

Minutes

Watertown Conservation Commission

Lower Hearing Room

Wednesday, June 6, 2007

7:30p.m.

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

Staff Present: Hayward, Collins

Members of the Public Present: See Sign-In Form

1. Public Hearing-Notice of Intent – Restoration of 450’ of bituminous paved pathway, the repair of tow pathway erosion areas and the removal of 320’ of existing guardrail, Department of Conservation and Recreation

Dan Driscoll, DCR, noted that there was extensive root damage along the Charles River Pathway. He proposed restoring the path at the existing depth and width of the present path. He reported that the project would be done in the summer. He had money available that has to be spent by June 30, 2007. He considered this project as the final piece to be implemented which was being done by Northern Tree. He informed that the erosion controls would be installed along Sasaki using geotech rolls allowing vegetation to grow over it over time. In addition, the project proposes removing the existing guardrail, a remnant from Lewandos parking. The area will be reseeded. This portion of the project will be implemented in late summer. According to Driscoll, this project will not have any impact on the existing trees. Ultimately, the path will look brand new. The process allows for the existing path to be ground up and reused as a component of the new path.

2. Public Hearing – Request for Determination – Vegetation Control of the Charles River Path, Northern Tree Services for the Department of Conservation and Recreation

Dan Driscoll reported that the poison ivy was out of control along the Charles River Path. He noted that DCR is unable to do maintenance each year to keep the poison ivy under control. He considered the application safe.

Calvin Layton, Northern Tree Service, informed that the control measures he proposed are to be done in conjunction with mowing by DCR. He was requesting a negative determination. He reported that the herbicide application would take place along pathways, walkways, and guardrails. He would not apply any in the resource area or buffer areas. He noted that the spraying is limited with a very narrow scope of application. He reported that where it is most cost-effective and efficient, a mechanized method would be used. He is authorized to apply a 10' swath around roads, sidewalk and paths.

Pallotta McDermott inquired if poison ivy would be eradicated under the application. Layton responded that the impact would be monitored. Pallotta McDermott inquired if the burnt look could be prevented. Layton said that the treatment is very obvious the first year but each subsequent year it is less dramatic.

Bering inquired if he had gone to the Pesticide Board to figure out the jurisdiction. Layton responded that he can't treat within 10' from wetlands. Driscoll noted that in Watertown the boardwalk cannot be treated because of the wetlands limitation.

Bering wanted to know why the request was an RDA versus a NOI since the walkway is in the buffer zone.

Driscoll noted that essentially the project is part of the DCR's maintenance of the right-of-way targeting of poison ivy and invasives. Driscoll noted that the application is only in areas where DCR is unable to treat or maintain under regular conditions.

Layton noted that he is limited to low-volume pesticides on guardrails and sidewalks. He uses an application device that targets and fires only at plants. He reported that he is obligated to present yearly application plan under the YOP.

Pallotta McDermott wondered how the CC would enforce conditions for a RDA. Layton responded that the Vegetation Management Plan was the venue which is good for 5 years.

Fairbairn was concerned that the 10' border was too aggressive and wide. Layton noted that Newton and Cambridge enforced a 5' border. Fairbairn preferred a 2' to 3' border. Layton responded that he could be very selective with minimum impact. The herbicide that he uses kills the root system and that over time the chemical usage would decrease.

Fairbairn wondered whether there could be a public information campaign to keep people from exposure to poison ivy. He suggested instructions on an interpretive kiosk that would identify the risks and benefits of poison ivy. Driscoll responded that there was information on poison ivy at the proposed kiosk. However, he wanted to keep signage to a minimum as signage attracts graffiti.

Hayward noted that 33 CMR allows maintenance of right-of-way for public safety with an RDA.

Fairbairn raised concerns that spraying the poison ivy bordering the volleyball fields would result in a dead wall of vegetation after the application. Layton responded that he can't treat above 12'. Driscoll noted that what is of more concern is the Japanese knotweed.

Bering raised concern about the vagueness of the map. He was unable to identify the areas to be treated. Layton responded that he was limited to the Charles River Reservation, Greenough Boulevard, and that year to year the application would change.

Bering wanted to see the areas that would be treated. Layton noted that the entire length of Greenough Boulevard would be treated. Bering responded that he wanted the map to reflect that. Layton noted that the Conservation Agent reviews the no-attack areas.

Layton agreed to provide a map that would identify the no spray zone with the aide of GPS for the Conservation Agent to review. Driscoll noted that Layton cannot go beyond Watertown Square. Layton noted he is limited also to high use trails. He is unable to treat the back trails. Layton noted that the plants to be treated will be on guard-rails and median strips. Driscoll noted that the poison ivy is problematic from dog to human contact. Not so much people to plant contact.

Pallotta McDermott noted that the poison ivy treatment is to be done in August. She preferred to wait until there is a map noting the areas to be treated. Layton agreed to do the mapping before hand, although this is the first time he has had a challenged RDA. Layton will call the Conservation Agent when it has been completed. Layton noted that

Northern Tree Services is the only applicant of the herbicide. There will not be any subcontractors. Layton agreed to have the maps ready for the July 18th CC meeting.

Henrietta Light, 22 Grenville Road, was happy that public education was considered for the eradication of poison ivy. She recommended a conspicuous graphic to keep people away from poison ivy. Driscoll responded that he could have two engraved granite boulders with poison ivy information. According to Driscoll, they cost approximately \$500 a piece and are generally avoided by graffiti vandalism.

3. Review of Proposed Watertown Wetlands Ordinance

Staff provided review and recommendations of Hammett and the Town Attorney's comments. Hammett dictated her additional comments to Hayward. Bering discussed his additional comments. A collective review and discussion of various points of the proposed ordinance followed. Hayward requested that Bering provide his comments in writing and to forward them electronically. Hayward was to incorporate Hammett's and Bering's additional comments for the next meeting. Pallotta McDermott requested that any additional changes must be submitted before the mailing of the next meeting. The final changes will be voted on at the next meeting.

4. May Minutes - Approved

5. 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	TC will consider the Recycle Center to remain at site with a land swap. If no place in found in 90 days, the recycle center will move. CC will not respond until after the 90 days – June 2007. After June, subcommittee to call Sideris.
Storm Water Monitoring Results	Report submitted to CC office, available for review.
Water Conservation Program	Pallotta McDermott talked to Mee regarding water conservation program, i.e.: sprinkler system water conservation measures. No progress.

Gore Estate	TC discussed item in Executive Session. No update.
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	Staff to include Hammett's comments in Ordinance and review K&P comments. Hayward, Hammett and Bering to meet with K&P with revisions in June. CC to review in June.
Pleasant Street Master Plan	A charrette is scheduled for June 18, 2007.
Pleasant Street Tree Fund	Pallotta McDermott to pursue the location of funds (\$26,000) through Stop and Shop and Town Treasurer. She hopes to get a copy of the check. K&P does not have the funds. Pallotta McDermott to write a letter to Greg Watson, copy to Town Mgr., with the backup documentation inquiring about the funds.

6. New Business

Hayward reported that they will begin sampling at Sawins Pond tomorrow.

Pallotta McDermott requested that Hayward write Rick Corsi to appear before the CC to report on the VMP, cc Julia O'Brien.

7. Order of Conditions – Charles River Pathway Restoration

18a, b, e, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, a, b,

Meeting adjourned at 10:20pm