

Brookline Conservation Commission Meeting
Tuesday, January 14, 2020, 7:00 PM
Town Hall, Room 103

Commissioners Present: Roberta Schnoor (Acting Chair), Pallavi Kalia Mande, Werner Lohe, Pamela Harvey, Marian Lazar (Associate)

Commissioners Absent: Marcus Quigley (Chair), Benjamin Wish

Staff Present: Tom Brady (Conservation Administrator), Katie Weatherseed (Conservation Assistant)

Guests: See attached.

AGENDA REVIEW/MINUTES

R. Schnoor, acting chair, called the meeting to order. Two minor amendments were made to the staff update portion of the agenda, including the insertion of a discussion of the wetlands by-law and a discussion of DEP rate changes. The Commission reviewed the minutes from November 12, 2019. R. Schnoor proposed two minor amendments.

P. Harvey made a motion to approve the minutes from November 12, 2019 as amended. P. K. Mande seconded. All in favor.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR NOTICE OF INTENT FOR THE COUNTRY CLUB

Mary Kate Schneeweis, of Beals and Thomas, Inc. introduced herself and Dave Johnson, the Director of Grounds of the Country Club. M. K. Schneeweis stated the original intention of the project and how the Country Club eventually decided to approach the project holistically and remove sediment from more ponds than originally proposed. M. K. Schneeweis thanked the Commission for recently extending The Country Club's Order of Conditions for vegetation management.

M. K. Schneeweis stated that the project will be completed after the U.S. Open, during which time The Country Club can utilize the temporary roads and infrastructure already in place and limit further disturbance to the site. M. K. Schneeweis stated that the dredged material will be dewatered in several areas on site and sediment will also be stored on site. She described the other permits that The Country Club has applied for and/or received. M. K. Schneeweis stated that the proposed project involves the removal of over 20,000 cubic yards of sediment, and reviewed the amount of sediment proposed to be removed from each pond. She stated that impacts to wetland resources will be temporary. M. K. Schneeweis said that the intent of the project is to restore the banks of the ponds, remove nuisance vegetation and improve the quality of the waterbodies. She continued that this project exceeds the threshold for a habitat wildlife assessment, and she requested that the Commission require a limited habitat wildlife assessment, as opposed to a detailed assessment. M. K. Schneeweis asked the Commission for any questions or comments that they may have.

R. Schnoor asked if The Country Club has done any water quality testing. M. K. Schneeweis responded that testing has been done and the results are currently being reviewed. R. Schnoor asked whether the applicant has any information regarding what sediment will remain. M. K. Schneeweis replied that she did not have that information immediately available, but could provide the Commission with that information at a later date. P. Harvey asked how the water will be removed from the ponds. D. Johnson responded that most of the ponds have gate valves (the irrigation pond has pumps) which The Country Club will open. P. Harvey asked whether The Country Club will refill the ponds with the same water that was removed. D. Johnson said that the ponds usually refill naturally, but when the water level is low, The Country Club gets water from the Town to fill them up. R. Schnoor inquired about the hatched areas on the provided site plan. M. K. Schneeweis stated that if onsite disposal of sediment is an option, the orange and yellow hatched areas will be utilized. She continued that these areas are outside of the buffer zone, except for one. T. Brady noted that at least one of these sites are up-gradient of ponds and that some erosion and sediment controls would be necessary. P. Harvey asked whether the ponds have any hydraulic connections. M. K. Schneeweis stated that they have offsite connections at Putterham Meadows.

M. K. Schneeweis stated that the quality of the water will not be disturbed during dredging, and a 401 Water Quality certification will determine baseline conditions. In terms of overall stormwater management, she stated that she does not believe any of the proposed work will affect off-site flow. T. Brady stated that there is a weir structure in middle of the woods, so that if there is an issue during construction, the applicant can shut the water flow off. T. Brady continued that he does not believe this project will adversely impact any wetland resources. He stated that he has seen the water levels manipulated over the years and he wouldn't expect the elevation of the water sheet to change, as the work does not involve changing structures or invert, etc. He added that due to the sheer scale of the project, he would suggest the Commission conduct a site visit. The Commission determined that the site visit will take place on Thursday, January 30th at 7:30 AM. T. Brady stated he would be interested in seeing where the applicant hopes to leverage the roadways that will be installed as part of the U.S. Open, where the spoil may be piled and dewatered, and the disposal areas.

T. Brady stated that the project started as a desire to address the two Primrose Ponds before the U. S. Open. Following discussions regarding permitting and the struggles of the other ponds on the property, the decision was made to do a comprehensive approach.

P. Harvey made a motion to continue the hearing to February 11th, 2020. W. Lohe seconded. All in favor.

T. Brady requested that the Commission reopen the hearing to discuss the need for a wildlife habitat evaluation, as suggested by the Department of Environmental Protection. The Commission discussed the different requirements of a baseline

evaluation versus a detailed evaluation, and determined that a baseline evaluation would be most appropriate.

P. Harvey made motion to continue the hearing to February 11th, 2020. P. K. Mande seconded. All in favor.

PERENNIAL STREAMS

T. Brady stated that the existing GIS layer of perennial streams appears to be accurate in some locations, and outdated in others. He stated that he will review aerial imagery and a map from the engineering division that overlays watercourses from several time periods and begin piecing together an updated version.

MUDDY RIVER REVIEW

T. Brady stated that the Army Corps of Engineers has informed him that there is a successful bidder, and they are looking forward to getting this project awarded and underway.

STAFF UPDATE

T. Brady stated that there is an upcoming MACC conference on February 29th. He asked that any Commissioner who wishes to attend inform K. Weatherseed as soon as possible.

T. Brady inquired about whether the Commission would like to review the Wetlands Bylaw language updates as a subcommittee or as a group. The Commission determined that they would like to do it as a group. T. Brady stated that he will make it a regular agenda item.

T. Brady stated that he and W. Lohe sat down with Brookline GreenSpace Alliance and discussed a quarterly review of the status of the Open Space Plan's Action Plan. One of those four meetings will be a broader review where the Commission invites members from GreenSpace Alliance to attend. W. Lohe stated that John Scheffler is new on the GreenSpace Board and has expressed interest in being a liaison.

T. Brady stated that DEP has updated their policy to require that Commissions either submit things through their online portal or through certified mail. He added that staff currently submits everything via certified mail receipt requested. P. Harvey inquired whether Brookline could begin moving towards eDEP submissions, and T. Brady stated that while he has run into obstacles in the past with the online portal, he would be happy to try it again. T. Brady also mentioned a change in the regulations regarding issuance date.

T. Brady stated that the Town received \$112,500 in funding for an Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan. He described the ambitious scope and timeline, and that the Select Board's Committee on Tree Protection would most likely be the starting point for the Master Plan Committee.

Lastly, T. Brady stated that he received a courtesy copy of a Notice of Intent for trail work in Allandale Woods from LEC Environmental Consultants, Inc. which will be going before the Boston Conservation Commission.

ADJOURN

P. Harvey made a motion to adjourn. P. K. Mande seconded. All in favor.

Minutes prepared by K. Weatherseed