

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

REMOTE ONLINE MEETING MINUTES Thursday, March 23, 2023 7PM

Approved 4/6/2023

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

Guests: L. Crawford, J. Mayell.

Mr. McHale called the meeting to order at 7PM.

Public Speak

- 1 – Laura Crawford, 15 Rice Street – Spoke on protecting Wellesley's Open Space.
- 2 – Jean Mayell, 27 Seaver Street – Spoke about protecting the Town's Open Space and Wetlands.

Director's Report

- Mr. Schmitt presented a request for a permit for Morton Park for an event open to the public on April 8. The board talked about it being in competition with a recreational department event on the same day. Mr. McHale said as long as it is open to the general public and make an effort to make sure the public is aware its' for free. Ms. Bezmalinovic thought the director could approve the permit contingent on confirmation that Recreation was amenable to another organization hosting a similar event on the same day/time as their event and that the group manages clean-up.
- Second permit is for the Irish Artillery Permit. Ms. Bezmalinovic asked about the cannon noise. The group agreed that the group would need to notify the neighbors and what the schedule and frequency for firing the cannons. Ms. Robert asked if they could modify or present an alternative for this year since Town Hall area is closed and the group will be in Morton Park, closer to residents than usual. The NRC will approve as long as Mr. Schmitt is satisfied with the adjustments the group will make on the event days.
- Tree Canopy Study – Asked PlanIT Geo for an overall study by the end of April. The study will give more analysis on Zoning and the impact on the tree canopy.
- Tree Planting Program – Tree Site Visits were started today. The visits took place today and the new trees will be in next month.
- Climate Compact Implementation Grant – The NRC submitted Longfellow Pond as a project for the grant. Mr. Schmitt shared his screen showing the dam. In August 2012 was the last inspection and it was low risk. The new project is to look at this in an attempt to reduce flooding. The CRWA will host a public input session organized jointly with the Town of Natick, on April 11. Ms. Robert asked about the pipeline in the area. Ms. Bezmalinovic asked how far the plan is to go. Mr. Schmitt said based on his discussion it's south from Route 9. Ms. Robert pointed out the parking lot at Longfellow lacks buffer to the pond. Mr. Schmitt explained the effort to get the word out and that they are just exploring the options around the landscape.

Liaison Reports

- Ms. Collins – Mobility is thinking about funding for a bike rack and where else we may want to place them. Looking at multiple options on where we may want to install bike racks on NRC land.

- Ms. Bezmalinovic – Playing Field Task Force – At the last PFTF meeting, members focused on resolving schedules for the spring and summer. Weston and Sampson presented the field utilization data. Initial findings suggest that the Town is short up to 5 rectangular fields but Weston and Sampson is not making recommendations yet. Once they finish their study, Ms. Bezmalinovic will have them present to the NRC board. She also shared an update on the storage at fields. Still waiting to hear from all the teams that store equipment in the field. PFTF mentioned that they are adding netting around the baseball field because foul balls are getting hit into the tennis courts.

- Ms. Robert – Talked about the Wetlands meeting which was based on 55 Rice Street. She shared that the Wetlands is sending out an RFP for another environmental assessment for the area. The next meeting is April 6.

- Mr. McHale shared that Linda Chow and he met Paul Kramer from Recreation involving pickle ball. Recreation is going to do some data gathering as it pertains to Sprague and Perrin Park.

New and Continuing Business

- Tree Hearing for 436 Weston Road – The board discussed the proposed removal of a 32” White pine at 436 Weston Road. The board discussed the desire to think proactively about the existing trees on the road and Planning for the future, as well as replacement trees for those being removed. **After a motion was made and seconded, the board voted via role call to approve the removal of the 32” White Pine. McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, Robert-Yea, Collins-Yea, D’Ortenzio, Yea**

- Vote of Diversity Equity & Inclusion Task Force Meeting Article 17 – After Ms. Collins made a motion to support Article 17 the NRC voted to support Article 17. **McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, Robert-Yea, Collins-Yea, D’Ortenzio, Yea**

- Centennial Reservation Trails – Ms. Robert talked about ideas for drainage dips for property of the S Trail. This would need more funds and structures. The Trail Committee voted to abandon the idea of small fixes under NRC jurisdiction on the S Trail. This would be to cover the damaged trail and divert walkers through the new trail. The Trails Committee wants to take the drainage dips off the table and divert the trail so the area heals. Ms. Bezmalinovic followed up asking about the plans for correcting the area that is eroded. Ms. Robert said Cricket Vlass from DPW will go through the area and offer a solution. Ms. Collins asked about the timing this work would be good for the wildlife and growing season. Ms. Robert said Trails is hoping for a one-day project now. It’s a good season to get it done.

Ms. Robert made the motion to reroute the trail path on the NRC land on the Inner Meadow through the Woodlands on the right and consult with Cricket Vlass on the restoration plan for the eroded existing trail. Mr. D’Ortenzio seconded the motion and it was approved 5-0 by the NRC. McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, Robert-Yea, Collins-Yea, D’Ortenzio, Yea

- Sisters Property (125 Oakland Stret) – The Trails Committee recommended and provided maps for potential conservation restrictions on the property. Ms. Robert recommended investigating acquisition of the entire property. Mr. D’Ortenzio explained the steps for a conservation restriction involving the landowner and the town. He also shared he agreed with Ms. Robert for a plan on this property. He suggested a conversation with the Select Board and Meghan Jop. The discussion revolved around what is the right path to take but Ms. Robert wanted the NRC to be aggressive concerning the property. Mr. McHale said he would reach out to Lise Onley to set up a meeting with the Select Board. Asked Mr. Schmitt to write a memo to start the process for acquisition or putting conservation restrictions on the land.

- Mr. McHale brought up the NRC board members’ participation in Wellesley’s Wonderful Weekend.

Adjourn:

*After a motion was made and seconded the board voted via role call to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 pm
Mr. McHale-Yea, Bezmalinovic-Yea, Robert-Yea, Collins-Yea, D'Ortenzio, Yea*

Referenced materials

Sisters Property Map with potential CR areas

Centennial Trail Map

Draft March 2, 2023 Minutes

Tree Hearing Information

Permit Request Applications: Morton Park (2).