



NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

MEETING Minutes

February 21, 2023 7 PM

Warren Building Room 008

90 Washington Street

Approved 3-2-3023

Present: Jay McHale, Chair; Bea Bezmalinovic, Vice-Chair; Lisa Collins, Secretary; Laura Robert; Michael D'Ortenzio; Brandon Schmitt, NRC Director

Welcome and Meeting Guidelines

Mr. McHale convened the meeting at 7:03 PM

Public Speak (non-agenda item)

No one spoke on a non-agenda item.

Director's Report

Mr. Schmitt provided reports on the Lawn Conversion project including procurement of edging material, tillage mats, and plant material. The board also discussed initial ideas for the outreach campaign. Ms. Collins explained that she would be meeting with the Wellesley Garden Study Club, and would participate in the outreach planning.

Mr. Schmitt reported that Weston and Sampson were in the final stages of data collection for the Field Utilization study and would hopefully be presenting it, as well as initial public survey data and information from the field condition/amenities audit at the March Playing Fields Task Force meeting.

Finally, Mr. Schmitt reported that he would be signing a contract amendment for Ken Wagner to begin sampling for the proposed pond dredging projects at Reeds and Duck Ponds.

Liaison Reports

Conservation Land Trust – Mr. D'Ortenzio announced he officially joined the Wellesley Conservation Land Trust.

Playing Field Task Force – Ms. Bezmalinovic reported that Weston & Sampson are still analyzing the team field utilization data. There is an issue with girls' lacrosse because they have to rent fields from a third party since there is not space available through the town. When space is not available for all teams - one thought is to cap team size. There are also issues with timing on setting schedules. PFTF members agreed to make the field permit approvals contingent upon provide of each team's actual schedule by the beginning of the season. The hope is that this will fill in some of the gaps in field usage data. Schools Linda Chow updated the two projects on the fields at Sprague and Hunnewell. PFTF is also surveying teams for who is using existing storage on the fields. The hope is that Weston and Sampson may present at the next PFTF Meeting and the NRC meeting.

Mobility – Ms. Collins noted that there are no bike racks on NRC property and she would like to model the one at the middle school for other NRC properties. Mr. McHale added that they want someone to look at the Aqueduct Bathroom to assess whether the bathroom access is ADA compliant.

CPC – Mr. McHale did not attend the meeting but there is an effort to assess the land at the North 40 so they can identify what should be in a conservation trust.

Climate Emergency

N/A

Approve Minutes

After a motion was made (D’Ortenzio) and seconded (Robert), the board voted unanimously to approve the February 2, 2023 meeting minutes as amended.

New and Continuing Business

Vote on Article 39 Changes to WPC bylaw. *After a motion was made (D’Ortenzio) and seconded (Bezmalinovic), the board voted unanimously to approve the Article 39 bylaw changes.*

Discuss Article 42: Residential Incentive Overlay (RIO) District at 125 Oakland Street. The board discussed the proposed Zoning overlay, with concerns about the impact on the sites existing natural resources, including trees and wetland resource areas, as well as impacts of development on the abutting Centennial Park. *After a motion was made (Robert) and seconded (Collins), the board voted unanimously to request the Planning Board to withdraw the submission of Article 42 as proposed until this Commission has explored all the mechanisms available to the Commission for conservation purposes and natural resource protection. This can include but is not limited to acquisition, maintenance, improvement, protections, restrictions, limitations on use or otherwise conservation and proper utilization, management and control of undeveloped open space.* Mr. Schmitt will send a letter to the Planning office to this effect.

Vote to approve and accept gift of replacement scoreboard: Reidy Field. Mr. Schmitt reported that he had not received any questions from the public about the scoreboard, and that the specifications indicated that while the individual numbers on the new scoreboard might be larger, the overall area of the sign that would be illuminated would be less than the former scoreboard. *After a motion was made (D’Ortenzio) and seconded (Collins), the board voted unanimously to approve the installation of the new scoreboard, and accept the gift of the scoreboard from Wellesley Youth Baseball and Softball.*

Discuss NRC parkways: The board discussed the need to investigate the status of all parkways within NRC parkland and overall vision for how those parkways are maintained.

Handbook Review: The board continued to review the policy manual, and proposed changes, including:

- Aligning the language about disposition of parkland with the new legislation (Chapter 274 of the Acts of 2022). The board also discussed the existing policy requiring a 2:1 exchange ratio favoring open space.
- Confirming the criteria for Evaluating Land Use Changes. Ms. Robert adjusted language under impact on neighborhoods.
- Mr. McHale made a suggestion on the Release of Exchange of Land (Chapter 274) – to simplify the language. Discussion continued about whether you need two-thirds roll call vote from the Mass. General Court. Ms. Robert suggested asking Town Council.

- Mr. Schmitt will find the origin of where the information came from concerning the 2:1 ratio.
Is it a law or bylaw?

Urgent Items Not Anticipated Prior to 48-hours of Posting

N/A

Schedule meetings

Mr. Schmitt shared the meeting schedule for the next two months.

Adjourn

Mr. D'Ortenzio made a motion to adjourn and seconded Ms. Collins. The board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 p.m.

Materials referenced

- Photos of Large Harvester construction progress
- Planning Presentation on Article 42: RIO zoning proposal for 125 Oakland Street
- Draft February 21 Minutes
- Draft NRC Handbook Sections 2, 3.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandon Schmitt, Director