

Conservation Commission

Minutes

July 11, 2023

Attendance: David Miller, Chair, Steve Cohn, Reed Pugh, Maratha Hoyt, Zeke Nims, Elaine Vreeland, Administrator.

Minutes: It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to approve the minutes of June 27, 2023, without changes.

Conservation Spaces:

Mt. Pisgah:

Steve spoke about his work with scouts to clean sections under the water tower, removing wood, trees, metal poles and invasive plant species at the entrance. More work is planned for the fall, possibly including a kiosk. He also noted that a neighbor reported that a dog walker is dumping debris and dog droppings within a frequently used dog walking area.

Sucker Brook:

David said that he will be meeting with Eagle Scout candidate Adam Lubomirski to begin the process and speak to neighbors, which should be placed on town land, avoiding any easements.

Town Forest:

David continued that Town Counsel Jay Talerman has written a letter which will be mailed to abutters to cease and desist trespassing in the forest. Should problems continue, more letters will be sent.

SGAR Rodenticides:

Members discussed whether to write a letter in support of bill(s) written to protect local wildlife from Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides. These rodenticides are harmful to wildlife, as they bioaccumulate in predators and kill them in addition to their target rodents. Electric kill boxes are recommended as a replacement, although they must be replaced and emptied more frequently. The Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions has testified in favor of the bills. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to write a letter of support, with David Miller signing on behalf of the Commission.

Aberjona Initiative:

Reed has been working with the Cultural District and town garden clubs regarding landscaping at Judkins Pond at the Griffin Museum. \$10,000 has been raised for invasive species management and landscaping. Reed said that he is putting together a proposal for a landscaping plan. Martha said that she would like to see more information on this on the Chamber of Commerce website, and Reed noted that both the Cultural District and Griffin Museum websites have posted it.

Lynch School: Con't. Public Hearing, Notice of Intent. It is proposed to demolish the existing Lynch School and to construct a new school with a supporting site and utilities.

- **Representatives:** Michelle Callahan, Nitsch Engineering, Ty Johnson, Warner Larson landscaping.
- **Information Submitted:** Lynch Elementary Site Lighting Plan, dated 6/29/23, Lynch Elementary Site Lighting Photometrics, dated 6/28/23, Lynch Elementary Riverfront Credits, dated 7/7/23, Lynch Elementary Planting Plan, dated 7/7/2023.

Michelle noted that they are reviewing Engineering Department stormwater comments. There was also discussion regarding the Riverfront Area template, with specific notation of Area 23 and the 2.5:1 mitigation ratio. Reed said that he would review the updated planting plan and the expanded irrigation plan. There followed some discussion about warranties for tree survivability and landscaping within the bioretention area, either one year by the installers, or more than one year by the Town. There was further discussion about the lighting plan. The lighting on the pedestrian bridge will be directed to the bridge and will not spill into Horn Pond Brook. DEP comments noted the need for a wildlife habitat study, currently being done. David requested colored maps which would include different colors for the bridge, the brook, a view from under the bridge and an aerial view which would include what is soil, what is asphalt and what is water. Reed requested a condition that would include at least temporary irrigation of landscaping across the full site, which could be in a zoned section, and an above ground line. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to continue the hearing to July 25, 2023.

18 Sunset Road: Con't. Public Hearing, Notice of Intent. It is proposed to construct an addition on piers within a floodway. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to open the hearing and continue it to July 25, 2023.

Elliot Park: Reed reported that there is a group of volunteers that wants to adopt Elliot Park and remove invasive species. Reed will meet with the DPW to arrange coordination. The volunteers are prepared to work for two times per month under Reed's supervision.

Conservation Budget Proposals: David requested that members assemble a list of possible projects, and that the Commission should request money from Town Meeting to perform work on conservation spaces. He suggested a figure of 25K, in addition to the annual 10K currently set aside for work on the Aberjona Initiative. Reed noted that the request may meet some resistance from the Finance Committee, which likes to keep tight control on which departments may spend money, and how that money may be spent.

Regulations: David said that he has drafted a document using the Arlington Regulations as a template. He noted that drafting regulations may require an extended period, and that he would welcome other Commissioner's input. He, Elaine, and Town Counsel Jay Talerman will continue with the drafts. He was particularly interested in language that would give the Commission greater regulatory authority over what was termed "land adjacent to" resource areas. He requested a vote to indicate whether Commission members were in favor of drafting regulations. Martha noted that the purpose of the regulations is to clarify the broad goals of the bylaw. Reed supported the idea, and requested to see copies of the drafts as they are written. Steve said he wanted to read what has already been written and noted that there may be resistance to the Commission having any regulations at all. David said that the Commission is vested with the power to draft and pass regulations by itself, and stated that the Select Board is aware of the Commission's work.

10 Converse Place: David reported that the DEP had requested further information from the applicant under the pending Superseding Order of Conditions and noted that the DEP reasoning in the request was much the same reasoning used by the Commission when issuing its denial. Elaine said that she had not received a reply from the Applicants. Steve noted that DEP had stated that the type of landscaping proposed by the Applicant does not count as mitigation.

Climate Change: Martha said that she had met with Sustainability Director Ken Pruitt, who is hosting Climate Solutions Week in September, and wanted to know if the Commission wants to add information to the effort.

Community Day: Scheduled for September 9, 2023. Commission members will discuss contributions at the July 25 meeting.

Submitted by:

Elaine Vreeland

