

Minutes
Watertown Conservation Commission
Lower Hearing Room
Wednesday, March 3, 2010
7:30p.m.
Adopted on May 5, 2010

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

Staff Present: Hayward, Collins, Magoon

Members of the Public Present: See Sign-In Form

1. Public Hearing – 71 Arlington Street, Construction of a parking lot adjacent to Sawins Pond. Owner applicant: Maximos Hatziliades.

Pallotta McDermott read a letter from William York, representative for the applicant, requesting a continuance to the April 7, 2010 meeting.

Vote: Taverna moved to continue the Public Hearing to the April 7, 2010. Fairbairn seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2. Public Hearing – Request for Determination of Applicability –North Beacon Street, to build and install a staircase for accessibility and erosion mitigation downstream of the Watertown Yacht Club, Department of Conservation and Recreation, owner; Charles River Conservancy, applicant.

John Broderick, Volunteer Coordinator for the Charles River Conservancy, reported that engineering students from Northeastern were to design the staircase project. He reported that Richard Scott signed and affirmed that DCR was the owner of the project. He informed that the area was severely eroded and that a set of stairs was proposed to mitigate the erosion, protect the river and improve the aesthetics. He noted that the students and the CRC had experience in installing three other bridges which received negative determinations from their respective CCs.

Broderick said that the stairs would end 38' from the river and that the end result would improve the existing conditions.

Pallotta McDermott noted that the CC was conscientious and conservative about issuing negative findings to RDAs.

Ryan White and Darren White, engineering students from Northeastern, presented the proposed project noting that the walkway's exiting conditions were eroded with a 3'

drop. They reported that people could not walk on the path and that tree roots were exposed from the erosion. They indicated that the proposal is for a 52' long staircase, of 20 steps of varying tread sizes, 5 stairs with 1' treads, 10 with 2' treads and 5 with 4' treads. The fill will use existing granite blocks from North Beacon Street and clean dirt. The trail/tread pack will be of stone ash. The area will be loamed and seeded. A gravel drainage swale will be installed before the seed takes. All materials used will be pervious. Efforts will be made to protect roots and trees.

Fairbairn questioned whether the erosion was a hydrology problem or pedestrian usage one. He questioned whether a biological alternative existed. Fairbairn wondered if the proposed path and location was the best and most effective solution.

White responded that the erosion problem was both a hydrological and pedestrian user one.

Broderick noted that the staircase is a good solution. Presently there are a lot of "cow paths" created for access which increase erosion. He added that once the staircase is installed, plantings would be placed that would deter pedestrians' access outside the staircase area. Pallotta McDermott concurred that it was a good location for the staircase.

Bering questioned whether the staircase was permeable. He felt that the erosion comes from runoff draining from the street.

White responded that the materials proposed were permeable – granite, dirt, and stone ash.

Bering question where the runoff would go and if it would be absorbed. White felt that with the introduced materials and the proposed loam and seed, the situation would be improved.

Richard Scott, DCR Charles River District Manager, felt that doing nothing will increase the problem. He thought that the stairs would act as water bars and stop the erosion. He described that the project would channel the water to the planted area where the water would be absorbed. With time the water absorption will follow new paths created by the water further away from the stairs. He added that he would use a hot box to fix the pot holes and the sidewalks.

Scott noted that DCR will supply the materials and would provide samples for Hayward. The materials come from New England Nursery. They will be using two grades of stone dust similar to the paths at the Fenway. He added that if this bridge is similar to the Eliot Bridge staircase it will be an excellent solution to the erosion and pedestrian access controls. He indicated that poison ivy and poison oak prevent access as well.

Taverna inquired how the material would arrive at the site. White informed that all the work will be done by hand. He thought that the project could be done in a day with 20 volunteers.

Scott informed that the amount of stone dust delivered would be limited to what could be installed in a day. There will be no stockpiling.

Rose questioned how a negative determination could be provided when the project is within 200' river protection area. In fact, the project is within 50'.

Hayward noted that the project was an improvement of the resource done manually by volunteers and that a negative determination was justified.

Hayward asked about the timeline of the project. White felt it could be done in three weeks in March and April.

Rose suggested that the silt fence be keyed into the plans. Hayward informed that he would check all the erosion control measures before work is done.

Vote: Rose moved to determine a negative finding with conditions for the Request for Applicability for the installation of a staircase on North Beacon Street. Taverna seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Hayward requested the Broderick keep him informed throughout the project.

3. Informational – Charles River Maintenance Plan Report, Richard Scott, Charles River District Manager, DCR

Scott reported that in March the main project will be the bridge staircase.

He said that the past winter was a hard winter due to the windy nature of the storms which was hard on the trees.

He reported that the area around Perkins School was mowed and invasives were cut back to help establish a meadow. He said that they have been chipping and using the chips on site.

He reported that Herb Nolan of the Solomon Fund has been very active in negotiating to get the Master Plan implemented.

He informed that the Healthy Heart Trail has been installed and is successful in promoting health and appreciation of the parkland.

He reported that the restoration and rededication of the Monument to the Founders of Watertown increased attention to the monument and the Charles River park. Pallotta McDermott inquired about the status of the Watertown Riverfront Park Scott responded that Nolan has been speaking with Commissioner Richard Sullivan to get the park done in phases.

Pallotta McDermott inquired about the basketball area. Scott noted it was not in the Master Plan.

Scott has avoided layoffs and maintained level staffing through adoption of creative initiatives such as cutting back the season for seasonal employees.

Scott stated that sweepers would be out shortly to clean the streets and that catch basins are being cleaned in a few weeks.

He announced that April 24 is the “Spring Clean Up Day.”

Hayward inquired about the status of the Nonantum Road Project. Scott responded that stimulus funds is funding the project. According to Scott, A. R. Belli, a good and reputable contractor, was awarded the bid which came in under budget estimates. Daly Field will be the staging area for the project.

Magoon reported that the Riverfront Parkway project funding request was submitted jointly by DCR and the Town.

Magoon stated that the Bike and Pedestrian Path was going out to bid. The project is managed by Dan Driscoll.

4. Minutes of February 2010-Approved.

5. Old Business

Item	Update status
Whitney Hill Report	Manager to forward CC delineation request to Town Council. Magoon stated that next step is for CC to hire a surveyor.
Recycling Center/Filippello Park	Relocation of the recycling center is under consideration.
Storm Water Advisory Commission	Rose reported that SWAC is working on drafting ordinances and other initiatives. Magoon indicated that CC support will be sought during the Ordinance approval

	process.
Rivers Protection Act	Hayward working with Assessor to update the RPA areas on the Town's GIS map.
GSA	On 3/2/10 a stakeholders meeting was held. Funding is available and sampling will be undertaken. The outcome is for passive wetlands recreation usage. Sampling to be done in May, Response to be done in June/July. Demarais was present at meeting and will craft the CC response. Hayward noted that the site is an attractive nuisance. Hayward and Pallotta McDermott to write a letter to Brown and Kerry to secure/remove the buildings. Photo documentation of before and after of nuisance access occurrences. Bering to bring up issue to Markey.
EOEA Grant	No update.
Sawins Pond	Owner's engineer is to provide information to Patrick Garner so he can write the report. Report to be completed with owner's response by CC's April meeting.
UPS	Site cleaned up to satisfaction. Owner to have clean up crew check site quarterly.
Stanley Ave.	Scott sent a letter (12.4.09) to the owner regarding site violations and requesting a response within 30 days. Bering noted that the letter did not id the violation affect on Walkers Pond. Pallotta McDermott will discuss the matter with Hayward.
Arsenal Park	Hayward hopes to negotiate park arbor care through donation from Mass Arborist Association. The \$12K for Arsenal Park improvements will be limited to infrastructure items.

6. Conditions – RDA – North Beacon Staircase

Rose inquired which box was going to be checked off on the RDA WPA Form 2. Pallotta McDermott identified the present site conditions as a danger. Rose insisted that rules must be followed. She felt there was no appropriate box to check off. Hayward responded that the project was a necessary maintenance improvement for the path and

that the appropriate project exemption category would be selected. Rose concurred that box 5 should be selected.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12pm.