

TOWN OF  
**STONEHAM**  
MASSACHUSETTS

Town Hall  
35 Central Street

**Stoneham Conservation Commission**  
**781-279-2696**

**STONEHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**July 10 2023 REMOTE 7 PM**

From your computer, tablet or smartphone. <https://meet.goto.com/962129325>  
Phone Access Code: 962-129-325 United States: [+1 \(408\) 650-3123](tel:+14086503123)

Phil Goff VHB, Erin Wortman, Dennis Sheehan, Jennifer M, Michelle Perry, Martin Wantman,  
Joan Lemire, Ellen McBride, Matt

Jessica Gerke, Norman L'Esperance, Alex Rozycki, Megan Day, Domenick Cimina and Richard  
Jackson

**DISCUSSION**

**Spot Pond Recreation Trail**

*Dennis Sheehan, Erin Wortman, Phil Goff VHB*

Phil Goff is Transportation planner in Watertown, feasibility study about a year ago for  
loop trail around Spot Pond. Spot Pond Circumferential Trail Project presentation,  
Middlesex Pond reservation, roadways DCR parkways. Project goals safety, connectivity  
for ADA and nature trail, efficiency to incorporate existing trails, environmental with  
DCR and MWRA with archeological resources, aesthetics to include views of trailheads  
and pond views maximized.

Accessible circumferential trail loop diagrams, bike lanes and 6 insets: Stone Zoo,  
Executive Drive, Flynn rink, Straw Point, Sheepfold area and Wright's Pond

Straw point inset- wider path adjacent to parking, striped parking, pedestrian  
improvements to DCR. Multiple meetings with MWRA, Mass Dot, City of Medford,  
Stone Zoo, Friends of Fells, Fellsway Caucus, and DCR.

Stone Zoo inset- along Woodland and Pond St recommend reduce to one lane each  
direction with bike lanes, new crosswalks, and intersection improvements

Executive Drive Inset- Woodland Rd road reconfiguration, widening shoulders to include  
bike lanes, stone dust path for walking, longer term recommendation for more park like  
experience if move cars to one side.

Sheepfold Area Inset – new sidewalk and crossing with flashing beacon to cross fells trail,  
Fellsway West recommend bike lane buffer and long term 10+ years reconstruct parkway  
with travel lane and shoulder and then separated bike lane with widened sidewalk.

I-93 Pinch point- between spot pond and I-93 has 25 foot grade change, formalize walking trail as goal. Widen I-93 shoulder with Mass DOT for foot path or mid-slope path with DCR coordination that may involve retaining walls to create footpath or boardwalk which would involve DCR and MWRA in Spot Pond. Mid slope path scored the best (safety/comfort, connectivity, engineering challenge, permitting, user experience.)

Next steps publish conceptual plan recommendations, met with Stoneham Select Board, coordinate with state agencies such as DCR, setup a quarterly basis loop trail committee, develop a scope of work, develop fundraising plan, focus on low cost projects in coordination with DCR, develop a logo to brand it and create excitement/momentum.

Richard Jackson asks about funding- Mass Trails grant paid for VHB. Phil Goff answers a variety of places, perhaps legislative earmarks and that a committee can look to legislative leaders.

Erin Wortman concept study facilitated by Senator Lewis and Representative Day earmark. Additional phases of funding tbd. Dennis Sheehan talked about stakeholder interviews, managed by other agencies like mass highway/mass DOT/DCR so advocacy to spend their monies in our Town.

Megan Day asks about subject to wetlands so when is Conservation part of process? Dennis Sheehan answers when engineering projects and studies are proposed then Conservation would be consulted.

Richard Jackson asks if maintenance is done by DCR on their property? Dennis Sheehan answers yes. Richard Jackson asks if Town of Stoneham is going to be responsible for maintenance on any path. Dennis Sheehan answers it'll be treated like the Fellsway and other paths around Town. Richard Jackson asks if Phil Goff has walked trail? Phil Goff answers yes mostly. Richard Jackson asks if pinch point by Medford next to 93 to parking lot across from old Friendly's? 50% of that area is real tight pinch point according to Phil Goff. Richard Jackson asks if we can stay away from Sheepfold and stay on Medford side? There is space for nature trail next to Pond but in feasibility study to make that a shared use path would be too challenging with pinch points with too much impact to resources, use of Fellsway West is recommended. Plan D per Richard Jackson keep plan tight to pond for walking, safety part coming out of Medford that anything near roadway seems dangerous. Phil Goff answers side path with barrier and landscaped offset is intention. Widening shoulder or sidewalk for bike path.

Dennis Sheehan another option instead path of least resistance people go underneath 93 and end up on Fellsway West.

Richard Jackson asks if there is a path at Straw Point? Phil Goff answers people are going out there. Dennis Sheehan said it's not well established.

Norman L'Esperance comments that you'd have to walk along Route 28. Richard Jackson asks Norman L'Esperance if area can be improved upon? Norman L'Esperance answers steep slope, may not be cost effective.

Megan Day what plans are there to connect this back to Stoneham? Dennis Sheehan mentions branding campaign, way finding signs so folks in Stoneham know how to access paths. Intersection redesign at Friendly's and how does that transition into route 28?

Alex Rozycki good opportunity, would parking become an issue? Consider interconnection of high school wetlands and include Spot Pond. Do we have a map of where the Town has ownership with DCR MWRA and Mass Dot? Where do we have jurisdiction? Phil Goff replies Wright's Pond is city of Medford, everything else roadways and parkways are DCR, land between park and parkways/Middlesex Fells is DCR/state land. MWRA per Dennis Sheehan may have concerns about infrastructure asset.

Ellen McBride mentions jurisdiction within 100 feet of wetlands, stream is 200 feet jurisdictional. Has there been work done, deer hill is animal trail full of poison ivy, to manage wildlife of Middlesex fells? Vernal pools on maps, is there a timeline? Dennis Sheehan answers DCR has competing interests, support within community helps gets project on to their capital schedule. Phil Goff responds to question of whether Stoneham taxpayers will be tasked that funding options were represented as choices. Dennis Sheehan says Stoneham may involve some level of funding for collaboration. Ellen McBride wants to be sure we aren't spending Stoneham money on state roads. Kayaks can be rented on spot pond, though you can not bring your own.

Michelle Perry asks in chat what is the cost of Option B and what is the impact to Stoneham taxpayers? Why is the presentation a draft not final presentation for attendees? Erin Wortman answers it should not say draft. Conceptual visioning without cost breakdowns. Michelle Perry thanks TA for transparency.

Jessica Gerke thanks everyone for coming. Dennis Sheehan asks what involvement Conservation Commission would like to have? Norman L'Esperance supports improving the loop.

### **Letter to Neighbors- Hall Rd**

*Jessica Gerke*

Asks Commission if names should be included on letter, decided to mail as SCC only.

### **Miscellaneous**

Topics for Future Agendas-

Megan Day suggests Open Space and Recreation plan review. Megan Day will forward to group.

### **Approve Meeting Minutes from June 12, 2023**

Motion to approve minutes from Norman L'Esperance and seconded by Richard Jackson. Roll call Norman L'Esperance, Richard Jackson, Domenick Cimina, Jessica Gerke and Megan Day 5/0 yes

Next Meeting August 7, 2023

Motion to adjourn public hearing and move into executive session to not return to open session by Norman L'Esperance and seconded by Megan Day Roll call Norman L'Esperance, Richard Jackson, Domenick Cimina, Jessica Gerke and Megan Day 5/0 yes

### **Executive Session**

To discuss strategy with respect to all pending litigation where an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the Town and the chair so declares pursuant to Mass. Gen. L. c. 30A sec. 21(a)(3) to wit: Rear Hillside v. Stoneham Conservation Commission