how much will actually be attended to.

Steven said they started with the scope of the Stormwater Wetland Project and focused on fully completing pieces so that determines how much they can get done. He stated that they have found after completing the initial area there's been an increase in wildlife and those birds have eaten berries and seeds and help spread them even further so the more that is completed the more benefit that is even unintentional.

Jennifer stated there is no public in attendance.

Kathryn Hess expressed that this is a great project, and she is glad to hear there's potential for it to be accelerated.

Jennifer confirmed her recommendation is to extend the order of conditions and stated there have been no issues with staffing or funding and when looking at the educational component and meeting their benchmarks, they have proven their track record with the significant amount of work and transforming the area.

Steven added that Parterre has been an excellent partner with their culture of the company working well with teens and bringing their expertise with the social education aspect and knowledge to their emerging generation.

Sarah Adkins, Deputy Director of Green Cambridge, introduced herself and expressed her excitement for the Alewife project and the potential it has over the next few years.

7:17 – Public Comment Closed

6 – In Favor, 1– Absent

7:18 – The commission unanimously approved the certificate of compliance.

6 – In Favor, 1– Absent

7:20 – Administrative Topics

Meeting Minutes Approved– August 12, 2024 (Upon correction of Kathryn Hess being absent)
4 – In Favor, 2– Abstained

Jennifer stated David, our chair, and Elyse, our vice chair, have both been reappointed for 3-year terms. There are also two new full-time members.

Lorie Graham introduced herself as a law professor at Suffolk Law, teaching topics including property, constitutional, and international human rights.

Jennifer announced that the other full-time member is Khyati Saraf, a professional landscape architect, and will join the meeting next month. She also stated there are two associate members.

Jim Gerstle introduced himself as a chemical engineer by training with 30 plus years of experience and focused the end of his career on risk management. He has also been a professor in chemical engineering with the University of Louisville. Jim stated that he moved to Cambridge during the pandemic to be around his grandchildren.

Jennifer stated we are now a full commission with the added benefit of Jim and Sean. She gave a preview of the October meeting as Kara and she has been working with the MBTA on their notice of intent submittal concerning an access tunnel to the red line through IQHQ's property. The work will be related to floodplain.

Elyse questioned if there will be an opportunity for a site visit to see the impact and scope of work before meetings.

Jennifer believes there will be several meetings and the first is to really introduce the project. After the introduction there will be dates for a site walk. She stated it is very important to see it in person as it changes the narrative to actually see the concerns from both a construction mitigation perspective and operating perspective. Jennifer asked that a representative from IQHQ be present as their property rights are still under negotiation.

Jennifer also announced that October 19th is the fall conference for Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions and the theme is Water Water Everywhere. All members are welcome to attend.

Erum stated it will be her third year to attend and it is a great venue and a nice way to see the leaves.

7:29 – Meeting Adjourned

6 – In Favor, 1– Absent