

Melrose Conservation Commission

Minutes for April 15, 2010

Present: Susan Murphy, Kate Hickey, Kevin Anderson, Joe Nerden and Steve Locke

Absent: Richard Doucette

Discussion Items

Ms. Kara Showers and Mr. Joe Singer from the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition came before the Commission with a presentation on the work that the group is doing and highlighted areas where teenagers are partying in the woods within Melrose. The Coalition is using grant monies to decrease the drug and alcohol abuse within the city. Melrose just recently enacted the Social Host liability ordinance which will include fines. The Coalition's approach is designed to reduce problem behavior by changing the environment. Joe outlined some of the party hotspots where there have been signs of beer cans and other paraphernalia. They made suggestions to deter kids from going into the woods such as having lights and posting rules & regulations, so that the Police could refer to them, and putting trash barrels out to help with the debris.

Ms. Murphy advised Kara and Joe of the plans that Commission members have been discussing, such as posting signs and upgrading the parking lot at Flagg Acres. There was some talk about Community Service and having the kids do some work on the trails including clean up of trash such as beer cans. Members thought that leaving a barrel out would require DPW or someone else to empty it and the possibility that animals would get into the trash, creating more of a nuisance condition. Most members felt it is more of a police enforcement issue. Kara and her group were welcomed to be included in the Friends of the Melrose Conservation Commission and help out with trail clean ups and other events that might go on. The Commission agreed to look into establishing rules and regulations for Commission land. Ms. Murphy offered to speak with the City Solicitor.

Bennett's Pond Brook Phase III DEP# 217-0173

As a follow up to the Commission's April 1st meeting, a letter was received from Matt Shuman, Project Engineer for the City, advising the Commission of some design changes the DPW would like to make regarding the project. They are proposing to install a permanent headwall and debris rack because of maintenance issues with the Flared End Section (FES) and animal guard installed at the drain inlet at Bay State Road and Damon Ave. During the storm event that happened on March 13th the city removed the FES and animal guard as an emergency measure because they were clogged, holding back water, and the debris could not be sufficiently removed because of access issues. Members had no objection to the changes as long as the inlet elevation and location remains the same.

Mr. Nerden moved to approve the alteration to the inlet as proposed with no alterations to inlet elevation or location. Ms. Hickey seconded the motion. Voted: Unanimously in favor.

Mt. Hood Meeting

Mr. Locke met with Joan Bell, Parks & Rec. Superintendent and Tim Post from North East Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA). Mr. Locke passed around a Draft Trails Proposal created by NEMBA. Mr. Locke explained to members that they plan to create a stacked loop, shared-use trail system. Steve went out with Joan and walked the area. The trail at First Pond is largely unmarked and does not go around the entire pond. Steve said that they discussed doing two phases. First phase would include making sure the trails were evident and clear to pass over, accessing near the maintenance shed. The second phase would require moving the trail back away from the pond, which would involve flagging the wetlands and seeing what, if any, clearing was needed. Joan wants to add signs for path awareness and add crushed stone. NEMBA's ideas are more intense, to make a bike trail with berms and regrading and reconstructing trails. Steve said that he told NEMBA that they would need to file with the Conservation Commission for more intensive work. Joan will have the trails flagged to see if a filing needed to be done for moving the trail back away from the pond.

Steve said that Joan would like the city to establish a plan first before having the management group execute any trail improvements or changes. She also talked about possibly using convicts to do the cleaning of trails and offer to assist more directly in the planning process.

Commissions expressed concern that NEMBA's proposal to Joan seemed to be the same proposal presented to the Conservation Commission just last year and that relying on NEMBA to enact trail changes without an already well throughout plan by both Commissions (Parks & Rec. and Conservation) could result in negative environmental impacts by both Commissions. Steve advised them that if it is just the intent to mark the trails and clear the trail way, they could move forward. If more extensive work needed to be done, a filing would be required from ConCom. Members would like to talk directly with Joan, possibly out at the site, and review what she has marked for the trail.

Adjourn

Mr. Anderson moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 PM, seconded by Mrs. Hickey, and voted unanimously in favor.

Approved _____ Dated _____