



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

Leo Martin, Chairperson
Marylouise Pallotta McDermott, Member
Charles C. Bering, Member
Patrick W. Fairbairn, Member
Maria P. Rose Member
Jamie O'Connell, Member

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MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, October 2, 2019, 7:00 PM in the Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room

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

Absent: Marylouise Pallotta McDermott

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

1. CPA Update

Rose reported that after the qualifications review and in person interviews, the CPC selected JM Goldson, who will prepare and help execute a community engagement plan, and also develop the Community Preservation Plan and help to implement that as well.

Rose explained that developing a CPA Plan is required by state statute prior to gaining access to the CPA funds for allowable projects. She informed the CC that a special meeting has been scheduled for Monday October 7th at 6 PM in Town Hall, where the scope of services and budget proposed by JM Goldson will be discussed.

2. Minutes- July 17, 2019 and September 11, 2019

After a brief discussion and review, the following two motions were made.

Motion: A motion was made by Bering to adopt the minutes from the July 17, 2019 meeting. Rose seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached accepting the minutes from July 17, 2019.

Motion: A motion was made by Bering accepting the minutes from the September 11, 2019 meeting. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was made accepting the minutes from the September 11, 2019 meeting.

3. **Commission Discussion-** the Town's annual Faire on the Square was held on September 28, 2019. For the second year in a row, the Conservation Commission made a significant appearance at the faire to meet the residents and discuss matters of conversation, as well as to share and disseminate information regarding conservation initiatives in the Town.

A contest that had been developed by Martin was held inviting participants to name all the ponds located throughout the Town. While discussing the faire, members of the commission offered congratulations to all the contest winners whose names were read off into the record of the meeting. The winners are to receive their choice of a *National Audubon's Field Guide to New England*, or in the alternative Rose offered one copy of *The Charles River Canoe and Kayak Guide* to any individual who had a preference. The winner's names were Maxine Barrios, Kate Coyne, Michael Schade, Dave Harrison, and Peter DelTredici. Martin, who organized the contest, was thanked for his work.

Members of the commission maintained a sign in sheet at the faire inviting visitors to leave their name and contact information and to jot down areas they were interested in learning more about or volunteering for. Some expressed interest in applying for membership on the commission, and some were interested in volunteering for future events sponsored by the Commission such as trail stewarding, and other opportunities that may become available in the future. Members of the board briefly discussed the potential of assembling a panel of Associate Members of the Conservation Commission who could potentially stand in for members of the board when needed.

For the second year in a row Fairbairn organized a questionnaire for visitors at the faire to rate in the order of importance areas the commission should focus their time and attention on. A summary report of the questionnaire along with the rating system by Fairbairn can be viewed below.

Data from the Faire on the Square returns
Fifteen-odd submissions by the public- 11 qualified for standardized calculation.

Assigning of a weight of 5 points to the items ranked first, 4 points to those ranked second, and so on down to 1 point for the fifth-ranked items selected by each respondent. All twelve items received at least one top-five ranking. Items ranged in points scored from a high of 33 down to 2. The five top-ranked items thus calculated are the following.

1. Climate Change Preparedness- **33 Points**
2. Acquisition of Public Open Space- **28 Points**

3. Anti-pollution advocacy (e.g. air, water, soil, sound, light)- **25 Points**
4. Storm water management (e.g. promotion of rain gardens, on site ground water recharge)- **14 Points**
5. Animal Management (e.g. habitat improvements for fox/weasel/coyote; bees/butterflies; Charles River Fishery)- **13 Points**

During the discussion on the questionnaire Fairbairn offered statistics that were collected the previous year during a Conservation Commission meeting as a comparison.

From the self-assigned questionnaire sample at last year's CC meeting, which included not only our six CC members but also two members of the attending audience, the following result was obtained.

1. Acquisition of Public Open Space- **30 Points**
2. Climate Change Preparation- **13 Points**
3. Storm water management (e.g. promotions of rain gardens, on-site groundwater, recharge- **13 Points**
4. Collaborative Education programs (e.g. scenic quality, relationship between natural and built environment)- **12 Points**
5. Assessment and promotion of landscape value (e.g. scenic quality, relationship between natural and built environment)- **10 Points**

Members of the Commission discussed the possibility of offering the questionnaire to residents of the Town on a wider scale, such as sending out a link to the questionnaire on Notify Me to all Conservation Commission subscribers. They discussed asking Charlie Breitrose, a local reporter, if he would be willing to publish it in the media for them.

4. Agent Report

a. Status of new Conservation Commission member

Martin reported that Egan, Bering and Fairbairn had been interviewed by the sub-committee. Bering and Fairbairn have already been cleared to serve another term and Egan should be cleared to attend the next meeting as a full member after being sworn in by John Flynn, the Town's Clerk.

Martin reported there were a number of individuals who signed the attendance sheet at Faire on the Square who were interested in serving on the commission. Fairbairn said he felt there should be some form of Associate Membership to assist the members with tasks such as research, or for filling in during member absence. Rose mentioned that Newton uses associate members as a backup, and she volunteered to send the Newton Wetland Ordinance so

Watertown could consider adding a similar type of membership to increase the stability and power of the commission in the future.

b. Whitney Hill Signage Update

Schwab reported that she had spoken to Magoon about choosing a kiosk for the Whitney Hill Park. She circulated a catalog for members to review and informed them they could select a style for two kiosks. Schwab said she would send around a digital version of the models for them and Martin said the group was welcome to vote on their selection next month when he would be absent. Rose suggested Martin could choose on behalf of the commission if he would like to. Members left it up to Fairbairn, Martin and Schwab to make the decision.

c. MVP Program Update

Schwab reported the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program kicked off with consultants Kim Lundgren and Angie Cleveland from Kim Lundgren Associates (KLA). She explained the program should be wrapped up by May so the Town will be eligible to apply for MVP action grant money. Each municipality that has completed the MVP process is invited to apply for grant money for items eligible under the MVP Program.

Schwab said there will be two back to back workshops with *Key Stakeholders* who would be invited by the town to participate in reviewing the data and baseline analysis done by the consultants and generating ideas about what actions the town could take to address specific vulnerabilities. Schwab said that there will be one single meeting for residents in January 2020 to come and hear a summary of the work done by KLA and the Stakeholders in the December workshops.

O'Connell stated it was crucial for interested parties to show up at the meetings as key stakeholders to speak up about the issues they want looked at. She said that the town has some unique vulnerabilities with flooding and also sites with hazardous waste conditions. She pointed out that once the Town is in the action grant phase of the process, no new initiatives may be added. She also pointed out that projects need to be completed within one year to meet the requirements of the program.

Martin told the group that KLA was a great consultant. Fairbairn asked if it would be helpful to have a collective voice in the planning phase and he was urged to attend the workshops where he could speak on the issues he wanted the Town to pursue. Schwab said the Planning Department was overseeing the process and she would act as the project manager representing the Conservation Commission on the core team working with KLA.

d. Update on Outstanding Orders of Conditions

- Status of Arsenal Park

Martin and Schwab talked about how the MOU with the developer had fallen apart. They reported that the Town is now creating a public bidding process for Phase I and the Town Manager is hopeful the bidding process will be complete by the close of 2019. Martin said the CC may have to amend the entire Order of Conditions to go forward with the whole park as opposed to just Phase 1.

- 330 Pleasant St.

Schwab reported that the electrical transformer for this project was placed into a sub-optimal location near the river and the Town worked with the contractors who agreed to use a secondary containment system with a clay bottom and crushed stone trench. Hayward is expected to work with the Landscape Architect on the site plan for the connections between the site and the river.

- Arsenal Yards

Schwab reported that at some point there had been an issue with soils being stored somewhere they should not have been. Martin said that it was located near the Home Depot Parking Lot. Schwab agreed she would keep an eye on it.

Motion: Bering made a motion at 8:20 to adjourn the meeting. Rose seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to adjourn the meeting.