

Minutes
Watertown Conservation Commission
Lower Hearing Room
Wednesday, June 6, 2012
7:30p.m.
Adopted September 5, 2012

Conservation Commission Members Present: Marylouise Pallotta McDermott, Patrick Fairbairn, Leo Martin, Charles Bering, Michelle Gauvin, Maria Rose

Conservation Commission Member Absent: Lou Taverna

Staff Present: Christopher J. Hayward, Daphne M. Collins

Members of the Public Present: See Sign-In Form

Pallotta-McDermott chaired.

1) Public Hearing – NOI - 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA DEP321-0151/WWO-12-3 to install boardwalks and other access amenities and wetland and buffer zone plantings to an existing pond on the Perkins campus. Applicant/Owner: Perkins School for Blind.

Brenda Nicholas, Perkins School for the Blind staff, agreed to provide Pallotta-McDermott a vintage photo of the Perkins pond.

Pallotta McDermott expressed concern for student safety with the pond bridge proposal. Chris Novak, VHB, reported that the existing OOC issued in 2009 expires in 2014. The present proposal is to create a safe environment for students to explore and experience nature. Novak explained that the project had changed due to a donor gift. The changes highlighted were:

- the new “John’s Bridge” is safer for students, it’s straight versus curvilinear making it easier to fish from;
- there will be fishing opportunities;
- there will be extensive plantings at all levels of the pond and surrounding area;
- the pavilion is smaller to protect vegetation;
- the stone dust path will be paved for easier access and mobility for students and their assistants.

Steve Rothstein, Perkins President, stated that the area is designed to promote safety and a love for the area. He assured that the area will not be open and students will not be allowed alone into the area. The proposal is to enhance appreciation of the resource which has aesthetic, wetland and historic merit.

Rose expressed concern about paving the stone dust area. Rothstein responded that it was a mobility/access issue as the students will be in wheelchairs. Rothstein offered to consider replacing it with a denser stone dust as long as access is provided for everyone. Rose noted that

the paved path was within the 50' no build. Novak noted that the need to provide and maintain an even path was for access compliance.

Fairbairn was not in favor of the proposed bridge across the pond for reasons of aesthetics, nature and history of the pond. He thought the planting plan was ambitious which will require monitoring and management to combat the inclination of the pond to return to its natural vegetation. He thought it was likely to revert to Button bush. He suggested a more relaxed vegetation approach –Button bush or woody vegetation. Rothstein responded that the more ambitious program was selected for its educational value.

Vote: Rose moved to close the public hearing portion of NOI - 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA DEP321-0151/WWO-12-3. Bering seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Vote: Fairbairn moved to issue the Order of Conditions for NOI 175 North Beacon Street, Watertown, MA DEP321-0151/WWO-12-3. Bering seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

2) Public Hearing Continuance – NOI – Waltham Street Apartments, Waltham Street, DEP321-0147/WWO-11-05, for the development of two five-story apartment buildings and one four-story apartment building containing 222 apartments, including 372 parking spaces and amenities. Applicant: Richard Dickason, WP East Acquisitions, LLC, 490 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742. Owner: LIG-JCDS Realty Holding Company, LLC, C/O LIG Development Company, 100 River Ridge Drive, Suite 105, Norwood, MA 02062.

John Bensley reported that Waltham Street Apartments projects had received all its approvals from Town Commissions and Boards. At the Site Plan Review the applicant will clean and maintain the pond for the Town and residents.

Bensley noted that the plan had been revised. The revised plan is for a total of 148 units, 2 apartment buildings; 7 townhouses; 256 parking spaces; and 1 club house. Overall the project has been reduced in size from the original NOI. 41% of the project is impervious containing walking paths of natural surface circulating around the pond. The paths will be accessible to the public.

Bensley indicated that the west side of Walker Pond will have paths with picnic areas and a crosswalk to the Gore Estate. The area will contain basketball courts and swings. There will be 8 parking spaces and a kiosk for the public. They are proposing a storm water bio retention for the area.

Bensley noted that the overall decrease in the parking was a result of the CC comments. Although the project has been decreased, the original storm water system was not reduced. Bensley reported that the water runoff and drain will be less than the present usage.

In response to Gauvin's inquiry, Bensley confirmed that they are treating the roof runoff.

Rose asked about snow storage plans. Bensley responded that there is sufficient area on site to handle snow storage. However if there is a large snowfall that exceeds capacity, the excess will be taken off site.

Rose requested that the applicant check with DPW about the new connection to the existing 16" pipe. Bensley noted that at a DPW meeting, Mee was satisfied with the connection.

Bering inquired if Wood Partners were responsible for the maintenance for the long term. Bensley said that they were.

Fairbairn said that the revisions were good. He noted that Walker Pond area was identified in the Watertown Open Space Plan as a priority public use area. He thought that the open space around the pond should be assumed for Town responsibility.

Martin reported that the CC had approached the Town to buy and preserve the land. He indicated that 3 of the 7 ponds in Watertown are on this property. Martin liked the proposed West path area and access to the pond.

Pallotta McDermott congratulated the applicant on the changes presented. She requested for the record to note that the CC did its due diligence to preserve the land as open space when there was an opportunity.

Rose inquired whether Mary Fynn's suggestion to install an aerator at the pond was considered. Bensley responded that aerators are relatively inexpensive to consider and could be accommodated.

Kevin Maley, Wood Partners, noted that the applicant would be amenable for the Town to take ownership of the pond and the provision of funds for maintenance and improvements of the pond could be discussed. Maley noted that LIG still owns the property. Hayward clarified that the line of discussion is outside the present NOI.

Hayward noted that a condition addressing the management of the coyotes at the site will be part of the OOC.

Mary Flynn, 66 Edwards Road, appreciated the changes proposed by Wood Partners and suggestions made by the CC.

Vote: Martin moved to close the public hearing portion of the NOI for Waltham Street Apartments, Waltham Street, DEP321-0147/WWO-11-05. Fairbairn seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Vote: A motion was made to issue an OOC for the revised NOI for Waltham Street Apartments, Waltham Street, DEP321-0147/WWO-11-05. Ayes – Rose, Gauvin, Fairbairn, Bering, Matin, Pallotta McDermott.

3) Informational Update – Charles Riverfront Park

Hayward informed that \$75,000 of DCR “Slippage” funds were available for the Charles Riverfront Park. Herb Nolan and Jonathan Hecht have been working to secure funding for the project.

4) May Minutes – Adopted.

5) Old Business

| Item | Update status |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Whitney Hill Report | Hayward is to review the Town Manager’s packet scheduled for filing before the TC. Hayward will bid out the markers and installation to surveyors. Hayward will email the CC advancement of these items. |
| Recycling Center/Filippello Park | Pallotta McDermott will meet with Magoon regarding the status of an alternative site for the recycling center. |
| Storm Water Advisory Commission | The second ordinance has been docketed with the Subcommittee. The Storm Water Commission finalized the third ordinance. |
| Rivers Protection Act | Gideon Shriver, Senior Planner, is updating the RPA areas on the Town’s GIS map. |
| GSA | Hayward reported that Iorio at ACE emailed stating that a contractor will be hired by September |

6) Agent Information/Update

Watertown Landing - Hayward reported that the project is progressing. Trees have been removed and grading has occurred. The replacement piles are to arrive. Project is to be completed on July 4, 2012.

Pleasant Street Tree Fund -Hayward reported that trees for Repton Place planting strip will be planted. The selection is limited to shorter tree varieties due to the wires overhead.

In addition, Hayward mentioned that the failed trees planted on Pleasant Street under the DOT project are on the punch list for replacement.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.