

Conservation Commission

Minutes

April 25, 2023

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

Minutes: The regular minutes of April 11, 2023 were approved by unanimous roll call vote. The executive minutes of April 11, 2023 were approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Aberjona River Day: Update. It was reported that there was an excellent turnout. Members discussed whether there were other and better ways to advertise, whether the work should be done two times per year, and whether the effort should expand to conservation areas, or land stewards should be doing that work.

Wedge Pond Invasive Species Management Proposal:

Gina Alexander approached the Commission with a proposal to fund an invasive removal and replanting effort, to be done by Parterre Ecological Services, under Conservation Commission supervision. She would pay Parterre. Members voted to endorse the effort and send a recommendation to the Select Board, so they will have the information when deciding whether to allow the work on town land.

Boston Gas: 724-823 Main St. Gas Line. Public Meeting, Request for Determination of Applicability

It is proposed to replace approximately 1,320 feet of an existing gas main along the east side of Main Street and the north side of Lake Street. This section of the existing gas main is aging and has reached the end of its useful service life. BGC is proposing to cap the existing gas main, abandon it in place, and install a new gas main adjacent to the existing line within the existing paved roadways.

Representatives: Kim Drager, Boston Gas Company, Carolyn Gorss, BSC Group
Information Submitted: Request for Determination of Applicability

Work will be done with the 200' Riverfront Area and the 100-year floodplain, with excavation and capping of the line within the 100' Buffer Zone. Best management practices will include refilling the trenches at the end of each workday, and following Boston Gas protocols for dewatering if necessary. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to issue a Negative Determination of Applicability.

314 Highland Ave.: Con't. Public Hearing, Notice of Intent

It is proposed to remove existing retaining walls along the property line, to restore grading, and to replace with a 3:1 slope treated with loam and seed.

It was moved, seconded and approved by unanimous roll call vote to open the hearing.

Representative: David Robinson, PE, Allen and Major Associates.

Information Submitted:

- Notice of Intent, prepared by Allen & Major Associates, dated December 20, 2022, revised April 19, 2023,
- Existing Conditions Plan (sheet V-100,) prepared by Allen & Major Associates, dated and stamped June 30, 2022,
- Landscape Plan (sheets L-101 & L-501), prepared by Allen & Major Associates, dated and stamped December 20, 2022,
- Response Letter, prepared by Allen & Major Associates, dated April 19, 2023.

David Robinson stated that this portion of the overall project is landscaping only and had been approved by the Engineering Department. It was noted that pre-construction and pre-landscaping meetings would be held, and a three-year invasives plan would be developed at that time. Dead trees will be removed. The large blocks will be removed as they are a part of the project at #316. It is expected that grasses will be installed in spring of 2024 after the invasive plants have been removed, and other landscaping will be installed in fall. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to close the hearing and to issue an Order of Conditions.

316 Highland Ave. Con't. Public Hearing, Notice of Intent

It is proposed to remove existing retaining walls along the property line, restore grading, and to grade to a 3:1 slope treated with loam and seed.

Representative: David Robinson, Allen and Major, Engineering.

Information Submitted:

- Site Improvement Plans for Notice of Intent Submission, prepared by Allen & Major Associates, dated and stamped December 19, 2022, revised March 15, 2023 (sheet C-500 revised April 12, 2023,
- Response Letter, prepared by Allen & Major Associates, dated March 15, 2023,
- Operations and Maintenance Plan, prepared by Allen & Major Associates, dated March 15, 2023.

It was noted that the Engineering Department had approved the plans. A watershed analysis had been performed showing that the proposed plan would reduce runoff due to a smaller impervious surface area. Netting will be used to hold soil in place until vegetation is established. Neighbor Peter Baldwin stated that his flooding issues had largely been resolved due to removal of blockage in the pipe that drains his property. He will maintain that pipe going forward. A stone pad will be installed to prevent mud from entering the street. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to close the public hearing and issue an Order of Conditions.

18 Sunset Road: Con't. Public Hearing, Notice of Intent

It is proposed to construct an addition on piers within a floodway.
Continued to May 9, 2023

Eversource - Cross Street at Aberjona River: Public Hearing, Request for Amended Order of Conditions. Eversource. It is proposed to change the method for underground trenchless crossing of the Aberjona River at Cross St. from a jack and bore method to a horizontal directional drill methodology. Applicants requested a continuance to allow for town permission to work in the lay down area on town property. Continued to May 9, 2023.

Town Day:

Members exchanged ideas for outreach, including using materials to engage children, displaying native and non-native vegetation, walks around Mill Pond, maps of conservation areas, wildflower seed giveaways, and land steward sign ups. Redd said that he will be giving tree tours. The matter was continued for further discussion to May 9, 2023.

Parterre Proposal for Mill Pond:

The proposal for the upcoming year's work came in at \$9,997.22. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to approve the proposal.

Volunteer Project for Davidson Park:

Members agreed to positively respond to the idea of removing invasive species at Davidson Park, either now or in the autumn.

Commission Branding:

David presented several possibilities, to be used on letterhead, banners, or posters. Following some discussion, David said that he return with a study sheet for May 9, 2023.

MWRA Project and Tree Replacements:

Questions were raised as to when the trees could be released, whether we could buy them, whether they would reimburse us for the cost, and locations where the trees could be used. The matter was continued to May 9, 2023, so members could make a list of their proposed locations.

Winning Farm Update:

Elaine reported that the last requirements of the Order of Conditions had been fulfilled. The final as-build plans have been received and approved by the Engineering Department, and Conservation Restriction, Public Trails Easement and Emergency Access Easement documents have been submitted and reviewed. The documents will be sent to the Select Board. It was moved, seconded, and approved by unanimous roll call vote to approve the Conservation Restriction, positively recommend the documents to the Select Board, and to release the Certificate of Compliance.

Wright Lock Farm

Elaine reported that she had invited Archie McIntyre from the farm to speak before the Commission on May 9th, for a report regarding any plans for agroforestry and any other work within the Commission's Conservation Restriction area. Ann said that there was a great deal of work being done around the farm pond.

44 Clark Street

Reed reported on issues he has been having with the developer of the property, who has exceeded plan configurations submitted with the Notice of Intent. The impervious surface of the rear patio is greater than proposed, the inspection port is covered with cement, it exceeds the 500 SF stormwater exemption, and drains over the rear slope rather than into an infiltration structure. He said that he had discussed the problem with the Engineering Department and believes that the patio will need to be reduced in size. He said that that the Commission should be more skeptical of less than fully professional plans and less likely to give applicants the benefit of the doubt. Steve Cohn added that any change order on the project should be checked with the Commission or the assigned commissioner.

Winter Pond:

Members discussed that certain abutters to the pond have been engaging in behaviors detrimental to the pond, including throwing leaves, grass clippings and dog feces into the pond, thereby raising the nitrogen and phosphorus counts, causing algae to bloom. Elaine and Ann will work on a letter to be sent to the Winter Pond abutters.

Submitted by:

Elaine Vreeland

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