



City of Watertown
Conservation Commission
Administration Building
149 Main St.
Watertown, MA 02472

Maria P. Rose, Chair
Jamie O'Connell, Vice Chair
Leo Martin, Member
Rachel Danford, Member
Jill Ayers, Member
Patrick Towler, Member

MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, October 9, 2024, 7:00 PM, Remote Meeting on Zoom

Conservation Commission Members Present: Maria Rose, Jamie O'Connell, Rachel Danford, Jill Ayers, and Patrick Towler

Absent: Leo Martin

Also Present: Steve Magoon (City of Watertown), Tyler Abreau (CDM Smith), Glenn Howard (CDM Smith), Brian McCarthy (RJ O'Connell), Chris Lucas (Lucas Environmental, LLC), Conor Nagle (VHB, INC), Nick O'Connor (National Development), Adrian Nial (Reed-Hilderbrand), and Brian Beck (Seyon, LLC).

Staff Present: Katie Swan, Conservation Agent, and Susan Jenness, Assistant

Rose took a roll call and proceeded to chair the meeting.

1. **Informational Update:** Arsenal Park Phase A (321-0169) and B (321-0181) updates.

Glenn Howard (CDM Smith) was present to update the commission on ongoing action items for Arsenal Park Phase A and B:

- **Community Garden and Skate Park:** Both are close to completion. Additional water spigots were installed for community convenience. Howard noted that a degraded hexagonal shelter would be replaced with a similar, more durable structure.
- **Field Renovation:** 4,500 cubic yards of soil is being spread, with erosion control measures in place. Sodding of the field is scheduled for early spring.

- **Playground:** Installation of playground equipment is complete, and rubber safety surfacing is set to be added as weather permits.
- **Pavilion:** Plans for a new rectangular pavilion include power connectivity to support events and community gatherings.

Comments/Questions from the Commission:

Rose suggested a grand opening for the skate park and community garden, potentially involving a large community event.

2. **Public Hearings:** (Continued from September 4, 2024 meeting) 10-30 Manley Way (Mass DEP #: 321-0188): Notice of Intent submitted for the re-purposing of the existing structure at 10 Manley Way, Watertown, MA for light industry, lab/R&D/non-nuisance manufacturing or warehousing use. The proposed work is within the locally regulated 150-ft buffer zone and state-regulated 100-ft buffer zone. The proposed work includes new landscaping, a new stormwater retention system, and a pedestrian walkway easement to the City of Watertown to foster connectivity from Walker Pond to the rear of the site. PPF Industrial 20 Seyon, LLC c/o Morgan Stanley Real Estate, Property Owner, and Christopher Lucas, Representative.

The proposed project includes:

- Work within the locally regulated 150 ft buffer zone and state-regulated 100 ft buffer zone with associated resource areas.
- The project would reduce impervious pavement and increase green space, add more stormwater infiltration, increase pedestrian access from Walker Pond, and add a pedestrian path (shared easement from 10-30 Manley and Repton). The project was approved for a special permit by the planning board on May 8, 2024.

Comments/Questions from the Commission:

Rose proposed that City Council approval would be needed before work on the easement could commence.

O'Connell suggested a condition requiring an executed easement agreement to be recorded prior to construction in the easement area, ensuring that maintenance responsibilities would be clearly defined.

Magoon clarified that while City Council approval was indeed required for the easement, the easement details would need to be documented and reviewed thoroughly.

Motion: O'Connell made a motion to close the hearing (MassDEP #: 321-0188). Danford seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present were polled and agreed with the motion made by O'Connell.

Motion: Danford made a motion to approve the project with specific conditions. Towler seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present were polled and agreed with the motion made by Danford.

3. **Public Hearing:** (Continued from July 10, 2024 meeting) -- 480-550 Arsenal Street, Watertown Mall (Mass DEP #: 321-0189): Notice of Intent submitted for the redevelopment of three parcels (31.4 acres) located at 480 Arsenal Way, 500 Arsenal Street, and 550 Arsenal Street in Watertown, Massachusetts into a campus of office, residential, lab, and retail uses with two multi-story parking garages. The proposed work is within the locally regulated 150-ft. buffer zone and state-regulated 100-ft. buffer zone and associated resource areas including inland bank, bordering vegetated wetland riverfront areas, and isolated vegetated wetland. The project includes an increase in open space and landscaping improvements and stormwater improvements.

Conor Nagle (VHB) presented details on Phase 1 of the project at Watertown Mall, which includes significant green space improvements. Planned features include a Miyawaki Forest for stormwater detention, a bioretention area, and boardwalks. The new green spaces aim to reduce impervious surfaces and improve water quality.

Nagle confirmed that the stormwater management plan is under review with the Department of Public Works (DPW), and calculations indicate a phosphorus load reduction.

Adrian Nial (Reed Hilderbrand) provided details on the Miyawaki Forest, explaining that the forest mounds would act as stormwater islands during significant rainfall and would create an interactive green space for the community.

Comments/Questions from the Commission:

O'Connell and Rose inquired about stormwater management details, including phosphorus load reduction and the area of impervious surface reduction (estimated at two acres).

Motion: Danford made a motion to close the hearing (MassDEP #: 321-0189). Rose seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present were polled and agreed with the motion made by O'Connell.

Motion: O'Connell made a motion to approve the project for Phase 1 with specific conditions. Towler seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present were polled and agreed with the motion made by Danford.

4. Updates

A. CPC Updates:

- a. **Historic Cemeteries:** Consultant Ray Dinowitz assessed the Common Ground Cemetery and Old Burial Ground Cemetery, providing preservation recommendations and cost estimates.

- b. **Walker Pond:** CPC funding was secured to support an ecological assessment and design improvements. Michelle Moon, Senior Planner for Open Space, will lead this project.
- c. **Saltonstall Park:** Scheduled for renovations with work to begin this fall.

B. Administrative update

- a. 2025 calendar – tabled the meeting and filing dates for 2025.

The commission discussed moving the July meeting to July 9 and the September meeting to September 3 to avoid holiday conflicts.

C. Agent Report

- Ongoing site monitoring: 23 Elm Street (MassDEP #: 321-0172). Swan reported that she met with Jim Borrebach and Tim from OHI to look at the installed landscaping. Nine (9) trees need to be replaced (1 pine, 5 junipers, 1 hemlock and two screen trees in back). Jim will follow up when he has an idea of when the trees will be replanted. Swan also noted that there is an area of bare soil on the southern side of the building and they plan to either use a jute mat with winter rye depending on what is under warranty to help stabilize the soil during winter.
- GSA Annual site inspection update. Swan reported that she met with USACE and DCR at the beginning of September as part of the annual soil cap inspection and ongoing monitoring for capped in place PCB-contaminated soil from past use of the site by the US Army. The site inspections happen annually for the soil cap and an overall site inspection occurs every 5 years. Swan then attended a follow-up site visit at the end of September with USACE and DCR with their maintenance team. DCR hired land surveyors to monitor the cap as part of the 5-year inspection to see how the cap is functioning and to make adjustments if needed. DCR and USACE will plan to follow up with a maintenance plan to address invasive plants and other needs.
- Walker Pond Project update. Swan reported that the Walker Pond project, funded through the CPC, has officially started. Michelle Moon is the point of contact for the project and if anyone has questions about the progress with the project, please contact her directly.
- Lowell School Playground equipment at Walker Pond staging area. Swan reported that DPW reached out about temporarily storing the new Lowell School Playground equipment in the construction staging area near Walker Pond for a period of time.
- MACC Fall Conference: Sat. 10/19 from 8am-3:30 pm in Devens, MA. Swan shared that the annual event is happening in a week and to please register if anyone wants to attend.

5. Minutes

- Acceptance of Minutes from July 10, 2024, Conservation Commission Meeting

Motion: Patrick Towler moved to approve the minutes as amended, with Rachel Danford seconding.

- Acceptance of Minutes from September 4, 2024, Conservation Commission Meeting

The commission decided to table these minutes until the next meeting to allow for additional review.

6. Meeting Adjournment

Motion: O'Connell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:46 pm. Towler seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present were polled and agreed with the motion made by O'Connell.