



TOWN OF WATERTOWN
Conservation Commission
Administration Building
149 Main Street
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

Leo Martin, Chairperson
Maria P. Rose, Vice Chair
Charles C. Bering, Member
Patrick W. Fairbairn, Member
Jamie O'Connell, Member

Telephone (617) 972-6426
Facsimile (617) 926-7778
www.watertown-ma.gov
Susan C. Jenness, Assistant

MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 5, 2021, 7:00 PM, Remote Meeting on Zoom

Conservation Commission Members Present: Leo Martin, Maria Rose, Jamie O'Connell, Patrick Fairbairn, Charles C. Bering

Absent: N/A

Also Present: Anne McMenemy, Katie Snyder, Dante Angelucci, Danielle Blake, Meredith Avery, Ed Roberts, Jon Spicer, Andrew Copelotti, Oliver Katz, Mark Krackiewicz

Staff Present: Laurel Schwab, Conservation Agent, Susan C. Jenness, Assistant

Martin chaired the meeting.

- 1. Continued Public Hearing- Notice of Intent- 57 Coolidge Ave-** To redevelop the site including a mix of office and research & development/lab-life sciences space including a new, publicly accessible open space, an enhanced stream corridor, and streetscape improvements. VHB, Applicant, National Development, Owner.

Meredith Avery appeared to review the modifications suggested at the meeting that took place on April 7, 2021, of the proposed office and lab development with publicly accessible open space.

The package of materials had been supplemented on April 21, 2021. The following updates had been included and were reported to the CC at the meeting.

- Landscape Plan with written responses to all CC comments from April 7, 2021.
- O&M Plan with updates related to snow removal.

- Stage 1 Risk Development Assessment.
- Stage 2 Ecological Risk Development Assessment
- Sawins Pond Risk Assessment
- MASS DEP comments with details on how they were addressed.

Some additional information was that stormwater approval took place on May 3, 2021, and that the Planning Board review had been scheduled to take place on May 12, 2021.

Commission Comments

Martin said the submission was quite thorough upon review. Rose concurred with Martin. Bering said he was surprised to see the list of comments from the Mass DEP, as that is rare. O'Connell requested a walk-through of the submission regarding mitigation on the site. She also asked where they stood with the planting plan and said she would like to see the final planting plan when it becomes available. Avery explained it is a not standard planting list, and there are some things they need more information about before they can commit to the plantings. Rose suggested they can supply a list of trees removed in the planting plan to be reviewed in the office by Fairbairn, Schwab and possibly the Tree Warden. She and O'Connell both asked to have the list of pollinator plants reviewed by a member of town staff and someone from a local pollinator advocacy group. Fairbairn said he liked the realistic approach being taken in terms of holding back on determining what plants would do well among the invasive species present. He mentioned that it would require at least 3 years to be able to evaluate the health of the new trees and plantings being planted on the site. He also stated sustainability should be considered when selecting native species for the site, and that Norway Spruce proposed for the eastern property edge might cast winter shade on the adjacent condo building. Bering commented that they should be aware of the velocity of flow in the stream as it enters their site during large storm events.

Motion: Rose made a motion to close the public hearing and approve the project as amended since the April 7, 2021, hearing. Bering seconded the motion.

Poll: A unanimous poll was reached approving the motion made by Rose.

2. **Public Hearing- Notice of Intent- 311 Arsenal St.-** To redevelop the Arsenal on the Charles Campus to add additional life science, office, retail, and community uses as well as publicly accessible open spaces and streetscape improvements. Stantec Consulting Services, Inc, Applicant, ARE-MQ Region No. 75, LLC, Owner.

Danielle Blake from Alexandria Real Estate opened the discussion. The project team included Dante Angellucci, Edward Roberts, Anne McMenemy and Jon Spicer.

Blake explained this was a project that had been through numerous community meetings so far. Alexandria Real Estate also is the landlord of 480-500 Arsenal St. and procured the Athenahealth Campus in 2019. In 2016 the project received Master Plan approval. This proposal is to amend the Master Plan and to repurpose the existing campus to include open space that is accessible to the public.

Jon Spicer, Civil Engineer, reviewed the proposed work in the 200-foot Riverfront Area, including reconstructing the existing walking path along the southern edge of the property, and the installation of new underground utilities, which will be loamed and seeded when finished. The project calls for the removal of 4 trees due to the utility work and 2 trees that stand in the way of the walking path. 15 new trees will be planted along with some new shrubs to screen the area around a utility loading dock.

Anne McMenemy reported that the Notice of Intent had been uploaded on Mass. DEP and was assigned the case number MASS DEP 321-0176. McMenemy reported that she has been monitoring the comments section of the Mass. DEP website and no comments were made for the team to address or follow up on.

Commission Comments

Rose inquired about the diameters of the trees being removed and what the compensation would be. Travis Mazzerall responded there was 48 inches in diameter being lost through removal of the trees, and 52 inches were being replaced. Rose asked for new tree data as a supplement to the Conservation Office. Fairbairn concurred with Rose. O'Connell was interested in the amount of existing impervious area within the 200-foot Riverfront Area compared to proposed impervious. Spicer reported they were decreasing impervious by about 80 square feet. O'Connell inquired about the stormwater outside the resource area and if it discharged into the river. Spicer said there was no direct discharge and that there was an outlet into a manhole that flows out under North Beacon St. and that there is a peer review of the design being done by DPW. O'Connell asked about work being done in the buffer zone and it was reported that all the work being done is between 150-200 feet from the river. She asked for them to find a way to save the red oak tree scheduled for removal in the new pedestrian area. Mazzerall said it would create a strange condition given the overall design of the space and the curbing. Bering said everything looked good to him. Martin said he wished they could save the few trees, but they are putting in some nice ones which he appreciated.

Public Comment

Mark Krackiwicz said he was interested in the path by O'Neil Properties and was concerned by talk of narrowing the path. Mazerall said the path is already pretty narrow and they have no intentions of making it smaller. Krackiwicz said he was pleased because it connects to the Commanders Mansion and the Cambridge Yacht Club. He said he was a supporter of taking care of that path.

Motion: Bering made a motion to close the public hearing and approve the project as discussed. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Poll: A unanimous poll was reached accepting the motion made by Bering.

3. **Notice of Intent- 0 Arlington Street-** Schwab reported that this hearing had been continued to the June meeting. She reported that while Epsilon had consulted for the Town on prior hearings regarding this site, they were too busy at this time. She said that Patrick Garner, the local biologist, would be consulting for the Town.
4. **Informal discussion-** potential fence removal and invasive species management along southern border of 485-617 Arsenal St (Arsenal Yards)

Andrew Copelotti appeared along with Oliver Katz from Boylston Properties to review some of the conditions along the border of the Southern section of 485-617 Arsenal St. which is known as Arsenal Yards.

Copelotti reported walking the site with Martin and he displayed photos of the fence, which is in disrepair in some areas. He explained that Boylston Properties is now interested in learning more about how they could work with the Town to remove the fence and the dead vegetation to improve the area.

O'Connell said she was concerned with removing the trees that were growing through portions of the fence. She also pointed out the dead vegetation could be a shelter for local habitat. Fairbairn said he would be happy to see the broken fence and litter go, but that everything is providing something to the ecosystem. He commented that dead trees are a resource as habitat unless they are a public safety threat. Rose commented that the fence could be perceived as a form of protection keeping litter from blowing into the river. She suggested that the Tree Warden should go out and inspect the health of the trees before any work is executed.

Copelotti said he would like to start working on this either later in the summer or early in the fall. Schwab said she would be happy to look into the jurisdiction issues, and that she could walk the site with the Tree Warden, Martin and Fairbairn.

Krackiewicz said that after viewing all the photos shared by Copelotti, he felt that some of the fence could be historic because it is made of wrought iron. He urged the Town and Copelotti to speak with the Historical Commission about the fence before planning to take it down.

5. Agent Report

- a. CPA- O'Connell reported that the Draft Plan has been completed and she reminded CC members that all comments and suggestions should be sent to Lanae Handy, the Coordinator for the CPC, for consideration. She explained that the next step is to have the draft reviewed by Town Council before it is adopted as the final plan.
- b. Climate and Energy Plan- Schwab reported that a Stakeholder Advisory Group has been set up and that it includes members that are representative of the diversity of the Town.
- c. MVP Action Grant- Schwab reported they are in the process of requesting an MVP Action Grant for an Equity Based Community Greening Plan, addressing climate change hazards in Environmental Justice areas of Town. She explained there is a lot of community engagement planned. Schwab explained that letters of support are a required part of the application. She had a template letter of support and requested that the Conservation Commission submit one. Rose was selected by the group to work on the template letter and submit it by the end of the week to accompany the application for the MVP Action Grant.

Motion: Fairbairn made a motion to support Rose. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Poll: A unanimous vote was reached to accept the motion made by Fairbairn.

- d. Pollinator update-O'Connell reported that the Pollinator Garden Planting is taking place on May 15th, although she has plans to be out of town and will not be able to attend. She reported that the group is looking for additional volunteers who would like to participate. She also reported that Friends of Bees were looking into the possibility of having a sign or plaque commissioned for the site. Fairbairn suggested asking Charlie Breitrose to report on the event and said he has been willing to publish

news flashes and photos about the local events in Watertown, to publicize them, and generate interest.

- e. Arsenal Park phase A- Schwab reported that she had sent around the update on Phase A of the Arsenal Park construction.

6. Minutes- March 3, 2021, and April 7, 2021

After a review of the March 3, 2021, minutes, a motion was made.

Motion: Fairbairn made a motion to accept the minutes of March 3, 2021, as modified. Rose seconded the motion.

Poll: A unanimous poll was reached accepting the minutes from the March 3, 2021, Conservation Commission meeting.

After a review of the April 7, 2021, minutes a motion was made.

Motion: Fairbairn made a motion to accept the minutes of the April 7, 2021, meeting. Rose seconded the motion.

Poll: A unanimous poll was reached accepting the minutes from the April 7, 2021, meeting.