

Brookline Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 11, 2021, 7:00 PM
Zoom Virtual Conference

Commissioners Present: Marcus Quigley (Chair), Roberta Schnoor (Vice Chair), Sam Burrington, Pam Harvey, Werner Lohe, Pallavi Kalia Mande, Marian Lazar (Associate)

Commissioners Absent: Will Corrdin

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

Guests: See attached.

AGENDA REVIEW/MINUTES

M. Quigley opened the meeting. The Commission reviewed the minutes from April 6, 2021.

R. Schnoor made a motion to accept the minutes from April 6, 2021. P. Harvey seconded. All in favor.

DISCUSSION OF CPA AND PLPA

The Commission expressed their excitement that the Community Preservation Act (CPA) passed. T. Brady suggested that the Commission draft a letter to the Select Board noting how pleased they are that it has passed, and that they would like to participate in conversations concerning the CPA moving forward. P. Harvey inquired about whether most Towns have a CPA committee. R. Schnoor stated that a Conservation Commission representative is required to be a member of the CPA Committee. M. Quigley agreed that a letter from the Commission would be a great place to start, and that it is important that the Commission is involved at the onset.

P. Harvey made a motion for the Chair and Town staff to draft a letter to the Select Board expressing the Commission's excitement in being involved with the Community Preservation Act, and for M. Quigley to sign on behalf of the entire Commission. P. K. Mande seconded. All in favor.

T. Brady inquired if P. Harvey had heard any updates regarding the Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA). P. Harvey responded that she has not heard anything since the Commission's last discussion. T. Brady stated that the Commission had drafted a letter of support for the PLPA years ago, and noted that it could be beneficial to send another letter reiterating the Commission's support. The Commission determined that Town staff will draft a letter and share with P. Harvey to revise.

P. K. Mande inquired how many members serve on the CPA Committee. S. Burrington replied that online it states that there are 5-9 members on the Committee.

DISCUSSION OF DRAFT PRIORITY HABITAT MAP OF RARE SPECIES

T. Brady stated that the Commission received a letter regarding endangered species habitat and were asked to provide feedback. He stated that the only endangered species habitat he is aware of in Brookline is related to the 3-Spine Stickleback. He inquired if the Commission has any areas of concern that they would like to note.

R. Schnoor stated that she looked at the online list of endangered species in Brookline and was interested to find that all of the listed species were identified as endangered in the late 1800s and early 1900s. P. Harvey noted that the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program has a service where you can report sightings of rare species. S. Burrington stated that he vaguely recalls reading about a rare species of bird that nests on roofs along Beacon Street in Brookline. T. Brady stated that the bird is not endangered, but is rare to see in Brookline. T. Brady added that nothing in particular sprang to mind for him.

DISCUSSION OF PERENNIAL STREAMS IN BROOKLINE

T. Brady stated the Commissioners had previously looked at locations across Town and marked up a map with perennial streams. He stated that the next steps are to develop a GIS map showing these perennial streams and share it with the Commission for their review. He added that the intention is to take the map of perennial streams and link it to the local wetlands bylaw. He added that staff will research with Town Counsel to make sure they are taking the appropriate steps.

R. Schnoor inquired how applicants will be made aware of this map. T. Brady responded that the Commission would send the map to common applicants and post it on the website, as well. He noted that Burlington has undertaken a similar effort and that Brookline should follow their lead.

MUDDY RIVER UPDATE

T. Brady showed the Commission several pictures of the amphibious excavator. S. Burrington inquired where the soil is being moved to. T. Brady responded that the soil is being tested and either sent to an in-state facility (landfill) or dried and sent to New York state. The Commission discussed the significant size of the watershed, extending up to Cleveland Circle. M. Quigley stated that the Commission should work on educating people about the watershed.

T. Brady stated that the contractor has been segregating out the material for in-state disposal versus out-of-state disposal. He noted that the project was put out to bid on a lump sum basis. At present, the vast majority of material is going out-of-state and there have been discussions regarding cost between the contractor and DEP.

T. Brady noted that the Boston Conservation Commission have placed landscaping activities on hold due to discrepancies concerning areas of disturbance, which could affect the project timeline. T. Brady stated that the project team is encouraging the contractor to look at the resource holistically and to consider what areas need restoration. M. Quigley stated that he feels that T. Brady represented the

Commission's position well. P. Harvey agreed and noted that it is important for the Brookline Conservation Commission and the Boston Conservation Commission to be on the same page.

STAFF UPDATE

The Commission scheduled site visits for The Country Club, Leverett Pond and the processing facility.

T. Brady stated that the tennis courts behind the Baker School received an increase in funds from Chestnut Hill Realty for improvements to the entrance. He stated that the Larz Anderson Project is underway and that it was discovered that the structures were on piers.

T. Brady stated that a significant piece of the Monastery property has been sold. He also stated that the project on Cottage Street is underway, however a Conservation Restriction has not been shared with the Commission yet.

K. Weatherseed updated the Commission on the progress of the Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan, and the Commission discussed some loss of canopy in conservation areas and open spaces. M. Quigley noted how important canopy is in combatting climate change, and asked if there are opportunities for planting in Brookline's parks. T. Brady discussed the potential planting locations shown in the University of Vermont's slides. The Commission discussed their concerns about the rising water level. W. Lohe stated that it is likely affecting many other communities. T. Brady suggested that the first step should be to get a report published in Town. M. Quigley stated that it would be beneficial to quantify the impacts of the changes in hydrology (how many trees lost and the environmental services those trees provided, etc.).

ADJOURN

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

Minutes prepared by K. Weatherseed