

Minutes

Watertown Conservation Commission

**Lower Hearing Room**

**Wednesday, March 5, 2008**

7:30p.m.

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

**Staff Present:** Hayward, Collins

**Members of the Public Present:** See Sign-In Form

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

Pallotta McDemott welcomed members of the Solomon Fund, Friends of the River, Riverfront Stewards, Charles River Conservancy, DCR, Trustees of Reservation, and Sasaki.

Pallotta McDermott noted that the applicant failed to present its required annual March report under the previous Charles River Vegetation Management Plan OOC.

Rick Corsi, DCR Planner, presented an overview of the projects to be undertaken during the next three years. Projects include erosion controls, brush cutting, tree pruning for public safety, invasive removal and control, and scenic vista clearing. He reported that the details of the vista pruning will be determined after the completion of the Sasaki/Riverfront Stewards Plan. He indicated that the under story areas will be cleared along Arsenal Street, similar to previous maintenance efforts in that area. He also noted that poison ivy control will be limited to the public path areas with Rodeo applied to cut stems.

Peter DeiTredici, Riverfront Stewards and resident at 104 Riverside Street, reported that the Riverfront Stewards walked from Squibnocket Park to Watertown Square prioritizing what needed to be done. He noted that they propose rip-rap for erosion control and a softer walking pathway; that poison ivy control is the top priority due to health concerns for volunteers; that Cat Briar must be controlled and eradicated; that hazardous trees must be removed; that Norway Maple saplings must be removed through volunteer efforts; and that aggressive Bitter Sweet has to be removed by the roots before it gets established. He realized that 50% of the plants in the area are invasives and that they can't all be removed.

Fairbairn agreed that poison ivy is the top priority. However, he questioned the removal of Cat Briar as it is a good native habitat plant. He urged situational ethics when controlling invasives. He suggested they consult with Hayward when making decisions. Pallotta McDermott requested that Fairbairn, Evan Moss, Corsi and Hayward meet together to determine the details.

Evan Moss, Charles River Conservancy, reported that he has scheduled April 5, May 12 as well as three other dates though out the summer to start the volunteer clean-up. He noted that they will begin the effort at Squibnocket Park and end at the Watertown Yacht Club by the end of the summer. He expects 125 volunteers and that each year they will be able to cover the territory faster. He noted that all work is coordinated with DCR and that next year the CRC volunteer work will blend with the Solomon Funds efforts. He informed that the trash will be picked up after each event.

Beth Zwick, Executive Director of Watertown Community Foundation and resident of 14 Oak Street, reported that Friends of the Watertown Riverfront met with CRC, Trustees of Reservation, and Perkins to discuss the riverfront efforts. Eighty people attended. She noted that the Historical Society, Friends of the Watertown Riverfront and the Solomon Fund successfully pursued a matching grant from DCR to repair the Saltonstall statue.

Richard Scott, Charles River Manager, reported that he works with Moss. He requested that the CC bring any concerns directly to him. He reported that he has the project scheduled and that Hayward is listed on the projects for notification. He hoped to have an intern during the summer so that there will be a daily presence at the site.

Pallotta McDermott inquired about liability. Scott responded that volunteer liability coverage is provided under DCR.

Michael Francis, Representative of the Trustees of Reservation, informed that his office is located in Dover. He reported that the Trustees have been in partnership with DCR through Dan Driscoll. The partnership began a year ago. The area that the Trustees are responsible for are Galen Street to Moody Street. They clean the entrances to the river walks, clear pathways, and platform views. The Trustees, he noted, assist Moss with labor, tools and equipment.

Hammett was concerned that there be coordination and consistency between the OOC and the execution of activities. She expressed frustration that the yearly report of the previous OOC was not done and wondered what could be done to be more effective.

Pallotta McDermott wants the report to be submitted date certain. Rose suggested a written report be submitted. Corsi stated that he would no longer be the responsible operations person, and that Richard Scott would be. Hammett requested that there be more specifics on the invasives, areas and dates. Fairbairn thought that the NOI is fine and that professional discretion at the site be allowed.

Peter DeITredicci said that the Watertown Riverfront Park will be coming before the CC with a separate NOI for their proposed path improvements.

Rose inquired who will be applying the Rodeo. Moss responded that he is a certified applicator and that he would be applying the Rodeo. He also informed that DCR hires certified contractors for applications. Rose suggested that herbicides not be applied before any forecasts of rain.

Annie Clark, member of Trees for Watertown and Friends of Watertown Riverfront, supported the project.

**2. February Minutes – approved.**

**3. Old Business**

Item	Update status
Whitney Hill Report	Fairbairn made a presentation to Town Council to declare Whitney Hill Conservation Area under the jurisdiction of CC. TC supported the proposal and forwarded it to the Town

	Manager to review. Pallotta McDermott read a report from 1880 that the land was acquired as parkland for \$7500. Marilynne Roach will obtain a copy of the deed, to verify if "parkland" status is on the deed.
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 made a presentation before DPW subcommittee of the TC. Mee to bring Stantec before the subcommittee for additional information. Hammett wants all the reports by the DPW on Stormwater.
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. * See Executive Session
Ordinance	Final Ordinance forwarded to the Town Council Subcommittee. Bering requested final copy.
Pleasant Street Master Plan	Pallotta McDermott to contact Watson on status of Master Plan and to inquire about any changes to Pleasant Street.
Open Space Plan	Joseph Merkel is finishing the Open Space Plan. Hammett to assist.

#### 4. Executive Session\*

**Vote:** Hammett moved that the CC go into Executive Session. Bering seconded the motion. The motion was unanimous by roll call vote.

**Vote:** Martin moved that the CC close the Executive Session. Bering seconded the motion. The motion was unanimous by roll call vote.

#### 5. OOC – Charles River Vegetation Management Plan

- The DCR shall appear at each March Conservation Commission meeting and present a report on the activities accomplished over the past year, and the proposed activities for the following year.
- The Conservation Agent shall be given two weeks notification prior to any work. No work shall begin until it is approved by the Conservation Agent.

- Mowing should be set at no less than 2 ½ inches. Sharp blades shall be used. (Refer to Page 179 of the Master Plan for the Charles River Basin).
- DCR's or its subcontractor's trucks shall not be parked under drip edge of trees.
- Slope cutters should not be used in the 6'-8' buffer. When used, they shall be set at a height of 12".
- Cut brush, trees and limbs shall be removed within 1 week of cutting.
- Cut brush, trees and limbs in the wooded area may be left in place under the direction of the Conservation Agent
- Cut invasives shall be removed immediately.
- The use of approved pesticides shall be applied by a license professional.
- Pesticides will not be applied if precipitation is predicted within 24 hours
- Anything not herein specified must come before the Conservation Commission for review and approval.
- The DCR shall work with the Conservation Agent on each proposed scenic vista, and no vista pruning shall take place without approval by the Conservation Agent.

18b, d, e, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 36, 38, 40

The meeting adjourned at 10:20pm