

Key Topics: Watershed Update; Drought/Water Conservation, PFAS6, and COVID-19 Updates

CAMBRIDGE WATER BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

February 8, 2022

Due to COVID-19, this meeting is available virtually on Zoom. This meeting is being recorded.

This meeting was called to order at 5:21 p.m. at 250 Fresh Pond Parkway, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Those in attendance via *Zoom* were:

Cambridge Water Board (CWB): Ann Roosevelt, Mike McNeley, James Burrell, Kathleen Kelly and Jason Marshall

Cambridge Water Department (CWD): Sam Corda, Dave Kaplan, Anna Van Dreser, Krystina McNally, Fred Centanni, Julie Greenwood-Torelli, Mark Gallagher and Linda Vierboom

A. MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2022, MEETING

Mr. Marshall moved, and Mr. McNeley seconded the motion to approve the January 11, 2022, minutes as amended. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

B. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Corda introduced Ms. Julie Greenwood-Torelli, as the new Director of Water Operations for the water department, replacing the recently retired Ed Dowling. She received a warm welcome by the board. Mr. Corda will send a copy of her resume to the Board per their request.

Drought /Water Conservation Update: We currently are not in a drought in Massachusetts. Precipitation for January 2022 was about 1" above average. Drought prediction models are predicting average precipitation into 2023.

Covid-19 Update: The numbers from the Covid Omicron variant are dropping quite a bit from the previous peak in cases in mid-January. The City continues decreased 50% staffing until March 11th. Staff continue to wear masks in City buildings as required. There is a daily disinfection of the facility at lunch and at night, with full disinfection on Saturdays. Air purifiers have been installed in the Water Department building and have been running 24/7 since November 2021.

PFAS6 Update: We continue to be in full compliance with the Mass DEP PFAS6 Regulations. January sample results were 13.6 ppt. Ideally the GAC Filter Media replacement project will be completed in about four months. Bid specs are anticipated to be put out within the next few weeks.

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt said that after the new GAC filters are installed (up and running), and the PFAS6 results are in, we should talk about sending a report to the Council.

Watershed Projects Overview: Presented by Dave Kaplan in slide format. A copy of this presentation may be viewed at-

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<https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/waterboardminutes/020822WatershedSummary.pdf>

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt asked if the 100-year storm model necessitates a dam study. Mr. Kaplan said CDM has been doing modeling for the Winter Street dam. The model they created indicates the dam is resilient and there are no concerns relating to the 100-year storms, even with climate change. Mr. Kaplan said we will be developing the modeling for the Stony Brook Dam.

Mr. Kaplan said he is hoping the interactive site monitoring mobile data management and mapping tool will go live in few months. This mobile tool allows us to track and monitor construction sites digitally.

C. OPERATIONS

Transmission and Distribution:

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt asked if there was available ARPA money for lead service replacement. Mr. Corda said we are on the list to receive American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the SCADA upgrade and GAC Filter Media Replacement over the next three years. The most recent Infrastructure Bill Funding, which has funding specifically for the replacement of lead service lines, is in the works and Mr. Corda would like to apply for assistance to help with lead service line replacements.

Watershed:

Questions/Comments: Ms. Roosevelt commented on the large number of projects in the watershed. Because the solar proposal to develop a solar field on a steep slope abutting Cambridge land near Hobbs Brook Reservoir would require site monitoring, Ms. Roosevelt asked if there was a lot of pollution from solar panels. Mr. Kaplan said, to his knowledge, there was not but stormwater runoff and management will be the concern. Mr. McNeley said on a steep area, construction could change how the runoff flows. Mr. Kaplan said the proposed panels proximity to the reservoir is what we are looking at. We are going to be in discussion with them and talk about runoff and how they plan to meet the latest Massachusetts Stormwater Regulations.

Water Operations:

Questions/Comments: Water levels at Stony Brook Reservoir remain low to assist in combatting milfoil and water chestnut invasives.

In response to Ms. Kelly's comment that the Board did not see the final design for the Little Fresh Pond Restoration Project, Mr. Kaplan said he would e-mail the preferred design out to the Board members.

The Little Fresh Pond project utilizing the "preferred option" which was voted on by the Board, will go out to bid shortly. Please see the June 8, 2021, Water Board vote cited below:

Ms. Roosevelt moved, and Mr. Marshall seconded the motion to approve the Preferred Option from the Hatch Study. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

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Mr. Marshall asked where we ended up on the Black's Nook Project. The decision was made to use the 2' dredge to restore Black Nook. We are currently reviewing the project permitting needs based on the actual soil conditions. Please see the June 8, 2021, Water Board vote below:

Mr. McNeley moved, and Ms. Roosevelt seconded the motion to accept the Water Department's recommendation to undertake a 2-foot dredge at Black's Nook as described more fully by the Hatch Associates Report. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Mr. McNeley appreciates the amount of diligence Ms. O'Connell puts into the watershed letters in response to the many redevelopment projects that are ongoing in the watershed. They are very successful in protecting our raw water quality.

Engineering:

No Comments

Business/Billing:

No Comments

D. ACTION ITEM

None

E. MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

No Comments

F. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Roosevelt asked Mr. Corda to add under "new business" the Water Board letter which was sent to the city council in response to the charter right by councilor Paul Tonner/policy order #9 which wanted to study other uses for the golf course near Fresh Pond such as putting the DPW facility and/or affordable housing within the golf course footprint. Please see the Board letter below:

*To: Cambridge City Council
From: Cambridge Water Board*

Re: Change of Use at Fresh Pond Reservation

We understand that the City Council may be considering an order (order O-3) next week relating to potential alternative uses of the Fresh Pond Golf Course. The Water Board writes here to provide information that may be timely and useful as you consider this issue.

In 1865, enabling state legislation authorized Cambridge to purchase the rights and property that compose our water supply system. Consistent with this authority, Fresh Pond Reservation is designed intentionally for the protection of our water supply. This includes the golf course.

As an open space abutting a busy roadway, the golf course acts as a buffer to protect the Cambridge water supply. Adding any structures or repurposing for intense uses would reduce or eliminate this buffer.

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Such a change would also appear to run contrary to the legislative purpose in the statute that vested Cambridge with the authority to acquire, and regulate, Fresh Pond as a water source.

In addition, as you know, the City maintains reservoirs in other municipalities that flow into Fresh Pond and, in turn, serve Cambridge residents and businesses. We regularly engage in these municipalities' administrative and regulatory proceedings to guard against uses and practices that could threaten our water supply. It is critical that the City set an example of protecting our water supply at home so as not to reduce the Water Department's credibility in enforcing watershed protection in other municipalities. If the City entertains proposals to develop natural landscapes at Fresh Pond which protect the City's water supply, those actions could undermine the Water Department's advocacy for strong water protections at our other reservoirs.

Thank you for considering this information as you consider issues relating to Fresh Pond.

A hearing was held, and Ms. Roosevelt presented the letter written by the Water Board upon her testimony. The hearing had a large turnout of golfers in attendance and one affordable housing advocate. The water board letter influenced the council. Ultimately, after discussion the order failed 6-1 with one abstention. A compromise was fashioned by Councilor Tonner stating there would be no change to the golf course but there would be discussions about how to use the golf course for public purposes assuming those public purposes didn't affect the water supply in a negative way. Mr. Tonner spoke of assembling a group for future discussions on how to use the course for additional public purposes and noted the Water Board and Water Department would be involved with any discussions about the course.

As Ms. Roosevelt noted, the golf course is statutory and any change to its use would have to go thru the waterboard.

Mr. Marshall thanked Ms. Roosevelt for flagging this as an issue.

G. NEXT MEETING DATES/AGENDA – Meetings via Zoom

- March 8, 2022: Approved/TBD
- April 12, 2022: Approved/TBD
- May 10, 2022: Approved/TBD
- June 14, 2022: TBA/TBD

Ms. Kelly moved, and Mr. McNeley seconded the motion to adjourn the Zoom meeting at 6:37pm. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.