



Approved 2.21.2019

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**January 24th, 2019, 7:00 PM****Kingsbury Room, Wellesley Police Station**

Attending: Regina LaRocque, Chair; Raina McManus, Vice Chair; Lise Olney; Laura Robert; Katie Griffith; Brandon Schmitt, Director.

Guests: Stanley Brooks, Jill Creevy, Jim Miller, Phil Landers, Allison Goehringer, Jim Rodrigue, Olivia Rodrigue, Bob Collins, Martha Collins, Ellie McLane, Mike Sweeny, Patrick Kinney, Michael Lueders.

Public Speak

Mr. Brooks requested a continuance on the illegal tree cutting at 75 Central Street.

Appointment

After a motion was made and seconded the board voted 5-0 in favor to appoint Ellie McLane as an Associate member of the Wetlands Protection Committee, effective immediately.

Hearing to Discuss Renovation of Lee/Hunnewell Softball Fields

Ms. LaRocque recapped the design process so far, and reiterated the NRC's wish to create a field that is commensurate to the Girls playing ability.

Mr. Hickey recapped the efforts undertaken by the DPW.

Mr. Bollinger reviewed existing conditions, including the limitations of appropriate outfield dimensions, and ancillary facilities, as well as ADA accommodations.

Mr. Moonan described his investigation of moving the field to the JV field. This option was viewed as highly unfavorable as it displaced several sports and added significant cost. Mr. Moonan also reviewed the technical report submitted to the Town.

Mr. Bollinger reviewed the proposed improvements, including shifting the fields, culverting a portion of the adjacent intermittent stream, and adding a constructed wetland. He then reviewed vegetation management and various impacts to trees on the property.

Mr. Hickey explained that the technical memo submitted was currently in draft form but would be finalized after vetting with the planning committee. He also explained that he saw the culverting technique as an opportunity to improve water quality and habitat and overall value of the resource area.

Ms. McManus inquired about flooding in the area and whether this design would alleviate some flooding issues. Mr. Hickey explained that the historic and designated flood zones are elsewhere, but issues with the depth of the water table create issues that could be improved by the design.

Ms. Olney asked about the culvert and whether a portion would still be open and kept planted in grass. She also asked about pavement requirements for ADA access. Mr. Bollinger said that

permeable pavement would be possible. Finally, Ms. Olney asked about trees along the third baseline. These trees would be impacted to accommodate the shifting of the field.

Ms. LaRocque asked about the outfield seating area, and the white oak (how the root system will be protected). Mr. Bollinger explained that the ancillary facilities might impact the tree and the specifications for tree protection, movement of construction vehicles and excavation will have to be very specific. Ms. LaRocque emphasized that the NRC would like to see how the tree protection will be enacted as a component of the final plans.

Ms. Griffith stated that she was excited about the project's potential to enhance the wetland area and felt comfortable letting the Wetlands Committee make a decision on whether the culvert was an acceptable option.

Ms. Robert inquired about relocating the white pines. Mr. Schmitt said that based on potential failure and cost associated with relocating the trees, he would not recommend it.

Ms. Goehringer, representing the softball team, said that the project would help with drainage on a historically wet field that is unusable through much of the fall.

Mr. Sweeny of Rice Street asked how much room is being gained by shifting the stream and wondered if the field would be gaining enough to make the field regulation, and whether sub-drainage was part of the plan.

Mr. Rodrigue thanked everyone for their efforts. He also asked about access to Lee field, particularly pedestrian access, and how foot traffic might change after construction?

Mr. Bollinger explained that the access would not change significantly, but will make a more ADA friendly entrance and formalize the existing paths. Mr. Hickey stated that improvements to the parking lot would not likely be part of the field improvements, but could be looked at for further improvements.

Ms. Creevy reiterated the importance of storage and dugouts at the field, and stated that softballs ricochet off the white pines creating a safety hazard.

Ms. LaRocque concluded highlighting the challenges of the aggressive schedule, and thanked the group for their efforts.

Illegal Tree Cutting at 75 Central Street

The board discussed the unauthorized tree cutting of public shade trees in front of 75 Central Street and potential fines associated with the act.

Mike Lueders, representing the tree company responsible for the cutting, addressed the board.

After a motion was made and seconded, the board voted to continue the subject at the February 6 meeting.

Continuing Business/Liaison Reports

Wellesley Conservation Council (WCC)/NRC partnership: Ms. Robert explained that the board was assisting the WCC with a speaker for the Wellesley Conservation Council's speaker series. Ms. Griffith reported on the city nature challenge, scheduled for April 26-29, which involved volunteers collecting data on species diversity. The board agreed that the effort could focus on Morses pond and the North 40. More information on the project is available here:

<http://citynaturechallenge.org/>

Gas Leaks: The board discussed ongoing efforts to address gas leaks in Massachusetts and Wellesley, including Ms. Olney's participation in a regional effort to discuss priorities with the

utility. Mr. Schmitt would also be discussing strategies to address gas leaks as they relate to tree mortality.

Director's Report

Project Updates: Mr. Schmitt reported that the DPW would be willing to take on construction of most of the sites at Morses Pond. This would save the Town money and avoid bidding the project out.

Healthy lawn signage: The board agreed to proceed with ordering healthy lawn signs to distribute to residents who have adopted organic lawn management practices.

Adopt-A-Highway; Letters were sent to 50+ local businesses requesting their help with cleanup along Route 9.

FY20 Budget Update: Mr. Schmitt reported that the board had presented their FY20 budgets to the Advisory Committee with positive results.

Approve Minutes

1/3/2019: *After a motion was made and seconded, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as amended.*

Other items not anticipated prior to posting/Schedule future meetings

Ms. Olney commended Ms. LaRocque on her appearance on WBUR's OnPoint. The audio is available here: <https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2019/01/23/climate-change-health-emergency-doctors-health-system>

Adjournment

After a motion was made and seconded, the board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:05 pm.

*A video recording of these proceedings is available online at wellesleymedia.org

Respectfully submitted,

Brandon Schmitt

Brandon Schmitt, Director