



City of Watertown

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

Leo G. Martin, Chair
Maria P. Rose, Vice Chair
Charles C. Bering, Member
Jamie O'Connell, Member
Darya Mattes, Member
Rachel Danford, Member

MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, March 1, 2023, 7:00 PM, Remote Meeting on Zoom

Conservation Commission Members Present: Leo Martin, Maria Rose, Jamie O'Connell, Charles, Bering, Darya Mattes, Rachel Danford arrived late

Absent: N/A

Also Present: Polina Safran, Patrick Garner, Richard Nysten, Angeline Kounelis, Patrick Fairbairn, Paul Pavone, Pam Phillips, Kathy Patterson, William Twombly, Brian Shea, Marilynne Roach, Eric Brodanese, Mickey Marcus, Elodia Thomas, Yinna, Bill Dillon, Jill Relson

Staff Present: Katie Swan, Conservation Agent, Susan C. Jenness, Assistant

Martin chaired the meeting.

- 1. Informational Meeting-** Discussion of Whitney Hill Annual Report per City Council Resolution of 2013 preserving Whitney Hill Park.

Martin passed the floor to Rose to discuss the Whitney Hill Annual Report that was delivered to George Proakis, the new City Manager on February 14, 2023.

Rose began her presentation by thanking Patrick Fairbairn, who recently retired from duty as a long-time member of the Conservation Commission, (CC). Rose credited Fairbairn

for his diligence over many years as a steward of Whitney Hill, a habitat of diverse open space. Fairbairn had conducted scientific tree diameter test plots with local high school students and took actions to initiate greater care of the trails.

2022 Actions taken
• Fairbairn continued to monitor 32 test plots on Whitney Hill. • Addition of side boards and trash barrels and addition of new signs. • Tree Inventory conducted by the City Tree Warden, and Peter Deltredejis, a resident of the city. • Trail Improvement Discussions with the Student Conservation Commission on specific trail projects to improve soil erosion issues. (Rose reported she submitted the application which has since been accepted).

Proposed Initiatives for 2023
• Tree inventory survey will continue into 2023. • Monitoring is taking place for residents who have been dumping their yard at Whitney Hill. • Planning some family-oriented activities as the interest rose in the previous year. • Future collaboration with the Student CC Association, if their current project outcome is a good one. • There is hope that Fairbairn continues to monitor the 32 sample test plots. • There is hope to find a way to utilize the granite curbing that has remained on the site over the years.

Fairbairn was invited to speak on the initiatives taken in 2022. He stated he thought there was more of a story of the initiatives than was in the final report. He also mentioned he was interested in being sure how the stewardship would continue on in the future, with credit being given to the school children and volunteers who were instrumental in the stewardship of Whitney Hill. Martin asked if he has specific names, he wanted to read into the record now. Rose pointed out a full appendix to the Whitney Hill Report gave many details of how the work was done on Whitney Hill over the last year. She also offered that the CC could form a sub-committee to oversee and plan and execute work at Whitney Hill in the future.

Public Comments

Elodia Thomas was present and suggested they use the showcase boxes installed in Whitney Hill to post signs about the site, for particular, such as the abutters meeting letter for Whitney Hill, and the Whitney Hill Report should be posted there. Thomas mentioned abutters letters missed some of the immediate residents, and request for additional signs on Oliver St. and Marion Rd.

William Tremblay thanked Patrick Fairbairn for his stewardship work at Whitney Hill and thanked him for his work inventorying the trees and plants. He said that the hill means a lot to all of the surrounding residents. He said the new barrels seem to be helping a lot on the entrance at Marshall St. and Oliver St. He recommended an additional 3 or 4 signs connected to the entrances to the hill.

2. **Public Hearing-** (Continuance was requested to April 12, 2023, meeting) - Notice of Intent- O Arlington St. (Williams Pond Parcel)- Mass DEP 321-0174- to construct a 2-story commercial building and parking lot on property known as the Williams Pond parcel: Max Hatziliades, Applicant/Owner, Mickey Marcus, Representative

Although the applicant requested a continuance to the April 12 meeting, Marcus was present. He discussed the filing deadlines with members of the CC and said he would submit some documentation by the appropriate deadline, which would be discussed at the April 12, 2023, meeting. Jenness said she will send the meeting/filing deadlines to Marcus so that he will be sure of the deadlines for filing new material for upcoming CC meetings.

3. **Public Hearing-** (Continuance was requested to the April 12, 2023, meeting) - Request for Determination of Applicability - for the proposed parking lot improvements and utility upgrades located at 10- 30 Manley Way, Watertown, Massachusetts. PPF Industrial 20 Seylon, LLC, Owner/Christopher M. Lucas, Representative Martin informed members of the CC, that the public hearing for the Application for RDA was continued to the April meeting. Swan will reach out to Lucas to ask for a status on this project and update CC members once she has done so.

4. **Public Hearing-** (Continued from the February 1, 2023 meeting), Lot located off 0 Arlington St - Notice of Intent submitted for the construction of a 41,289 square feet (sf) of pervious parking area to grade and pave the north side of Sawins Pond, extending from the existing paved parking lot, located off 0 Arlington Street, between 71 Arlington Street and 15 Arlington Street taking place within the 100 foot Buffer Zone of Vegetated wetlands and Inland Bank and locally regulated 150 foot Buffer Zone. Polina Safran, Representative from SWCA, Max Hatziliades, Owner.

Polina Safran and Chip Nylen were present for the continuation of the public hearing. Nylen would be discussing the responses to the peer review letter from Patrick Garner, as well as the plan revisions. Safran would be discussing the plans for mitigation. Brian Shaw of OHI would be available to discuss the best ways of removing rubber and debris from the site, and had also been present for the limited amount of work that was done in 2012 on the site, when work was begun based on the Order of Conditions issued by the CC to build a parking lot on the site.

Martin reminded those present that the issue for the Conservation Commission was the fact that work was proposed in the No Build Zone.

A large discussion progressed about the previous history of the site, its classifications by the Mass. DEP and the site's contamination history.

Safran shared slides of the current state of the site, and shared details of the plans to plant native trees and shrubs to create plant diversity where none currently exists, creating a vegetated buffer zone around Sawins Pond and on top of the slope in the buffer zone, after removing considerable soil and waste, adding safer parking area that will serve to enhance the site by 31%.

Nylen stated that he had spoken with Rick Salvo who said there seemed to be no need to remove any trees to build the parking lot, that were greater than an 8-inch caliper.

Commission Comments and Questions

- Bering pointed out that based on the AUL Limitations, there would be good cause to put a fence up between the parking lot if it was built, keeping the public out. Snow stated that this would be on a walking path and there is no need stated in any DEP reports to keep the public out.
- Rose suggested finding out from DEP's Solid Waste Division and the Wetlands Division on whether this landfill needs to be capped prior to redevelopment. She stated that a municipality wants to build on an old landfill or do a brownfields redevelopment, it either needs to be capped or the waste products addressed *prior to* development.
- Rose questioned the long-term structural integrity of porous pavement. Brian Snow has mentioned that if you look closely rubber is sticking up out of the surface. That is because the rubber is migrating up to the surface; this is common with these waste products.
- How can we be assured that with this land disturbance and redevelopment does not further flush out contaminants from the landfill (buried waste) – and into the pond or the Charles River via groundwater flow?
- No information as to the rationale for the size and location of the proposed parking lot.
- The area within the 50-ft no-build zone is significant.

Mattes said she had nothing further to add as an additional concern and was in agreement with many of the statements by Rose. She would like more information about how the large parking lot would benefit going into a no build zone.

Danford said she agreed with Rose and Mattes although she wanted to know if this would be a public parking lot, or if it is just a place for certain people to utilize in the wintertime.

O'Connell pointed out as a Conservation Commission their role is not to determine the contamination of the site, and how to fix it. She clarified it was their responsibility to determine how we bridge the gap of allowing building into a 50 foot no build zone, with no warrant for it. O'Connell also voiced concern for the trees on the slope and hill.

As a final thought Rose raised the issue of snow storage around the pond, and whether a soil management plan should be done.

Martin raised the concern of how pedestrians would be able to walk with no paths to a sidewalk and the issue of the 50 foot no build zone. He said he saw no demand for a parking lot to drive the project.

Public Comments

Former City Council member Angie Kounelis was present for the hearing. She asked to know more about the anticipated use of the parking being proposed in a 50 foot no build zone. She wanted to know if it was to offer to the public, or if there will be a development on or around the property where there is a site for sale now.

Garner said this meeting was raising more issues that are currently unclear. He said he would like answers to the questions raised by Rose, such as an analysis of what happens when water mixes with the density of material in the soil, and would the root systems of the trees be disturbed during excavation of the materials in the soil. Garner was also not comfortable with the old soil boring logs for seasonal highwater levels, that were not conducted by certified professionals. He summarized that this would be doing the work in an area protected by the by law, and he pointed out a parking lot would bring in oil and gas issues that are not beneficial factors for a no build zone.

Nylen stated that overall, the wetlands area will be better protected than it is now.

Motion: Bering made a motion to continue the public hearing to the April 12, 2023, CC meeting. Rose seconded the motion.

Roll Call: A roll call was taken, and all agreed to continue the public hearing while they analyzed the questions raised in this public hearing.

5. Agent Report-

- **CPC Update-** Jamie O'Connell reported that the applications were reviewed and at the March meeting the members of the CPC will discuss and deliberate about which projects will be allowed to move forward. After they have made their decisions on the projects, they will make their recommendations to the City Council who will determine where the funding will be distributed.
- **Ongoing Orders of Conditions-** Swan reported she visited Arsenal Yards on January 26th and found the multiuse path was not complete, the soil was not stabilized, and erosion control issues were apparent. Swan attended another visit on February 1st, accompanied by Matt Shuman, City Engineer, and Andrew Copelotti, from Boylston Properties. They spoke in person about the specifics of what needed to be take care of. She informed Copelotti he would need to ask for an extension on the Order of Conditions. He would file the application with the Conservation Office in time to get on an upcoming agenda, in a timely fashion. When she walked the site on February 15th, she noted considerable improvement.

6. Acceptance of Minutes- Review and Acceptance of Minutes from the February 1, 2023, Conservation Commission. Rose requested members wait until the April meeting to review and vote on the minutes. The minutes will be reviewed and voted on during the April 12, 2023, Conservation Commission meeting.

Motion: Bering made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 pm. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Roll Call: A roll call was taken, and all agreed to adjourn the meeting.