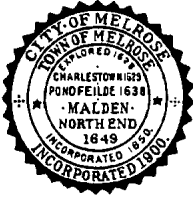


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CITY OF MELROSE

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MICHAEL PAIEWONSKY
Chair

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Melrose Conservation Commission Minutes for February 13, 2025

Present: Chair Michael Paiewonsky, Paul Moore, Charles McCabe, Craig Molway, and Associate members Kaitlyn Calhoun and Dorian Rose (arrived late).

Absent: Forrest Tiedeman, Jason Jancaitis, and Emily Anderson were absent.

Staff present: Ingrid Winkler

Mr. Paiewonsky opened the public meeting at 7:34 pm. All members participated in person.

Public Comment:

Ms. Meghan McDonough of 185 Main Street was present. Ms. McDonough expressed her concerns about invasive species, specifically Japanese knotweed, and inquired about the Conservation Commission's plans to deal with them. Ms. McDonough shared information about programs in nearby communities and listed some grant and funding opportunities including Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) TAP funding and National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grants. Mr. Paiewonsky noted that these grants are extremely competitive and that the Conservation Commission has very limited resources. However, the Conservation Commission would be willing to support efforts by and work together with other groups and communities since multi-community projects and strong volunteer efforts are favorably looked upon by those awarding grants.

Ms. McDonough also mentioned the iNaturalist mapping app and suggested that perhaps trail stewards and other volunteers who regularly walk the trails in Melrose could use this app to help survey and inventory invasive plants in the area. Mr. McCabe suggested that Ms. McDonough reach out to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Friends of the Middlesex Fells, and to Claire O'Neil of Earthwise Aware for more information.

Review of Minutes:

Conservation Commission members reviewed draft minutes from January 16, 2025, meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Moore to approve meeting minutes for the January 16, 2025, meeting, seconded by Mr. Paiewonsky. Motion was approved 4-0.

110 Penney Road:

On behalf of the Conservation Commission, staff sent repeated requests to the property owner to stabilize the site where soil had been disturbed during previous unpermitted work. Specifically, the Commission requested that the homeowner apply a layer of straw mulch on the sloped area and install a row of filter fabric, backed by staked straw bales or wattles, along the limit of activity between the disturbed areas and the wetland. The homeowner did not respond to the requests and as of January 15, it did not appear that any site stabilization had been attempted.

The City Solicitor suggested that Conservation Commission send a letter to the homeowner that defines what compliance will entail and sets a date when compliance must be achieved and upon which fines would start being issued. The Commissioners reviewed a draft letter prepared by staff and s. 231-14(E) of the City ordinance which pertains to enforcement to determine which fines would apply. The Commissioners will request that erosion control around the disturbed area (with filter tubes placed under any snow) be installed within two weeks from when the letter is sent and that the homeowner appear before the Commission at their next meeting in March to discuss any plans for future work at the site and long-term stabilization of the site in the spring. Mr. Paiewonsky will work on the draft letter.

155-157 Main Street:

A garage behind the property at 155-157 Main Street is encroaching (located almost entirely) on a City-owned Conservation parcel on Mount Vernon Avenue. Staff sent a certified letter to the property owner of 155-157 Main Street regarding this encroachment issue on January 30. Staff tracked the letter, but no authorized recipient was available at that address. Staff will resend the letter to the new mailing address of the property owner.

Encroachments onto Conservation Land:

The City Solicitor is continuing to look into the process of designating certain paper streets and other City-owned parcels as Conservation Land so that they would fall under the care, custody, and protection of the Conservation Commission.

Pond Maintenance updates:

During the last meetings, the Commissioners discussed doing more testing and sampling, especially for Ell Pond, and using analytical results to guide the treatments of the ponds in order to be more deliberate with those treatments. Continuing that discussion, it was suggested that, prior to installation of any filters (EutroSORB filters as recommended by Water & Wetlands), samples should be collected during or after a rain event from all inflows into Ell Pond as well as in the middle of Ell Pond to get a better understanding of the sources of phosphorus in Ell Pond. The Commissioners had questions about the flow capacity through the EutroSORB filters and whether those filters can back up. Staff reached out to W&W for clarification.

According to W&W, the filters weigh approx. 25 lbs each and would be installed at each location to maximize flow through and therefore efficacy of the filter. Too much flow would not back up as excess water would just flow around the filter. If high flow is anticipated at a specific location, the filter would be staked down to secure it. Initial sampling ideally would take place in March so that filters could be installed in April. The Determination of Applicability for chemical

treatment for nuisance vegetation as part of an ongoing maintenance program for Ell, Swains, and Towners Pond (2/22/2023 - 3 yrs) as well as the Order of Conditions for the management of Water Chestnuts in Ell Pond (12/29/2021 - 5 yrs) are still valid and have been extended for 2 years by the Permit Extension Act.

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to approve W&W to conduct water quality testing at Ell Pond this spring, at up to 8 inflows into Ell Pond plus a background sample, not to exceed \$2,500, seconded by Mr. Moore. Motion was approved 4-0.

Bench in Memory of Eric Devlin: The plaque for the bench in memory of Eric Devlin is done. Staff reached out to the Parks Department (Rob Carillo, Superintendent of Parks and Open Spaces) to discuss a Request for Determination of Applicability for vegetation management around Ell Pond to open viewing windows. The RDA should cover invasive species management and any tree work, to be done at the discretion of a trained arborist for the health and well-being of trees around the pond and with approval of or at direction of ConCom or conservation agent. Staff will revisit with Mr. Carillo to further discuss placement of concrete pads for installation of benches around Ell Pond Park.

MWRA Maintenance Notification: The Conservation Commission received notification that maintenance and repair of sewer lines and manholes along several MWRA sewer sections in Melrose has been postponed but the scope has not changed. This work was scheduled to begin in Spring 2025 but is now scheduled to begin in Spring 2026 and will last until Spring 2028. It will include installation of structural liners within the sewer sections and repair of sewer manholes. Some of the work is within the 100-ft Buffer Zone, 200-ft Riverfront Area, and Bordering Land Subject to Flooding associated with Spot Pond Brook. The Conservation Commission had reviewed the plans and concurred with MWRA that these activities are exempt from WPA review under 310 CMR 10.02(2)(a).

43 Rivers Lane (DEP File # 217-0228): A request for a Certificate of Compliance has been filed and staff conducted a site visit. Staff recommended postponing the hearing to allow for site cleanup, stabilization and removal of sedimentation controls.

Reappointments: City Council is now requiring letters of interest from candidates for reappointments. The reappointments of two commissioners are currently in process.

Mullin Rule: The Conservation Commission discussed whether to accept the Mullin Rule which would allow members who missed one meeting to be able to vote on a matter after certifying in writing that all evidence from the missed session had been reviewed by that member. The Commissioners agreed that the Mullin Rule should be adopted.

Other items:

A contractor contacted staff to inquire what is permitted to be built on a residential parcel in Floodzone A. The property in question is located almost entirely within the floodplain and therefore they may be limited in what can be done. Staff will recommend that they reach out to Inspectional Services or consider hiring a consultant.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be March 20, 2025, at 7:30 PM.

Motion made by Mr. Paiewonsky to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Molway. Motion was approved 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:56 PM.

Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law, M.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.