

Minutes
Watertown Conservation Commission
Town Council Chambers
Wednesday, April 5, 2017

Conservation Commission Members Present: Marylouise Pallotta McDermott, Leo G. Martin, Patrick Fairbairn, Maria P. Rose, Jamie O'Connell

Commission Members Absent: Charles C. Bering, Louis Taverna

Staff Present: Christopher J. Hayward, Susan C. Jenness

Martin Chaired.

1) Welcome to our new member, Jamie O'Connell

Martin welcomed Jamie O'Connell to the Conservation Commission. Each member of the CC spoke for a few moments explaining their background within framework of the commission.

2) Public Hearing Continuation- Notice of Intent- 485 & 615 Arsenal Street-Arsenal Yards – DEP # 321-0165, WWO 17-2 - As part of a site redevelopment project, work proposed is within the 200-foot Riverfront Area and Watertown 150-foot Buffer Zone to the Charles River and includes installation of subsurface storm water management structures, construction of a multi-use pathway and regrading/repaving of specific areas. Applicant: Jeffery Heidelberg, BP Watertown Retail, LLC, c/o Boylston Properties.

Jeff Heidelberg appeared for the presentation to review the revisions requested by the CC at the previous meeting to review the following data.

The public hearing was continued for review of Boring Logs, Groundwater Levels, Operation & Maintenance Plan, documentation from Licensed Site Professional regarding soil contamination plans for site and revised planting plans.

A package of documents was filed by Lucas Environmental, LLC in the Office of Conservation for distribution to the Conservation Commission. The package included details of all of the updates that were made to the proposed plans in in response to the requests made at the March 1, 2017 Conservation Commission Meeting

1. Soil test plot and soil boring data which documents groundwater elevation at the infiltration systems. The information included supplemental grain size distribution information, groundwater monitoring reports, test pit logs and boring logs associated with each of the proposed subsurface infiltration locations.
2. Documentation on procedures regarding the management on site re-use and off site re-use/disposal of excavated soil generated as a result of the proposed development from the Licensed Site Professional

3. A revised Planting Plan prepared by the CJRA-IBI Group (Sheets L301, L302 and L400) which were to replace Sheet L100 from the original Notice of Intent Submission.

Jeffrey Heidelberg appeared for Boylston Properties. He explained that they would be reviewing all the modifications and changes made to the plans that were discussed at the last meeting.

Heidelberg called on Chris Jones the Landscape Architect for the project who is with Carroll Johnson Associates. He presented the changes made to the landscape plan as revised in the proposed project.

Jones reviewed details of the landscape plans that had been changed to satisfy the concerns of the CC, Libby Shaw, President of Trees for Watertown, and Sharon Bauer of the Friends of Bees.

Deciduous Species- Jones explained that he had taken Red Maples out of the landscape plans and added Swamp White Oak. He also distributed a higher count of the other species that everyone was comfortable with.

Evergreen Species- Balsam Fir has been removed from the plans. Black Spruce, Eastern Red Cedar and Bold Cypress have been added, in even distribution.

Hemlock Trees- 5 of the 8 Hemlock trees has been removed from the plans. Three were left and the developer has been urged to maintain those very carefully over the years.

Wildflower Mix- Some concern was raised that oxeye daisy was too aggressive a choice in the wildflower mix; it was removed and orange cone flower was been added as a suggestion of the Prairie Moon Nursery book.

Ramp Area- Gro-low-sumac, cat mint, prairie drop seed, and barren strawberry had been added to the mix near the ramp area. Some ornamental woody vegetation was drawn in with river birch, red bud and fringe tree as well.

O'Connell inquired whether or not there would be any trees planted in the area around the infiltration sub system might which could suffer root damage being so close to the system. Jones said that the system would up be high enough not to cause root damage to any of the trees.

Roy Smith appeared to represent RJ O'Connell the Civil Site Engineers.

Smith explained that a request had been made for soil boring logs and that was included in the updated package including boring test pit analysis. The data was taken from the years of 2013-2016. The readings were calculated by taking the highest readings of each well, and then a safety factor was added in order to reach the highest levels to establish each season's highest reading.

O'Connell inquired as to why out of the 8 catch basins located out near Arsenal St. only 4 were included in the point of analysis. Smith explained that this project is permitted under a Master Plan Permit and is now in Phase I of the Project. In this area the 4 catch basin that are off line don't contribute to the point of analysis in this project. He assured O'Connell that if the parking lot were to be included in a later Phase of the project where those 4 catch basins were located, they would be included in the analysis for the later phases of the project.

Rose inquired about the test pit-which concluded pieces of building material were evident in the analysis and wanted to know if they would remove the building material during the construction process. Heidelberg explained that if the building materials happened to be found underneath the construction site of the new building, the materials would be removed to assure the stability of the foundation.

O'Connell felt concerned with how the water drained off the parking lot by Home Depot and Smith explained that Home Depot, the owners of the parking lot, is not part of this project. O'Connell discussed some ideas about diverting the flow from the parking lot that were discovered not to be options in this case.

Fairbairn said he needed reassurance about the proposed use of Bald Cypress in the planting plans. Jones assured him that this will not only help to make this an interesting environment, but that he believed that the species would all do well in the climate and in the locations where they would be planted. Jones also indicated that the contractor would have details about the exact guarantees that would be honored on the life of any species that does not do well.

Libby Shaw said that she was concerned about the long term aspects of the proposed vegetation plans and questioned the reasoning used behind the process for selecting the species. She also voiced concern that the walkway which is incorporated into the plan is causing the removal of so many mature trees. She said that she had hoped the CC would go down and have a site visit before this meeting so that they would know what she was concerned with. In her summary she asked if the walk way could be moved to another location in the site in order to save the mature trees from being removed.

Heidelberg-discussed the placement of the walkway from various locations on the site and gave the multitude of reasons why this was the only options for placement of the walkway. There were concerns with the walk way that had to do with utility infrastructure beneath the site, lack of connection to roadways, lack of connection to the river and green space behind the site and Heidelberg explained with certainty that this was the one location on the whole site where the walk way would be feasible for its intended purpose.

Motion: Rose made a motion to close the public hearing. Fairbairn seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to close the public hearing.

Motion: Pallotta McDermott made a motion to approve the Notice of Intent and that the Conservation Commission issue an Order of Conditions for the Project. Rose seconded the Motion.

Vote: A Unanimous vote was reached to enter an Order of Conditions in the proposed project.

2) Election of 2017 Commission officers – Vice Chair

Motion: A motion was made by Rose to nominate Lou Taverna as the new Vice-Chairperson of the Conservation Commission. Fairbairn seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached electing Taverna as the new Vice Chairperson of the Conservation Commission.

3) Minutes from February 1, 2017

Motion: Rose made a motion to adopt the minutes of the February 1, 2017 meeting with modifications. Fairbairn seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached adopting the minutes of the February 1, 2017 meeting with modification.

4) Minutes for March 1, 2017

Motion: Rose made a motion to adopt the minutes of the March 1, 2017 meeting with modification. Fairbairn seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to adopt the minutes of the March 1, 2017 meeting with modification.

5) Discussion on moving Conservation Commission meeting start time to 7pm

A brief discussion was held about moving the start time of the Conservation Commission meetings each month to 7:00 PM.

Motion: Rose made a motion to move the starting time of the Conservation Commission meetings to 7:00 PM. Pallotta McDermott seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached adopting 7:00 PM as the new starting time for the Conservation Commission meetings.

The Clerk of the Conservation Office will update the Conservation Commission Meeting and Filing Schedule for the 2017 season and post it up on the town web site and send out a notify me to all Conservation Commission subscribers.

6) Agent report

Hayward turned the floor over to Martin who reported that there has been some activity at the base of the Pedestrian Bridge Replacement site where they are getting ready to pour the concrete. Floating devices are out in the river and Hayward said that there are some large tree stumps on the path that they are getting ready to remove.

Martin reported that he has seen no work at Sasaki that is related to the project approved by the Conservation Commission recently.

Meeting adjourned.