

Minutes

Watertown Conservation Commission

Lower Hearing Room

Wednesday, February 6, 2008

7:30p.m.

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

Staff Present: Hayward, Collins

Members of the Public Present: See Sign-In Form

Lou Taverna introduced Maria Rose, whose application for the CC is being considered by the Town Council. Her appointment is to be finalized by the March 2008 meeting.

1. Public Hearing Continuance – Notice of Intent Charles River Vegetation Management Plan, Department of Conservation and Recreation, DEP 321-0131/WWO-07-12

Rick Corsi, DCR Planner, reported that the plan is similar to the previous Vegetation Management Plan (VMP). The plan proposes cutting the vegetation in a manner which would maintain the root system that holds the shoreline. He reported that the Watertown Square Restoration Project is going out to bid in spring 2008 and that the project would be similar to the one undertaken by the Army Corps of Engineers. Corsi highlighted the VMP which proposes the cutting of vegetation and vista pruning at selected areas.

Hammett questioned why the vista pruning was being proposed before the Solomon Funds design activities. It was suggested that the vista pruning be done in conjunction with the Solomon Funds and to make it part of the OOC.

Hayward introduced the report made by the Riverfront Stewards and that it be considered in tandem to the VMP.

Evan Moss, CRC, suggested that the proposals made by the Riverfront Stewards be made an amendment to the OOC.

Hammett had concerns about which elements of the VMP be postponed and which be approved presently.

Corsi suggested approving the cutting and dealing with invasives and mowing." He proposed that the control of poison ivy in areas along the path ways using Round-up and Rodeo be considered and that the poison ivy in the wooded areas be left as they provide habitat. The goal of the control efforts, according to Corsi, is to decrease the invasives by half in three years.

Fairbairn proposed that the invasives be ranked in priority, as some plants listed are not really invasives like Japanese Knotweed. In addition, Fairbairn thought the pruning of trees for safety should be the number one priority.

Hammett was concerned about who was doing all the work. Corsi responded that the Solomon Fund, CRC and the DCR were involved. Moss noted that the CRC efforts are only supplementary. Corsi and Moss noted that Larry Callahan and Richard Scott at DCR needed to be contacted about the actual work to be done.

Fairbairn suggested that the work proposed be marked at the site with flags. Corsi responded that the areas where work was proposed had not been established. Hammett suggested that before any work is done that they contact Hayward. Corsi agreed.

Martin inquired if Rodeo and Round-up was being used during the cutting of Alantia to insure it successful eradication.

Hammett asked when and what is DCR going to do, and what is the process. Corsi did not know. Hammett and Martin requested that the DCR line staff (Larry Callahan, DCR foreman) contact Hayward before initiating the work.

Moss noted that the maps designed by the Solomon are good for identifying the areas.

Moss reported that the Nature Conservancy has a list of the five most invasive plants. He felt knotweed and ragweed were not too problematic and that the use of a tier system for managing invasives was a good one.

Corsi noted that the goals of the VMP were – control the invasives, keep the area alive, prevent erosion and public safety.

Hammett questioned what method would be used to prevent cuttings going into the river and propagating downstream. Corsi noted that the staff rakes back any cuttings that go into the river. However, he indicated that it is a problem with the slope mechanical cutters. Moss suggested that additional staff be required when the slope mechanical cutter is used.

Hayward recommended that the VMP be coordinated with the Riverfront Stewards. He felt that a coordinated effort would be important and practical since there is so much focus by different stakeholders on the riverfront.

The CC requested that Hayward contact as many of the DCR operations staff and key members of the Riverfront Stewards to be at the next CC meeting.

Hammett proposed that the draft OCC contain the following:

- that a site visit be conducted with the Conservation Agent to identify activities
- that the Agent be contacted before any work is conducted
- that be activities coordinated with the Solomon Fund
- that efforts be made to prevent cuttings going into the river
- that no spraying be undertaken
- that any uprooting be done early in the year

- that cuttings be done after the bird nesting season in the July
- that a timeframe be submitted
- that public safety issues be a priority
- that the protection of the shoreline be considered along with the Storm Water Protection Maintenance Plan
- that the debris be picked up with a week of operations
- that the debris of the top five invasives be removed off-site immediately.

Collins will forward the OOC for the previous VMP.

2. January 2 and January 16 Minutes

January 2 and January 16 approved.

3. New Business

Hayward reported that the CC comments regarding Sawins Ponds Report were submitted to Vineyard Engineering.

Hammett requested a status report on the Open Space Plan.

March MACC Conference – Fairbairn, Hammett interested in attending. Collins will pre-register interested members.

4. Old Business

Item	Update status
Whitney Hill Report	Fairbairn reported that Susan Falkoff was supportive and

	encouraging of the coordination of open space, environmental protection and wetland protection by the CC for Whitney Hill. Hayward reported that Watson is holding off but wants to forward the report to Town Council.
Recycling Center/Filippello Park	No update. Mt. Auburn backed out of site offer. CC subcommittee (Hammett & Martin) to set meeting with the new Council subcommittee.
Storm Water Monitoring Results	Hammett provided information on the DPW report to EPA. See New Business item.
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 in December 2006. No update.
GSA	Letter of appreciation to Bob Davis to be sent. See "Due Diligence Report" item.
Ordinance	Hayward reported that K&P letter was received stating its satisfaction with the final draft and the proposed Ordinance was being forward to the Town Council for its first reading on February 12 where it would be assigned to a subcommittee for review.
Pleasant Street Master Plan	Pallotta McDermott to contact Watson on status of Master Plan.