

Minutes
Watertown Conservation Commission
Lower Hearing Room
Wednesday, July 21, 2010
7:30p.m.
Adopted September 15, 2010

Conservation Commission Members Present: Pallotta McDermott, Taverna, Martin, Rose, Fairbairn, Bering, Sadkowski

Staff Present: Hayward, Collins

Members of the Public Present: See Sign-In Form

Pallotta McDermott informed that the Open Meeting Law had been updated as of July 1, 2010. She distributed a handout and highlighted the following main Open Meeting Law changes: that members must avoid discussing issues before the CC by email; that the Public Notices are to be posted visibly 24/7; and that the 48 hour posting exclude Saturday and Sunday.

1. Public Hearing – RDA-580 Mt. Auburn, Vernal Pool Habitat Vegetation Improvements, Mt. Auburn Cemetery, owner applicant

Pallotta McDermott noted that the RDA was not proposing any alteration. It was, rather, an enhancement. She stated that re-vegetation was an eligible activity and that it would not disturb the existing wildlife.

Dennis Collins, representative of the Mt. Auburn Cemetery, reported that the work was scheduled for the Fall in late September through October. The planting schedule will not disrupt the wildlife's schedule. The proposed work will take place along the edge of the pool, not in the pool. The vegetation will be on the existing bald spots. He said that the plantings will supplement and not replace the existing vegetation.

Fairbairn inquired how was the perimeter defined. Collins replied that they used the average low water mark. He noted that in March the watermark got above the path.

Collins mentioned that all the plantings will be done by hand. The plants will be provided by a nursery in Amherst, MA who specializes in these plantings. All the plants are native species that are well adapted to the site. He noted that in the past 10 years of planting experience Mt. Auburn has developed a record of successful plants.

Fairbairn inquired if a plant is not successful, will they replant or find another plant species. Collins responded that something will be selected from the list of successful plants. The goal, he indicated, is protecting the young in their early development stages.

Sadkowski informed that Cardinal Flower is poisonous to dogs and cats, and questioned whether an alternative had been considered. Barnett and Collins noted that dogs do have access to the cemetery with its large plant inventory and they have no record of animal poisoning.

Collins informed that they will be keeping records at specific points in time of the introduction of eggs and the migration of adults within the 150 acre cemetery grounds.

Note: Rose moved that a negative determination be assigned under #2 for the Vernal Pool Vegetation Improvements. Bering seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Faibairn recused himself.

2. Public Hearing –RDA–580 Mt. Auburn, Willow Pond Filtration System, Mt. Auburn Cemetery, owner/applicant

Dennis Collins informed that the project proposes a filtration system at Willow Pond a 37,000 square foot man made pond, built in 1929. He noted that the present system works except in extreme rain events. The proposed work includes cleaning the sediment, rebuilding the sump, installing 1200 new aquatic plants to improve the water quality. Dave Barnett stated that the pond has brown algae but is otherwise healthy. Collins said that the plantings will be at a higher location about 380 square feet within the exiting emerging shelf. He noted that the plant zone will be increased by 200sq’.

Pallotta inquired if they were working within the resource area. Collins replied that all the work would be done by hand.

Sadkowski noted that there was dredging involved and he wondered how they were going to dewater the area. Collins responded that they propose removing the sediment. Sadkowski indicated that the proposed design was missing scour protection. Collins said that that issue is limited to the initiation of the project, but once the plants are established it won’t be a problem.

Sadkowski had not ever seen a project placing logs perpendicular to the flow. He inquired if they had any experience with coir bio-logs. Collins responded that he didn’t consider the pond as flowing except in extreme cases. Sadkowski wasn’t sure that the solution proposed will give them the protection they were looking for. Collins reported that New England Environmental was their consultants who they trust with this situation.

Rose noted that the logs do not last. She was concerned with plant die-off in the winter and spring. Barnett informed that they have experience with successful plant establishment with logs above water level. Rose liked the concept of the plants acting as filtration.

Hayward stated that the project was working in the resource area. He recommended that a filed NOI would be better for the CC and Mt. Auburn.

Fairbairn stated that New England Environmental has a good reputation for this kind of work. What they are proposing is not experimental, he said, but an established technique.

Barnett suggested that the consultant could attend a future meeting to answer CC questions.

Bering asked when the project was scheduled. Barnett said the Fall. Collins said that late summer is the best time for plants to be established. Barnett noted that there is more failure in spring plantings.

Martin inquired about the maintenance plan for the proposal.

Rose wondered if this project could be attached to an existing NOI for the dredging. Sadkowski felt details in the plan were missing. Barnett wanted to report back the CC determination to go to funders.

Pallotta wanted it done correctly with a filing of a NOI.

Rose wanted more engineering information in a NOI especially since the previous NOI failed.

Martin proposed installing the plants now and have the dredging done later after the NOI is filed. Hayward indicated that there was dredging with the proposed planting.

Sadkowski suggested a turbidity curtain.

Martin suggested that an NOI have a Maintenance Plan.

Pallotta McDermott suggested looking at the previous OOC.

Rose noted that the existing sump pump was not shown in the plans.

Note: Martin moved that the item be continued to allow the consultant to be present to answer questions. Rose seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Minutes of April, May and June 2010 -approved.

5. Old Business

| Item | Update status |
|---------------------|--|
| Whitney Hill Report | Agreement with Everett Brooks to survey Whitney Hill signed. The project to take three weeks – first week for research, two weeks for site work. |

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| Recycling Center/Filippello Park | Pallotta McDermott has not received response to her letter to Mee. |
| Storm Water Advisory Commission | Rose reported that progress on draft ordinances is underway. |
| Rivers Protection Act | Hayward reported that there is a new Assessor. He will meet to discuss updating the RPA areas on the Town's GIS map. |
| GSA | Data sampling results available. Copy sent to Anne Marie Desmarais. Results will be presented on 12/11/10. Desmarais to be in attendance. |
| EOEA Grant | No update. |
| Sawins Pond | Ask Gardner to continue and complete the report for submission to CC. |
| Stanley Ave. | Russo's trailers still park in area |
| Arsenal Park | Linden scheduled for removal. Copper Beech to be protected during take down. |

6. New Business

CC Rules and Regulations

There was a discussion about the No Build Zone in the regulations and which version was adopted. CC requested that staff check with Flynn about the Rules and Regulations version filed, in particular Page 2, Item #3.

Meeting adjourned at 9:31 pm.

