



CITY OF MELROSE

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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Melrose Conservation Commission Minutes for September 21, 2023

Present: Charles McCabe, Craig Molway, Forrest Tiedeman, Michael Paiewonsky and Jason Jancaitis. Associate members Sydney Hy and Dorian Rose were also present.

Absent: Paul Moore and Emily Anderson

Staff present: Eric Devlin

Mr. Paiewonsky opened the remote public meeting at 7:31pm. All members participated remotely.

Minutes

August 17, 2023 meeting minutes reviewed for approval.

Invoices:

Staff provided a copy of the invoice for Massachusetts Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals (MSMCP) FY2024 membership for review. A combined roll call vote was taken for simplicity with the intention for two separate motions to approve the minutes and the invoice and a roll call for attendance. Two separate motions are shown below to clarify this intention.

Massachusetts Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals (MSMCP) FY2024 membership) - \$20.00

**Motion by Mr. Paiewonsky to approve payment of the Massachusetts Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals (MSMCP) FY2024 membership) - \$20.00.
Second by Mr. Tiedeman.**

Roll Call vote: Emily Anderson - absent, Jason Jancaitis – yes, Charles McCabe – yes, Craig Molway – yes, Paul Moore – absent, Michael Paiewonsky - yes, Forrest Tiedeman – yes.
5-0 in favor

**Motion by Mr. Paiewonsky to approve the August 17, 2023 minutes, as written.
Second by Mr. Tiedeman.**

Roll Call vote: Emily Anderson - absent, Jason Jancaitis – yes, Charles McCabe – yes, Craig Molway – yes, Paul Moore – absent, Michael Paiewonsky - yes, Forrest Tiedeman – yes.
5-0 in favor

Public Hearing:

Notice of Intent- (217-229) Lynn Fells Parkway and Melrose Street intersection improvements – submitted by MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

Jeffrey Parenti and Val Soroka were present from DCR (applicant), Jessica Wala and Birendra Gurung were present from Nitsche engineering.

Mr. Parenti introduced the team members for the project, he is the deputy chief engineer at DCR, Mr. Soroka is the Project manager from the DCR side of the project and the DCR traffic section head. Ms. Wala and Mr. Gurung are from Nitsche Engineering and will be representing the applicant for the presentation. Mr. Gurung is the project manager from the Nitsche engineering side.

Mr. Parenti gave a brief overview of the proposed project. The intersection is owned by DCR and is currently a high crash location. Two crossing guards are staffed at this intersection and noted that the intersection is very difficult to navigate during school pickup and drop off times and during commuting times.

Ms. Wala - No work proposed within Bordering Vegetated Wetland (BVW) or the No Disturb Zone. Mill and Overlay and replacement of portions of existing sidewalk proposed within the 100 foot buffer zone to BVW. Mill and Overlay, reconstruction of sidewalks, installation of pedestrian ramps and removal of raised traffic islands proposed within Bordering land Subject to Flooding (BLSF). Net increase of 500 square feet of new impervious surface area proposed. Elevation by elevation analysis of flood storage capacity conducted and net increase of flood storage capacity proposed.

Drains currently discharge to stormwater system that ultimately discharges into Ell pond. Existing catch basin depths were measured by Nitsche engineering, 2 or 3 foot sumps found in catch basins on Lynn Fells Parkway. Melrose Street sumps were unable to be confirmed (sediment in sumps prevented accurate depth reading). Melrose Street Sumps are Melrose DPW maintenance responsibility. DCR will coordinate with Melrose DPW to confirm depths of Melrose Street sumps and get sediments cleaned. Catch basins cleaned or inspected 4 times a year, street sweeping once a month. Operations and Maintenance plan also specifies to inspect catch basins after street sweeping as well.

Alternative locations for rain gardens and other green infrastructure analysis were submitted, assumed groundwater elevations and shallow depth of the drainage infrastructure prevented feasibility of any infiltration structures or rain gardens with an underdrain. Mature trees in one of the potential locations also limited feasibility for that location.

Potential special conditions discussed. Standard Melrose special conditions to be used.

Motion by Mr. Paiewonsky to close the public hearing for Lynn Fells Parkway and Melrose Street intersection improvements and issue an Order of Conditions. Second by Mr. Tiedeman.

Roll Call vote: Emily Anderson - absent, Jason Jancaitis – yes, Charles McCabe – yes, Craig Molway – yes, Paul Moore – absent, Michael Paiewonsky - yes, Forrest Tiedeman – yes.

5-0 in favor

Discussion:

2023 Victorian Fair table comments - The Melrose Victorian Fair table was discussed, good turnout until the rain started. Lots of interest on Ell pond and water chestnut, trail maps were popular. Invasive species photos and information were useful materials for the table.

A similar issue from the previous time that we shared a table with the Friends of the Fells was mentioned. Most visitors were not aware that we were the Conservation Commission and not part of the other group that we were sharing the table space with. (No good place to mount a sign since we are on a shared table. More polished materials for the table such as a printed sign-up sheet rather than just the yellow notepad and things like easels to be able to put up materials so that they could be easily seen were suggested as improvements for future Victorian fair events.

Main street location saw much more foot traffic than previous space. Need to discuss this again in the Spring to determine if we should get our own space or other materials.

Open Space and Recreation Plan comment letter – Staff drafted a comment letter to submit to the Planning department for use with the Open Space and Recreation Plan update. Commission members were comfortable with the language.

Florence Ave Conservation Land- Staff spoke with the new owner of 33 Goss Ave about the conservation land. New owner seemed to agree and was instructed to not mow that area with goal of woody vegetation like shrubs to fill in. A volunteer cleanup could be scheduled – use the volunteer site that the school uses that is open to anyone in the city. There is some trash currently on the site and lots of yard waste. The site currently does not have any conservation land signs or no dumping signs on it. A no dumping sign should be added to the site. Birch Hill Road has a no dumping sign, we should get one similar to that for this site.

Staff will check with Parks to see where they get their no dumping signs. Grainger has a generic, aluminum no dumping sign as one potential option.

Ideally get a supply of these signs to have on hand as we find other sites that need them. We should set up at least 2 weeks before the event in order to start getting potential volunteers for the cleanup. DPW will need to know for coordination and get some money budgeted for pizza or something like that. These types of cleanup events should be more of a regular thing/more of an ongoing program.

October 21, 2023 set for cleanup date. Mr. Molway will work on getting something put together for the school volunteer site.

November is also usually a potential month for a cleanup event since most of the leaves have fallen by then and you can see more.

Vernal Pools – Hillside Park area – Tentative approval from Natural Heritage to certify a vernal pool near the Patrick's place development. Informal email approval received so far, very likely to get official mapping update soon.

Other two potential vernal pool locations that were being looked at last spring will need to be revisited this spring. Ms. Rose had put out an audio moth sound recorder in the area to collect evidence. There might be wood frogs on the audio recording data that Ms. Rose collected.

Conservation Land list – Staff sent out an updated conservation land list and made a shared parcel map. A standardized assessment sheet, form, checklist or template should be developed so that each site gets the same questions answered. Encroachment, illegal dumping of trash/yard waste, photos, vegetation type (woody vegetation, grass, bare soil), invasive species status.

Field sheet needs to be developed. Ms. Rose said there are some smartphone apps available for help with some identification such as iNaturalist, Seek and PictureThis.

Ms. Hy offered to help try to put together a form.

Staff suggested to focus on the smaller, isolated parcels closest to the Flagg Acres properties. Also the Porter street/East rock park and the various parcels closest to the Northern edge of the City like Mt. Zion, Corner street and Hawley Rd.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be October 19, 2023 at 7:30 PM.

Motion by Mr. Paiewonsky to adjourn. Mr. Molway seconded the motion and it was voted 5-0 in favor.

Adjourn

8:41 PM 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.
