



CITY 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, January 19, 2022, 7:00 PM, SPECIAL Remote Meeting on Zoom

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

Absent: Maria Rose

Also Present: Glenn Howard, Nick Watkins, Rachel Guilfoil, Elodia Thomas

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

Martin chaired the meeting.

1. Commission Discussion

Review of 90% Concept Plan for Arsenal Park Improvements Phase B

Howard reminded members that a full presentation of this plan had been presented at the January 5, 2022, Conservation Commission meeting.

Thomas, a member of the public, stated she had been following this project since day one, and it would help her and others to know exactly what had been left out of the plans, compared to what was in the initial plans coming from the public meeting process. For example, a new splash pad had been discussed and now it seems it is no longer in the plans. Martin told Thomas he would circle back to her in time. Martin said he also wanted to see what was in the plans back then, what is in them now, and what the cost factors are.

Fairbairn began the discussion. He said he was concerned with the location of seams in the paved tennis courts and described how the existing seams made for unsatisfactory play. Howard assured him there would be no seams on new ball court playing surfaces. Fairbairn was concerned that the tennis practice board should be located near a gate so that balls may be easily retrieved if hit

over into the adjoining court. Watkins explained that the practice board had been placed in the best possible location. Fairbairn was concerned the rain gardens were not well separated and protected from pathways and other areas of intensive use. Howard and Watkins explained that the rain gardens were designed to receive stormwater and to separate them would require more impervious surface such as curbs and curb cuts. Fairbairn reminded them of the mulch concerns that were brought up by Rose at a previous meeting and said he noted some plan details that he was not sure reflected Rose's requests. Watkins and Howard said they would make corrections to the drawings showing that the mulch requests are in the updated plans. Fairbairn said he was pleased to see provision for a tree at the entrance to the park, but he would like it to be a large one capable of shading the roadway north of the sign. He also requested sassafras plantings elsewhere in the planting plans, moving them from location two and three to four or five, where their root sprouts would not interfere with formal landscaping. He also wanted to be sure electrical power would be available for special events around the open sided building and pavilion, citing the experience of the first annual Watertown Arts Market last year. He was informed that the problem had been noted and addressed.

O'Connell asked for details on the plans for construction stockpiling and Watkins explained he had sent a supplemental plan to Schwab. On L-2 O'Connell asked about phasing and the type of composite erosion control log being proposed. She asked if there will be one closer to the river and if they could use one along the parking lot. Watkins explained it is a standard, core biodegradable log being used. On L-5 O'Connell pointed out during the hearing on the NOI, commission members conditioned for more details on the restriction on clearing existing loose debris. Watkins said they will clarify that with the contractors, and once they know who it is, they will walk the site with them and flag what will get pulled out. On L-6 O'Connell pointed out they wanted the artificial berm removed but it is still in the legend. She asked about the flagpole location, and Watkins replied it had been moved away from the entrance. On D-8 she pointed out a blank space and wanted to know the details. Watkins said the team had not agreed yet on the details, but it would be clarified in the new plans. O'Connell asked about the court shade structure, and they discussed if there is not enough money for that model, they will have picnic tables. She asked about the lighting plans and Watkins and Howard explained it will be the same lighting bollards that were used in Phase A. Howard also explained that the DPW had already adjusted the lighting in the parking lot so that it did not spill into the apartment building. The flagpole will also be lit with a feature provided by the DPW.

Martin gave a list of changes that had been deleted from the plans since the 30% drawings that were shared in March. They are:

- Spray Park
- Exercise Equipment
- Field Improvements
- Amphitheater improvements
- Irrigation of the field
- Budget Augmentation \$500,000 from the Arsenal Yards developer, plus another \$300,000.00 from Athena Health

Martin thanked CDM Smith for the presentation last month and said they have done a good job so far. Based on looking at the drawings, he asked if they were demolishing the gazebo. The areas are hatched, which would indicate they were to be demolished. They indicated it would merely be re-roofed. He asked about whether the irrigation systems had been deleted. The consultants responded there will be no irrigation. He indicated the flagpole is shown in two locations and prefers it be by the old spray park at the west end. Martin mentioned that the parking lot will be paved on some drawings and completely rebuilt on others and pointed out it badly needs work.

Martin clarified that nothing would be carried off site as indicated on L-3 and that any extra materials be placed on the berm and playground. He also asked for a better definition of the interface between Phase A and Phase B.

He inquired about the upper parking lot on L-4 and it was clarified there would be an exit on the northwest side with 2 crosswalks to a sidewalk, which Martin said seems inconsistent. There are 2 parallel sidewalks that a diagonal sidewalk alignment would result in less pavement. He said he wanted to reduce excessive pavement if possible. Watkins explained they had marked parking spaces for vans that would be striped with an accessible ramp and that there is a hill within the sidewalk with a tree that was not clearly shown on the drawing. Martin asked about the fencing height around the tennis and basketball courts and Howard said CDM usually utilizes 12 feet height fencing, but they could bring it down to 10 feet. It was agreed to leave it at 12 feet. Martin asked about the planters. CDM responded they were removed on the north side but not the south. Watkins explained the reasons why and they were left as shown. Martin asked them to move the recreation storage container against the wall. He asked for infiltration basin details and Howard said they should be in the details portion of the plan set. Martin pointed out while most structures are getting new roofs, we might want to consider red standing seam metal roofs to match those of nearby Arsenal yards. Martin mentioned the park was scheduled to close around 9 PM and asked if they need security lights for the police. Howard agreed he should discuss that with the police. Martin asked why we would be lighting the pavilions since we do not do that currently. Martin asked if the splash pad would be removed or left as-is. Howard and Watkins explained they originally planned to replace the spray feature and the DPW clarified it was in bad condition. To replace the whole spray park was a large expense, requiring changes to the subsurface systems, and they had been asked to bring some of the costs down. Magoon stated that they had intended to replace the spray park in the next phase of improvements, and that to hold the project up for that now would delay the whole project. Howard clarified they were planning to get the project out to bid in February and to re-do this part of the project would mean they could not put it out to bid until at least March.

Ms. Thomas said she was speaking on behalf of herself, but that she is a member of the CPC and there are other pots of money that might be available. She said she likes to see projects be completed all at once and this project should be complete after this phase.

Thomas asked where kids would be going to the bathroom with no bathroom at the end of the field. She said the field needs irrigation. She mentioned the exercise equipment and said they needed to go see the set up at Lincoln Park in Somerville. She said that maybe CPC can help with the funding. She asked for benches at the entrance of the park to be facing the park and not the parking lot. She also asked for seating at the basketball courts. Thomas pointed out that Lincoln Park is organically connected and all the fences in this park concept are breaking up the flow of

users. She commented on the lights in the project and asked if they were like the ones on Arsenal Yard, and Howard said that is what they are using. Thomas said this should be a special place, it should be fluid, we should delay this project to be sure it is done right.

Martin asked to have all the costs broken down because he agreed with Thomas about the need to finish the spray park during Phase B and not in a future phase.

Martin read Rose's comments, indicating she was afraid of children getting hurt by the boulders in the rain gardens. Rose's comments also asked what the warrantee was on plants, and Howard indicated it was two years. Martin said he had received a note from Bob Dirico at the DPW stating he likes the planting mix.

Bering had no comments. Magoon said the City Administration has been trying to stay on schedule and on budget. Martin said he wanted to take a poll to approve the project as modified with a request to City Council to approve more funds to complete the renovation of the splash pad during Phase B rather than waiting until the future.

Motion: Bering made a motion to accept the 90% plans with modifications discussed tonight, and a second motion to request City Council agree to approve more funds to complete the renovation of the splash pad during Phase B. O'Connell seconded the motions.

Poll: A poll was taken, and members unanimously agreed with the first motion made by Bering.

Poll: a poll was taken, and members unanimously agreed to the second motion made by Bering.

Bering made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm. Fairbairn seconded the motion.

Poll: A poll was taken, and members agreed with the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm.