



TOWN OF WATERTOWN
Conservation Commission
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MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, October 6, 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: Steve Conte, Mike Gove, Mike Cunningham, Patrick Garner, Richard Nylon, Counsellor Angie Kounellis, Mickey Marcus, Louisa Coldwell, Harbaczski

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

Martin chaired the meeting.

- 1. Informational briefing-** MWRA maintenance project to rehabilitate wastewater siphon structures in Watertown

The proposal is located to take place on the banks of the Charles River. It is maintenance and repair and exempt under the Wetlands Protection Act 22A which stipulates the right to maintain wastewater infrastructure while adhering to best management practices.

The consultant was Kleinfelder.

Mike Cunningham showed a locus map that was attached to the letter he submitted to the Conservation Commission. The map focused on the area off Greenough Boulevard and the parking lot northwest near Home Depot for the purposes of showing where the wastewater syphoning of the headhouse for maintenance was located.

The benefits of the proposal are for flood protection, site access improvement and to improve structure of surfaces. Cunningham stated there is no intention to enlarge the site in any way and they will replace the concrete slab on top of the unit with a more watertight seal.

They have coordinated with DCR closely about their requirements for recreation taking place in the vicinity of the work being proposed. There are no widespread improvements indicated but there is some overgrowth of vegetation that will be cleared to gain access to the structure and the grades will be left the way they are now.

Gove explained the work is planned to take place next year in the spring/summer season and reaffirmed the grades will be left in the same condition.

Martin mentioned the contractor will have to do flow bypassing in the structure while they work.

Fairbairn asked if Schwab could check in with them when the project is starting up so she can report back to the Conservation Commission. They will contact Schwab for a site visit.

Counsellor Kounellis said she wanted to thank MWRA for the informational session. She said where they are making impacts on Watertown and Greenough Boulevard, they should consider contacting DPW. Gove said they have been working with DCR mainly for the recreation schedule, but they would let DPW know about it too.

2. Abbreviated Notice of Intent- 480 Pleasant Street- for installation of electric vehicle charging stations in existing parking lot

Steve Conte appeared to review the project proposal within the 200-foot Riverfront area and the FEMA flood plain. The plan calls for underground digging to run cable through to a new electric vehicle station that will sit on a concrete slab.

Rose inquired about the potential for stockpiling of soil and cautioned if they did stockpile to please cover it. O'Connell echoed Rose's concern. She asked about hydraulic fluid from the transformer and was told it is stored inside the compartment. Fairbairn echoed all his colleagues' comments.

Motion: Rose made a motion to close the hearing and approve the project. O'Connell seconded the motion.

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

- 3. Public Hearing (continued from previous meeting)- Notice of Intent- 0 Arlington St (Williams Pond Parcel)** - to construct a 2-story commercial building and parking lot on property known as the Williams Pond parcel; Max Hatziliades, Applicant and Owner.

Marcus was present to discuss his client's proposal with the Conservation Commission.

Martin said that this has been going on since May and the Commission would like to see the inquiries made by Patrick Garner answered fully.

Marcus explained that on June 24, 2021, there was a site walk with the architects and engineers and members of the CC and at that time comments were made about the project and the site. Marcus said he had some updates on those comments for tonight.

He explained that Hatziliades wants this building for his importing business, and to satisfy some of the comments at the site walk, he has shifted the building and removed the driveway and reduced the wetland impacts from 4,215 to 2,126 square feet. They have reduced the permeable asphalt and all stormwater will be infiltrated to treat all water from Elm St. There is now an option for a walking trail that would be considered open space on the site too. The driving force behind this project now is to remediate PCBs, creating a major ecological benefit to the town under redevelopment and remediation. Marcus said they would like to request a continuance to the November 3, 2021, meeting to work with the outstanding issues that need to be resolved with the architects.

Martin clarified the project is in the 50 foot no build zone. Rose commented the building is still large and said she was perplexed as to why if it was for an import business are there so many parking spaces in the corridor. Rose also said that they saw snow removal becoming a large issue on the site and mentioned the trends of heavier precipitation with climate change to be concerned about and this would mean a loss of flood storage. As to the offering of the open space, Rose asked if they would offer a Conservation Restriction to the Town? Marcus said they would discuss and explore how that would work.

Members of the Commission referred to Garner's third-party report which highlighted the invasive species on the site, and they pointed out this would need ongoing maintenance and care over many years. Rose said she would want DPW to weigh in on that and also the Town Engineer who could comment on velocity and the mixture of sediment and discharge from their experience.

Marcus said he would like to go back to the architects and get more information about the stormceptors.

O'Connell said she still did not believe the project met either the performance standards of redevelopment under the Wetlands Protection Act or those of the Watertown wetlands ordinance. She urged Marcus not to get involved in details of the project, when the proposal met none of the performance standards at this time.

Garner spoke that the riverfront filing question would need to be addressed.

Bering said he agreed with his colleagues' comments, as did Fairbairn, who clarified that the Conservation Commission was charged with protecting the wetlands and that was what they were trying to do.

Public Comments

Counsellor Angie Kounellis said she was not an authority on conservation, but she was a resident and member of the neighborhood. This building would be setting a precedent, as echoed by Rose, and this is the proposal of a new building, not a redevelopment that will have ongoing maintenance concerns to the East End of Watertown. She closed by stating the members of the Conservation Commission were doing a fine job at reviewing this proposal.

Schwab had no comments to add.

Martin said the next meeting is taking place on November 3, 2021.

Motion: Bering made a motion to continue the hearing to the November 3, 2021, meeting. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Roll Call: a unanimous roll call was reached agreeing to continue the hearing to November 3, 2021.

Martin asked for responses to Garner's comments by the next meeting.

4. Agent Report

- a. CPA -Martin reported that he took the opportunity to submit an eligibility form for CPA funding on behalf of the Conservation Commission. He worked with Steve Magoon and put together an eligibility form as a place holder to see if they would be eligible for funding which would be discussed in an executive session. The Conservation Commission and Planning Department partnered to accomplish the application in time for the deadline. Bering asked to see the application and O'Connell said she had a copy she could share with him.
- b. Climate and Energy Plan- Schwab explained that comments are still being allowed in from the public for consideration on the high-level list of goals, strategies and actions until Friday of this week. There will be much more detail going into some sections of the plan where some groups had more material starting off than other groups. The details are all still being crafted at this point. A stakeholder advisory meeting is being held on October 28 which will be based on work being doing in the groups and the comments collected by the public. The plan is being management by Kim Lundgren of Kim Lundgren Associates, (KLA).
- c. Pollinator update- O'Connell reported that Linda Relson had collaborated with Bob DiRico at DPW for designing and coordination of a pollinator garden at Filippello Park. This garden was designed to attract butterflies, caterpillars, and birds due to its location in a family-oriented park near the playground and the splashpad. O'Connell attended the planting on September 25, 2021, right before the Faire on the Square. She reported she took a Blue Bike from Filippello Park and rode it over to the Faire on the Square on the bike path and thoroughly enjoyed being able to hop on a bike to get to her next destination for the day in a safe and enjoyable way.
- d. Ongoing Orders of Conditions-Schwab advised the Commission that there needs to be a water line replaced in the development of the Old Miller Ale House project. Andrew Copelotti is overseeing the process. As maintenance it is exempt from jurisdiction under the Wetlands Protection Act, and it is being done at the request of the Department of Public Works. Permitting has been confirmed by Mass. DEP.
- e. Arsenal Park- Schwab reported there has been no recent update on Arsenal Park Development. Vegetation has gone in. She will contact CDM Smith for an additional update by the next meeting taking place on November 3, 2021.
- f. Update on Mount Auburn Cemetery vernal pool project- Fairbairn updated members of the Commission that in light of the retirement of David Barnett, and the incoming of new management of the cemetery, it has been decided to let the new incoming manager get settled into their new position, and then they can take up this subject at a later time. In the meantime, Schwab will have a

conversation with Mass DEP to determine if permitting should be a requirement or if the project is exempt.

- g. Faire on the Square: Martin reported on the day in general and the outcome of the nature trivia contest. There were at least 5 or 6 winners, and 3 people got all the answers to the quiz correct. Rose reported there were a lot of connections made at the Faire that will hopefully lead to possible new members for Commission vacancies, and some residents who were interested in future opportunities to volunteer for special events and stewardship.

5. Minutes-review and approve minutes from September 1, 2021, meeting

Motion: Fairbairn made a motion to accept the minutes with discussed modifications from the September 1, 2021, meeting. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Roll Call: A unanimous roll call was reached accepting the minutes of the September 1, 2021, meeting.

Motion: Fairbairn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM. Rose seconded the motion.

Roll Call: A unanimous roll call was reached agreeing to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM.