



CITY OF MELROSE

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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Melrose Conservation Commission Minutes for December 16, 2021

Present: Ryan Sloan, Gwendolyn Orford, Jason Jancaitis, Michael Paiewonsky, Chris Redfern, Paul Moore and Eugenia Gibbons* (arrived at point indicated)

Absent:

Staff present: Eric Devlin

Mr. Paiewonsky opened the remote public meeting at 7:30pm. All members participated remotely.

Minutes-

November 18, 2021 meeting minutes.

**Motion by Mr. Paiewonsky to approve minutes from November 18, 2021, as written.
Second by Mr. Sloan.**

Roll Call vote: Eugenia Gibbons- absent, Jason Jancaitis – yes, Paul Moore – yes, Gwendolyn Orford – yes, Michael Paiewonsky- yes, Chris Redfern –yes, Ryan Sloan- yes.
6-0 in favor.

***Ms. Gibbons arrived at this point**

Public Hearing:

Notice of Intent (217-0216) 373 Pleasant Street – Raymond Boghos, applicant and Giovanni Fodera of Fodera Engineering were present. Staff indicated that a DEP file number had been issued for the project (217-0216). Draft special conditions were prepared and circulated among members.

Motion by Mr. Paiewonsky to accept the applicant rebuttal of impacts under the interests of the Wetland Protection Act.

Roll Call vote: Eugenia Gibbons- yes, Jason Jancaitis – yes, Paul Moore – yes, Gwendolyn Orford – yes, Michael Paiewonsky- yes, Chris Redfern – yes, Ryan Sloan- yes.
7-0 in favor.

Motion by Mr. Paiewonsky to issue an Order of Conditions for 373 Pleasant Street with standard special conditions. Second by Mr. Sloan.

Roll Call vote: Eugenia Gibbons- yes, Jason Jancitis – yes, Paul Moore – yes, Gwendolyn Orford – yes, Michael Paiewonsky- yes, Chris Redfern – yes, Ryan Sloan- yes.
7-0 in favor.

Notice of Intent 217-0217 - Ell pond water chestnut mechanical/hydrorake submitted by Solitude Lake Management – Dominic Meringolo, Environmental engineer of Solitude lake Management was present. Mr. Meringolo described the recent water chestnut growth problem at Ell pond, enormous biomass of water chestnuts over significant portion of the pond. Water Chestnut are true annual plant and seeds last for 5-10 years in the pond sediments, most seeds germinate within 3 years. A mechanical harvester proposed for primary water chestnut growth removal and a small hydro-rake. The mechanical harvester is kind of like a lawnmower for a lake. Floating pontoon with paddle wheels and cutting head, the machine is powered by a diesel engine and uses vegetable based, biodegradable hydraulic fluids. It has a conveyer to move material from the cutting head at the front of the machine to a storage area on the back of the machine. Harvester requires water to operate, shallow areas will require a hydro-rake for access.

Material will be brought from the storage area back to the shore for removal. This material will need to be transferred to a dumpster or dump truck at the shore. The parking lot has some large boulders that will need to be moved for machine access during treatment and to allow access to the lake. Details on how material will be offloaded on-shore have a few options for management.

The plan is to employ a mechanical harvester and hydro rake for 3 years and after that time period move to a hand pulling program.

Mr. Paiewonsky- Do you need to add any material (crushed stone) to stabilize the area for machine access?

Mr. Meringolo- Not usually required, this site has a pretty gentle slope in the proposed access area. The offload area could have a dumpster or roll off dumpster partially in the water to directly load the materials.

Staff- Melrose DPW had previously said they could get a bobcat or dumpster available for this work with a couple weeks' notice.

Mr. Meringolo- There are 10-12 acres of dense growth out there, you won't see much improvement over the first (2) two years.

Mr. Paiewonsky- A newspaper article to warn public about expectations on this would be beneficial.

Mr. Redfern- Any concerns about timing of activities for wildlife impact?

Mr. Meringolo- Sometimes there is minor by-catch of fish during the harvesting. Most fish aren't active at the depths that the harvester operates. Wait until July to let most seeds germinate.

Mr. Moore- There have been past difficulties with treatments by this company in the past. Any way to guarantee that this project will not face these same problems?

Mr. Meringolo- There has been trouble with staffing recently. Would like to work with Melrose Staff to lock in a spot for this project.

Mr. Paiewonsky- Is any of this work weather dependent? Is rain an issue for treatment?

Mr. Meringolo- Normal rain isn't a problem, only an issue if rain causes flooding over the vegetation or something like that.

Mr. Jancaitis- Budget changes?

Mr. Meringolo- Need to review the

Budget with Melrose staff. Budget was previously prepared by another person that is no longer with Solitude. Costs are most likely within the same ballpark estimate.

Mr. Sloan- City Ell pond feasibility panel is looking to make sure that access to the lake is improved in the future.

Public Comment:

Finn McSweeney- Is it the goal or a reasonable expectation to remove 99% of the water chestnut biomass? Previously planned to do a hand pull follow-up.

Mr. Meringolo- You should still plan to do the hand pull, The machines are not likely to get 99% of the biomass out.

Mr. McSweeney- Are the machines noisy? Should the City notify lake ave residents when the work will occur so they are aware?

Mr. Paiewonsky- Any other areas nearby with any work like this? Any cases where it worked well or not so well?

Mr. Meringolo- Machines aren't very noisy and wouldn't be operating very close to homes. Some recent work in Arlington for water chestnut removal. I can make a list and send it to Melrose staff for review. The key with water chestnut management is to keep after it year after year. Hand pulling is ongoing, basically forever.

Marlilem Ferentinos- How are the seeds destroyed after removal? Is there any special disposal process?

Mr. Meringolo- The seeds will dry out and not be viable any longer. No special process required other than remove them from the water.

Cindy Luongo- This is a great Christmas present for Melrose!

Motion by Mr. Paiewonsky to issue an Order of Conditions with standard special conditions for the project. Second by Mr. Sloan.

Roll Call vote: Eugenia Gibbons- yes, Jason Jancaitis – yes, Paul Moore – yes, Gwendolyn Orford – yes, Michael Paiewonsky- yes, Chris Redfern – yes, Ryan Sloan- yes.

7-0 in favor.

Continued public hearing Notice of Intent 217-0214 36 Slayton Rd- Staff stated that the applicant has requested to continue to the January 20 meeting date.

Continued to the January 20 meeting date.

Discussion:

FY2023 Budget – Mr. Sloan went over the budget details with the rest of the Commission.

Increase staff hours from 10 to 16 hours. Advertising and printing line items to be kept flat(used for legal ads and trail maps). Conservation line item is the biggest, removal not factored into the original budget. Member/dues line increased to catch up to current 2%

increase/year. Education line item used for classes/conferences. Staff needs to check with the mayor's office to confirm the timeline for spending the earmark funds from the state for invasive species treatment.

Mr. Sloan- Looking to document the process to adjust funding levels for additional hours or other items for future use.

Mr. Moore- Willing to come to budget hearing to support the budget proposal, helpful to see these details on what we actually have for funds.

Mr. Redfern- Earmark from state must be spent out during the calendar year, expire at the end of the fiscal year they were given. Can a multiyear contract be signed with the earmark funds? Under the impression that you need to use it or lose it.

Ms. Gibbons – I think it needs to be obligated by end of fiscal year. Not sure if it actually needs to be spent out by the end of the fiscal year or if it is committed to a contract.

Mr. Moore- Sign a 2-3 year contract and use the money if we have to.

2022 Meeting schedule- Staff circulated a list of the potential third Thursday meeting dates for 2022 and noted any obvious conflicts. Discussion among the commission members to change the April meeting date to April 28th (the 4th Thursday of that month).

Old/New business-

Staff stated that Eagle Scout project to re-route the broken trail near Cunningham way (Knox memorial to Rockyview) has been completed. Staff shared photos from recent site visit.

Mr. Paiewonsky – We should have plan in place for someone else to be the chair if he isn't available for a meeting. Expects that there will eventually be a meeting that he isn't available for and we should have a plan in place for someone else to take over a meeting in that event.

The commission should re-visit the rotating chair option.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be January 20, 2022 at 7:30 PM.

Motion by Mr. Paiewonsky to adjourn. Ms. Gibbons seconded the motion and it was voted 7-0 in favor.

Adjourn

8:52PM adjourn

Approved

Date.

Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law, ' G.L. 39, 23B, the approval of these minutes by the Commission constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Commission as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.
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