



CITY OF WATERTOWN

Conservation Commission
Administration Building
149 Main Street
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

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

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

MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, July 12, 2023, 7:00 PM, Remote Meeting on Zoom

Conservation Commission Members Present: Leo G. Martin, Maria Rose, Charles C. Bering, Darya Mattes, Rachel Danford, and Jamie O'Connell.

Absent: N/A

Also Present: Richard Nylen, Rebecca Bachand, Patrick Fairbairn, Polina Safran, Angie Kounelis, Shahar Colt, Corey Lin, Bill Dillon, Patrick Oates, Nancy Hammet, and City Councilor Nicole Gardner

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

Rose chaired the meeting.

1. Public Hearing: Notice of Intent (Continued to July 12, 2023) -- located off 0 Arlington Street, between 71 Arlington Street and 15 Arlington Street (DEP #: 321-0186) - construction of 41,289 square feet (sf) of pervious parking area on the north side of Sawins Pond, extending from the existing paved parking lot, 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.

Chip Nylen was present to review the outstanding issues for the proposed work in the 50-foot No Build Zone and the 150-foot Buffer Zone. Nylen reported that since the last meeting, he compared this project to 99 Coolidge Avenue project as a precedent for total square feet of impervious surfaces. Additionally, the applicant have considered the letter from Patrick Garner dated July 10th. In the revised plans, there was a 50% reduction of

impervious surfaces from 6,527 square feet to 3,455 square feet and an increase in square footage of plantings from 15,337 square feet to 18,300 square feet. Nylen noted that they do not have a planting plan at this point to match the landscape plans. Currently, they are working through stormwater comments. Rose commented that the details from 99 Coolidge Avenue should be shared with Nylen.

O'Connell commented that the updates were a step in the right direction but noted that the parking lot would still encroach into the 50-foot No Build Zone. She asked if the parking area by the Arlington Street entrance could be reduced to just a travel lane, thereby removing the parking lot from the No Build Zone. Rose asked if they could consider angled parking. Martin said he agreed with O'Connell and requested that they find a way to meet the goal of the project without encroaching on the 50 foot No Build Zone and stay consistent with the intent of the Watertown Wetland Ordinance. Bering agreed with O'Connell. Mattes agreed with O'Connell and urged the applicant to minimize impacts. Rose stated that the changes were big improvements. Rose explained that she still did not feel satisfied that permeable paving would not make things worse on the site. She wondered if the Conservation Commission should get a peer review on the applicant's conclusion permeable pavement would not cause contaminants in the soil to migrate due to increased infiltration.

Public Comments:

Angie Kounelis was present and stated that she said she emailed Steve Magoon regarding the parking lot. She asked if this was going to be a parking lot where people exchanged money for parking and what was the purpose of the parking lot. She said curb cuts are not "allowable by right," and that they need authorization from the City. Martin explained the topic raised by Kounelis was outside Conservation Commission jurisdiction and would be addressed when the applicant applies for a permit from planning and zoning.

Patrick Fairbairn, former long-time member of the Conservation Commission was present. He mention that this is another last available open space and inquired if the Conservation Commission could make an offer in public interest for the City to buy this parcel. Rose cautioned that the Conservation Commission is not in a position to speak on behalf of the City.

Nylen stated he was optimistic and would put together all requested material into a packet for the Commissioners to review at the next meeting.

Motion: Bering made a motion to continue the public meeting until the September 6, 2023, meeting. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members agreed with the motion made by Bering.

2. Public Hearing: Request for Extension of Order of Conditions – 330-350 Pleasant Street (MA DEP #: 321-0163) - To address plantings on the site needing replacement. Rebecca Bachand, Representative.

Rebecca Bachand was present to review the conditions of the site at 330-350 Pleasant Street. Bachand explained that the building was finished, and the Wetland Permit was set to expire in July. Bachand recently met with Swan for a site visit to review the mitigation plantings located within the 200-foot Riverfront area. The team sought an extension of the Order of Conditions to address the plantings.

Bachand discussed the planting plan (L1.1) with the Commissioners and stated that there were issues that affected the establishment period due to combination of shade and drought. Swan had no comments to add about the site visit.

O'Connell asked if the number of plantings coming in as replacements are comparable to what was established in the Order of Condition. Bachand said she matched quantity as closely as possible and noted that there is a weed control issue they are trying to settle before they can get more detailed. O'Connell was interested in the balance of what did not take. Rose said she was interested in the tree/shrub balance. Bachand said that for now, she was here for an extension and was certain they could get everything sorted out to the Commission's satisfaction. Rose asked for a color version of the planting plan to supplement the black and white copy they had received in the meeting packets. Bachand said she would provide them to Swan.

Motion: Martin made a motion to extend the Order of Conditions for another three years. Mattes seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members voiced their agreement with the motion made by Martin.

3. Informational Update: Whitney Hill Trail Work with SCA

Whitney Hill Trail Work was postponed due to unforeseen circumstances with Student Conservation Association (SCA). Rose explained that the work at Whitney Hill would be postponed until 2024 and that some notices should be posted at the site to let abutters know about the changes.

4. Informational Update: Oates family request for tree planting in Arsenal Park in honor of Maureen Oates

Patrick Oates was in attendance as the representative for the family of Maureen Oates, who served on the Watertown Conservation Commission in the 1970's when care and custody of Arsenal Park was given to the Commission, per town ordinance. He explained that Mrs. Oates was an active environmental educator in addition to being a commission member.

Oates explained that the Oates family would like to work with the Conservation Commission for an opportunity within Arsenal Park to honor Maureen's service to the environment in Watertown. Oates talked with Swan about ideas such as educational signage in different areas of the Park.

Rose suggested that story boards with an ecological theme might be an option if Steve Magoon is open to the idea. Swan attended a site visit with the Oates family to begin discussions about ideas they had to honor Oates's service. O'Connell suggested there may be some options through CPA to pay for some of the cost of tree planting and signage installation at Arsenal Park as enhancements that would incorporate these ideas. O'Connell suggested the Oates family look at the plans for Phase B of Arsenal Park renovations and think about how their ideas would fit into the plans. Councilor Gardner was present and said Friends of Bees, Charles River Pollinators, Peace, Justice and the Environment, and the Public Arts and Culture Committee may be interested in getting involved. Swan will start reaching out to various groups to schedule some future meetings.

5. Agent Report:

- A. DCR Vegetation Management (MA DEP #:321-0185) - Swan announced that the DCR was hosting a volunteer event the upcoming Saturday to do some clean-up of the vegetation.
- B. 23 Elm Street (MA DEP #: 321-0172) - Swan reported that she has been in contact with the project team at 23 Elm Street who reported they need to relocate the transformer from Elm Street to Arlington Street and to bury the lines. She confirmed this is considered a modification and not a change to the plans.
- C. 99 Coolidge Avenue (MA DEP #: 321-0175) – Swan shared that the applicants requested to have the headwall to be extended 10-12 feet (that is within the City's ROW) for improvement of new grading and prevent erosion around the end of the headwall. This is considered as a minor modification. The DPW was in favor of the extension.
- D. DCR Riverside Park (MA DEP #: 321-0133) - Swan spoke to Seth Whitcomb about the plantings and they will plan to remove the siltation fences and keep the erosion socks to reduce erosion to the river while the new grading stabilize.

6. CPC Update:

O'Connell reported that Lanae Handy, CPC Coordinator has been holding clinic hours instead of holding workshops this year during specific times. The clinic hours had been scheduled in June for 6/2, 6/7, 6/21, and in July on 7/6, 7/10, and 7/12. O'Connell reported that project eligibility forms are due on July 14th and from a regulatory perspective, if a project is fundable, the applicants will be notified by July 26th.

7. Acceptance of Minutes:

Review and acceptance of Minutes from June 7, 2023, Conservation Commission meeting.

Motion: Bering made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted. Danford seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members accepted the motion to accept the minutes for the June 7, 2023, meeting.