

Minutes

Watertown Conservation Commission

Lower Hearing Room

Wednesday, February 7, 2007

7:30p.m.

Conservation Commission Members Present: Pallotta McDermott, Bering, Martin, Fairbairn, Hammett

Staff Present: Hayward, Collins

Members of the Public Present: See Sign-In Form

1. Informational – Charles River Riverfront Proposal, Herb Nolan of the Solomon Fund

Pallotta McDermott expressed her pleasure over the Charles River Riverfront proposal to develop the river park from Watertown Square to the Yacht Club with the Solomon Fund undertaking the cost of planning and design.

Herb Nolan, Associate Director of the Solomon Fund, described the Solomon Fund as a family foundation that undertakes the restoration of parks through the coordination of public/private partnerships. Nolan noted that the Fund has been working with the Town and DCR creating a design for the area in consultation with Dan Driscoll following his success with the upper trails of the Charles River riverfront park. Nolan felt that planning was the key to implementing the project. He felt that a good, strong design with permits would create the momentum for implementation. The initial public information meetings on the proposed project lead to 100 interested citizens attending the meeting. Nolan felt that the river basin was the heart of the Boston metro area and what is being proposed would complement the Charles River Master Plan. He indicated that the area was historic and very significant, and that the riverfront characteristic changed along the river requiring different management. His ultimate plan is to see the Watertown riverfront section knitted together

with the existing sections. According to Nolan, the Watertown section discussed is part of the largest loop along the Charles River at 3.5 miles long and has the foundation for a great park. However, its present condition is in bad shape with serious erosion conditions and little ongoing maintenance. Nolan identified the Perkins School for the Blind as another important participating stakeholder in the process to restoring the path system. Nolan noted that the maintenance and management are key to informing the proposed project. The timeline for the project is as follows: 2006 for visioning; 2007 design and planning; and 2008 for development.

Nolan identified the following uses and users of the proposed project:

- make more access for elderly, children and families,
- provide a water park,
- increase boating usage,
- provide handicapped access with leadership from the Perkins School,
- create Special Events; consider closing Charles River Road,
- provide for access in the design. Walkways are in bad shape. Improvements are to accommodate the different users,
- provide connections to the river for the Perkins School,
- provide for bicycle access,
- provide for different pedestrian usages,
- consolidate the eastern path, softening the existing pathway,
- provide for art.

Nolan identified the following landscape stewardship issues:

- maintenance of paths,
- tree hazards vs. habitat,
- plant maintenance - woodland species vs. invasives;
- provision of windows to the water,
- provision of decks over the water,

-erosion prevention,

-provision of directive access for people.

Nolan indicated that the planning work is being done with Sasaki with funding from the Solomon Fund. A Landscape Subcommittee has been created.

Peter DeITredicci, resident of 104 Riverside Street and Director of the living collection at the Arnold Arboretum presented. He felt that the design for the riverfront had to be in balance with the resources available to maintain the project. He indicated that sustainability of the project was key to the success of the project. He noted that in this project the maintenance cost had to be connected with the design and program. He felt that the area was divided into eight zones with distinct habitat and maintenance plans associated with it. The following eight zones were identified: Meadow – to be mowed 1 time a year, containing native grasses, good for birds; Mowed Meadow; Gallery Forrest – a mowed area with trees widely spaced; Sloped Woodland – a mix forest area with erosion issues; Mixed Woodland – an area with native and invasives; Riverbank Edge – area requiring engineering solution and soft vegetation solution; Parkway Bank – area adjacent to guard rail in need of weeding; Street Tree Edge – area to be strengthened by maintenance and addition of trees.

Peter DeITredicci urged that the proposed project focus on what can be done currently, in particular, the deferred maintenance of trees. This activity should be driven by public safety. He noted that some trees should have been removed five years ago. Tree hazards along the path should be marked for take down and dead limbs should be removed. In addition, poison ivy has overgrown over pathways and the removal should be undertaken where public safety is an issue. He felt volunteer could manage this project with the manual removal of poison ivy. Nolan felt that the work should be undertaken currently with an NOI for next meeting. Richard Scott of DCR was present and was in agreement.

Nolan noted that the current Charles River Vegetative Management Plan is sustainable and urged the committee to continue the work. Members of the committee included the Town, Perkins School for the Blind, DCR, and Watertown residents. He felt a timeline needed to be developed indicating DCR's responsibilities of mowing, tree removal, implementation of design (with State project monies), local Town role and volunteer roles.

The CC felt that the proposed eminent work could be done under the current Charles River Vegetative Maintenance Plan Order of Conditions.

Greg Watson, Director of Community Development and Planning, presented the plan for the Watertown Landing. He reported that the plan funded by Watertown Savings Bank proposed the following:

- the improvement of the formal landscape,
- the connection of the area with the Watertown Square,
- improvement of the formal entrance to the landing,
- the addition of tree,
- the decrease of impervious area,
- improve the walking experience for pedestrians,
- improving the overall aesthetics of the area.

Watson reported that the Town has been informed of the award of a \$100,000 from DHDC. He indicated that DCR will be managing the project.

Hammett inquired whether the grant would address the erosion problem. Watson responded that the plan was to sod versus seed to insure that the grass take root.

Martin suggested that whatever erosion controls proposed follow the details used by the Army Corps of Engineers used at Squibnocket Park.

Hammett hoped that the CRC was involved in the project. Hammett inquired whether there were any lessons to be learned from the development and maintenance of the Upper Charles riverfront project. DeITredicci responded that that area is more wild and time would be needed to determine the success of the plants in that area. He felt that the success of the project would come through the cooperative approach used. He warned that low maintenance does not mean "NO" maintenance.

Steve Rothstein, Director of the Perkins School for the Blind, stated the full support of the school for this project.

2. Public Hearing Continuance – Sawins & Williams Ponds Disposal Site, Arlington Street & Coolidge Street, Notice of Intent, DEP# 321-0123/WWO-06-02, Maximos Hatziiliades applicant

Martin Michener reported on the delineation of the area. He reported that the file is in Google and was provided to Hayward. He reported that the site is very hazardous, with debris of barbwire and table saws at the site. He noted that the solid black line denotes the top of the bank. He indicated that the weather was not necessary for the delineation. In fact, the simple hydrology determined the confidence of the bank and delineation. He reported that the debris had created a habitat for coyotes to den. He identified blue heron and geese at the site.

Pallotta McDermott informed Hatziliades that the delineation could be used by his engineer. Pallotta McDermott noted that Hatziliades is positioned to conduct his borings whose results will be available for everyone. Pallotta McDermott requested that Hatziliades engineer contact Hayward.

Vote: Hammett moved to continue the Public Hearing for the next meeting of the CC on March 7, 2007. Bering seconded the motion.

Copies of the delineation to made for the CC.

3. Public Hearing NOI – Charles River Reservation Stormwater Outfall Repair Project, Notice of Intent, for the repair and replacement of 17 existing stormwater outfalls along the Charles River Reservation, Department of Conservation and Recreation applicant.

Robert Lowell, DCR, Director of the Outfall Program. He reported that EPA had asked them to fix the outfall. He reported that aided with GPS and flushing of the lines, the needed repairs and maintenance of outfalls and catchbasins were identified. He reported that they would attempt to maintain of the bank and soften the landscape when attempting the work.

Tim Sullivan and Lauren Caputo, ENSR, engineers for the applicant presented details of the NOI. He noted that all the work will be within the 100' buffer zone. He indicted that 17 outfall pipes exit to the Charles River. They have either the headwall or embankment headwall in disrepair. He reported that he had good access to the outfalls for repair. Each outfall with be cordoned off with erosion controls. He estimated it will take 2 days per pipe to repair.

Martin inquired whether there will be a boom at the water level for control. Sullivan thought it would be rare that they would be in the water for repair. He noted that the outfalls are far from the bank due to bank being washed out.

Lowell indicated that this is preliminary work for future efforts. He noted that 5% to 10% of the pipes don't flow. They are attempting to fix as many broken pipes as possible. More investigation is needed. He reported that they used a hydroject to determine flow.

Martin inquired whether they were upgrading with the Town of Watertown and to work with Gerry Mee at DPW.

Vote: Bering mover to close the Public Hearing portion of this item. Hammett seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Public Hearing Amendment – 380 Pleasant Street, Amendment to the Order of Condition, 321-0017, WWO-05-06, for revised grading and drainage, Avary Corporation applicant representative.

Richard Garaffo, of Avary Corporation represented the applicant. Garaffo indicated that the sewer line and gas line location prevented them from installing the storm water drainage system proposed which would connect to the Town system. Instead the parking lot was pitched toward a storm water control system in the back of the property. According to Caraffo the change was done according to George Whittie from DPW. He felt it was the only engineering solution available.

Hammett inquired where the calculations were. She was not clear where the water was going. She noted that the calculations to determine the adequacy of the alternative plan were missing.

Mr. Callanan, owner of the property, will check with VHB to provide the determination. Hammett requested that it be determined whether the neighboring abutter has the capacity.

Vote: Hammett moved to continue the item to the next meeting to be held March 7, 2007. Bering seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. **January 2007 Minutes – approved with minor corrections.**

6. **Old Business**

Item	Update status
Whitney Hill Report	Watson forwarded report to Town attorney. Pallotta McDermott to forward plan to TC.
Recycling Center/Filippello Park	A five member TC subcommittee est. to determine a new location. Fairbairn, Hammett and Martin on CC subcommittee. TC to consider the Shick Property with Mt. Auburn. The recycling program is to be removed from Filippello Park.
Storm Water Monitoring Results	Town pipes are being inspected by DPW. Hammett has plans from EPA. She'll summarize for CC at the March meeting. Mee will be invited to the meeting.
Water Conservation Program	Pallotta McDermott to talk to Mee regarding water conservation program.
Gore Estate	Martin delineated and calculated area. Pallotta McDermott and Martin met with Watson. Watson and Scott to be contact with UBS in lieu of CC. Hayward to ask for schedule of meetings and request to be included. UBS waiting to hear from CC.
GSA	West side of delineation to be included. 150' buffer and 50' no build to be included. Letter of appreciation to Bob Davis. Letter to DCR not to accept property until all buildings are removed. Davis to be contacted regarding Section 206.
Ordinance	Ordinance forwarded to Watson for legal review and submission to Town Council. Kimmel to submit executive summary. Town Attorney comments to be reviewed at March meeting. Hammett to review for consistency with Town Attorney comments.
Pleasant Street Master Plan	Pallotta McDermott to discuss with Watson.
Pleasant Street Tree Fund	Hayward to contact K&P regarding tree account.

7. **New Business**

MACC Conference – Hammett, Bering, Fairbairn and Hayward to attend the March meeting. Collins to e-mail about pre-registration.

8. Charles River Reservation Stormwater Outfall Repair Project, Order of Conditions

Special Conditions: No tree removal will be allowed only at the last resort. Potential removal of trees 5" dbh or greater will require review and approval of Tree Warden.

18a,b,c,d,e, 19, 20,21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41a, b, g.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30pm