CITY OF MELROSE

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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Melrose Conservation Commission
Minutes for January 21, 2016

Present: Susan Murphy, Zachary Drench, Kevin Anderson , Aaron Weieneth

Absent: Michael Paiewonsky, Richard Doucette and Kate Hickey

Ms. Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Minutes:

Motion by Mr. Weieneth to approve the minutes from January 07, 2016. Mr. Drench seconded the motion and it was voted 4-0 in favor.

Discussion Items:

Community Garden- Gosia Symons, Joan Bell, Bob Boisselle and Erin Zwirko present. Ms. Murphy explained to the commission that Ms. Zwirko had contacted the commission for input regarding the potential location of a community garden at Flagg Acres. The community garden search committee recently had the potential location area staked out and discovered some unfavorable topographic features in their original area, so they also staked out an alternative location. The alternative location is in the same general area and would eliminate the tunnel effect that the original plot layout would have created.

The updated proposed plot layout would include twelve 10'x10' plots arranged in two rows of six plots, located on the south side of the trail. The plots as shown included a 4' wide aisle between each plot, a wood picket fence on the south west side and chain link fence on the remaining three sides.

Ms. Murphy- What would be the timeline for this project and is there funding already in place? Is a 4' aisle between plots necessary? Ms. Zwirko- We would still need to get a decision from the state whether this would be an acceptable use for Article 97 land. No funds specifically designated for this project at the moment, but funding could be arranged once a more definitive plan has gained the required approvals from both the state and city departments. Ms. Bell- we have arranged to mitigate some of the cost of additional labor through help from the city DPW, our biggest expected costs associated with this project would most likely be the materials for the fences. Mr. Boisselle- at the Winthrop garden, each garden is a 10' x 10' plot but you sacrifice a 1' border of your plot as an aisle between the adjacent plots (essentially a 9'x9' plot to actually use) thereby allowing for a 2' aisle. Rather than a wood raised bed, there is an option for a felt package that you fill with soil and sits on the surface like a raised bed but without the

additional construction cost. They are biodegradable and last about 3 years. At the Winthrop School there are some issues with wildlife browsing on gardens, expect more at this site. Ms. Symons- the 4' border is really there to distance the plots from pets on the trail. Ms. Zwirko- the plot spacing can be reduced and the fence can be moved to reduce the total overall footprint, a new updated plan will be generated to reflect this.

Ms. Murphy- Will tree clearing be necessary? Do you know the sizes and number of trees to be cut? Ms. Bell- We can have someone from the City forestry department come out and identify the trees that would need to be cut and report what species they are. Ms. Murphy read some written comments from Mr. Doucette- Is the parking area sufficient for trail users and gardeners or will it need to be expanded? How many people are on the waiting list at the Winthrop community garden? Mr. Boisselle- We have 1 or 2 cars at a time on an average day, maybe 3 at a time on the weekends at the Winthrop garden. Any potential parking issues could be spelled out in rules that could be developed for the parking area. There are currently four names on the waiting list for the plots at the Winthrop school and interest in the gardens is cyclical with ups and downs, people try it out and see if they like it or not. Ms. Symons- we would attempt to keep the plots filled, but we can't guarantee full utilization. Any vacant plots could potentially be used for seed library production. Ms. Bell- Perhaps the garden plot area could be started smaller and scaled up over time to meet demand.

2017 Conservation Budget- The commission discussed the previous year's budget and deemed it sufficient for the coming fiscal year with a few minor revisions.

Motion by Ms. Murphy to approve a level funded conservation budget with changes for other charges to $645 for member dues and $355 for education. Mr. Drench seconded the motion and it was voted 4-0 in favor.

Next Meeting:
The next scheduled meeting will be Thursday, February 11, 2016 at 7:30 PM.

Adjourn
At 8:30 PM Mr. Anderson moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Weieneth and it was voted 4-0 in favor.

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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.