

Minutes
Watertown Conservation Commission
Philip Pane-Lower Hearing Room
Wednesday, July 13, 2016
7:30 p.m.

Conservation Commission Members Present: Marylouise Pallotta McDermott
Charles C. Bering, Leo G. Martin, Louis Taverna, Maria P. Rose, Patrick Fairbairn

Commission Members Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Christopher J. Hayward, Susan C. Jenness (adopted 10/5/16)

Meeting chaired by Pallotta McDermott.

- 1) Public Hearing – Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) -175 No. Beacon Street - Installation of ramps, rain garden, seating area outside of 150-
buffer zone to resource area - Perkins School for the Blind, Applicant/Owner.**

Sandra Duran, Director of Facilities Management appeared to present the project proposed by Perkins School for the Blind.

Duran explained that the main objectives of the project proposed to take place at the Hilton Building was to house all the children in one building without having to shuttle back and forth between two buildings, and to create one universal entrance that is handicapped accessible by adding an elevator adjacent to the existing one, to create optimal accessibility to all students.

The work associated with this project is taking place outside of the 100 foot buffer zone with just a 50 foot resource area which will be minimally impacted by the project by adding the universal entrance

A rain garden will be planted to enhance the entryway where an attractive seating area will be built to offer students and teachers a pleasant area while awaiting transportation.

There will be an increase in green space as a result of the removal of some of the sidewalk is.

Motion: Taverna made a motion for a Negative Determination of Applicability. Martin seconded the motion,

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached on the decision for a Negative Determination.

- 2) Public Hearing Continuance - Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD)** to identify and approve the Buffer Zone and 200-foot Riverfront Area boundaries in the vicinity of the Arsenal Mall property. There is no work proposed as part of this application. Owner applicant: BP Watertown Retail LLC, Waterpart, LLC

The Conservation Commission (CC) was taken on a site visit on June 14, 2016 in the company of Thomas Liddy, Professional Wetland Scientist from Lucas Environmental and Jeff Heidleberg of Boylston Properties, the Project Manager. All parties were in agreement with the placement of the flags on the wetland site.

A brief discussion was held about the site visit and it was estimated that the upcoming project is expected to come before the CC around November of 2016.

The CC had no additional comments or questions.

Motion: Rose made a motion to accept the Delineated Wetland Boundaries as submitted. Martin seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached with the exception of Fairbairn who was not present for the prior meeting.

- 3) Public Hearing – Request for Amendment to Order of Conditions DEP 321-0160 WWO 15-3** Charles River Pedestrian Bridge Replacement- 114 Rear Pleasant Street/California Street - James Potvin, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Applicant/Owner. Nobis Engineering, Inc., representative.

The original Order of Conditions was entered by the Conservation Commission on March 4, 2015.

David Cloutier of Nobis Engineering appeared to present the request for amendment which came as a result of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) coming up with additional funding. The amendments being applied for would add a formal landscaping plan, and include some minor modifications resulting in improvements to the pathways and trails approaching the bridge increasing their ADA compliancy. All terms for the installation of the bridge remain the same.

Cloutier reviewed the drawings to outline the changes made to the original order of conditions.

Public Comments

Elaine R. Sokoloff- and **Chuck R. Longenhagen, III-** Both residents of 111 Pleasant St. spoke with concern about the area between the old and the new river path on California St. where vegetation was planted last year that has since died off. They expressed concern for the vegetation in this project and requested details about how the DCR planned to ensure the health of the vegetation in this project.

Dan Driscoll, Director of Recreational Facilities from the DCR explained that the vegetation planted on the path on California St. was planted by the contractor beyond the recommended intended planting season that would have ensured a reasonable, healthy outcome. He said that this was not endorsed by the DCR. Driscoll explained the DCR would not intervene in a situation such as what occurred on California St. without voiding the warranty on the plants altogether. Driscoll said new vegetation will be planted when the contractor implements the warranty which has remained in effect, and he expects to see an improvement to the paths on California Street at that time.

Driscoll explained that he was present at this meeting to offer his assistance in this project in any way he was needed.

Elaine R. Sokoloff- Resident of 111 Pleasant St. Ms. Sokoloff spoke about her concern with the trash barrels not being emptied and maintained properly along the river paths in Watertown. She requested information about the strategy the DCR would use for handling trash once the Pedestrian Bridge Project has been completed.

Driscoll explained that in his many years with the DCR he has experienced disappointing results at his attempts to manage refuse on DCR sites such as this one. He gave the example that when barrels had not been covered animals got in and trash would become strewn on the ground. When barrels had been covered he said vandals would throw the covers into the river. Agent Hayward agreed that results had been disappointing when attempting to effectively deal with trash and recycling along the river in Watertown.

Driscoll explained that most DCR sites are carry in carry out policy for trash and recycling. Both he and Hayward agreed that this policy helps to cultivate a sense of responsibility among users of these public spaces.

Driscoll said he remains hopeful that a Big Belly receptacle could be used on this site and assured the residents and the CC that he would look into what he described as this strong possibility.

Commission Discussion

Rose stated that she wanted the DCR to maintain the vegetation in this project for at least one year then inspected by Agent Hayward, before a Certificate of Compliance is proposed to the CC.

In closing his presentation, Cloutier explained that the river pathways in the original Order of Conditions called for a loss of 31 trees to clear the site and make room for the bridge installation to occur by crane. He explained that if these amendments are allowed that only 26 trees will be lost while 31 trees will still be added to the site.

Motion: Martin made a motion to accept the amendments and approve the amended order of conditions. Taverna seconded the motion to accept the amendments and approve the amended order of conditions.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to accept the amended Order of Conditions.

Cloutier thanked the Conservation Commission and said that he expects the project to be underway by November.

4) Follow up Discussion on Informational Presentation – Regional Mixed Use District (RMUD) zoning amendment - How might the Conservation Commission play a role?

Pallotta McDermott referred to a recent email which was written by Jonathan Bockian a former member of the Zoning Board of Appeals which cited several projects now being reviewed to start a conversation among members of the CC.

Fairbairn discussed the original intention for assembling the Conservation Commission. He pondered about how members of the CC could actually be of assistance in the Master Plan Process.

Bering asked if there was a time period in which the CC could make comments on the projects cited in Bockian's email and wanted to know where the projects were in the approval process. He said he thought that the CC should make their jurisdiction known to those they are making comments to prior to comments being made.

Hayward suggested a meeting take place between members of the CC who are interested in this topic. It was agreed that he would make arrangement with Planning, Building and Zoning Officials in order to find out directly what the CC could do to participate in the Master Plan Process that is not already being done by another department or individual.

Hayward agreed to contact the CC when a date and time has been determined.

5) Minutes from June 1, 2016 meeting

Motion: A motion was made to approve the minutes of the June CC meeting by Martin. Rose seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to accept the minutes of the June meeting as amended.

6) Agent report on recently permitted projects

Pallotta McDermott announced that Filippello Park was approved by the town council at their July 12, 2016 meeting.

Hayward reported that the River Dredging Project is complete.

Hayward reported that Greenough Boulevard has received many new tree plantings recently as part of that greenway project.

Meeting adjourned.