

TOWN OF
STONEHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

Town Hall
35 Central Street

Stoneham Conservation Commission
781-279-2696

STONEHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 26 2024 Virtual 7 PM

Join from your computer, tablet or smartphone. <https://meet.goto.com/842257757>
Phone +1 (408) 650-3123 Access code: 842-257-757

Jessica Gerke, Megan Day, Richard Jackson, Domenick Cimina, Alex Rozycki, Rich Kirby, Jennifer Relstab, Amy Ball, Jamie McCarthy, Robert Thomas Jr, Camille and Bob Thomas, Martin Wantman, Rich Kirby, Cat Pedemonti, Joan Snyder

PUBLIC HEARING

Stoneham High School Wetlands Restoration #297-0416

Jennifer Relstab, Horsley Witten Group
Notice of Intent

Sr Water resources engineer with Jamie McCarthy environmental scientist. June 2023 provided informational presentation of concept. Project team includes Dennis Sheehan and Erin Wortman, Mystic River Watershed Association with Daria Clark and Catherine Pedemonti, MVP group Carolyn Mecklenburg. Horsley Witten Group Jennifer Relstab, Amy Ball Sr Ecologist, Jamie McCarthy Environmental Scientist, Michael Easier landscape architect. Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant fall 2022 secure \$100,000 for high school storm water with match from Town to undertake design. Field work assessments and permitting, public engagement and grant completed by June 30, 2024.

Site at Stoneham High School (SHS), site primarily on southern portion. Wooded area, used to be agricultural land until midcentury when there was more development of schools and residences. Site abuts DCR property, connects to Middlesex Fells, Spot Pond and Whip Hill. Connect trail to existing trails to Doleful Pond and Whip Hill.

Resource areas including Bordering Vegetated Wetlands(BVW) and Isolated Vegetated Wetlands(IVW) and intermittent stream. Wooded property, connections in adjacent Dapper Darby, Karen Drive and SHS. Aerial image shows resource areas. Site assessment and surveying for invasive management and site conditions, debris including cars, machinery, concrete, boulders, dumping from neighborhoods. Densely covered and overgrown. Intermittent stream is fairly healthy. Invasive species listed. Limited native species.

Site limited access. Chain link fence on southern side behind bleachers of high school. Removal of fence to connect to cul de sac at Dapper Darby Drive, as well as Karen Drive access. Trash and dumping areas prevalent.

Priorities to restore wetland hydrology and improve capacity by removing trash. Improve biodiversity and ecosystem by planting native species and removal of invasive species. Wetland used to be larger, restore some previous conditions. Accessible ADA pathways for pedestrians to harmonize with environment. Provide educational opportunities for students and residents.

Public engagement fall 2022 meetings, spring 2023 direct mailing, summer 23 met with conservation commission, fall 23 met with public at high school, 4000 community members were contacted.

Project design temporary construction access Karen Drive. 16' wide temporary construction access, temporary bridge crossing, temporary construction fencing and silt socks, removal of 24 trees. 4 access points, 2 on north, 1 on western with stairs and 1 stone stairs access. 4/10th mile ADA pathway that is 6 foot wide. Dapper Darby and Karen Drive proposed as access.

Boardwalk over intermittent stream, low impact strategy, helical piles for boardwalks. Restoration of 2 primary areas, remove debris of appliances, cars, boulders and invasive species. Grading to allow connection to BVW and intermittent stream. Will try to use boulders on site. May use trees to stabilize areas.

Project benefits addresses 3 acres of invasive species management, revegetating with 64 native trees and 169 shrubs. Creating 9500 sf additional wetland area. Creating accessible paths and 2 accessible entrances. Native seed for disturbed areas.

Jenny McCarthy resource areas presentation. Inland Bank, land under waterbodies and waterways is stream, BVW along river, IVW to be connected to BVW, 2 buffer zones for local bylaws.

BVW and isolated area with buffers around them. Chart of impacts shows affected resource areas. Impacts are due to trail going in. Invasive Species carpets area and will require maintenance for 3-5 years.

Community workshops April 13, 2024 for preconstruction invasive species management and debris removal and high school involvement. Contractor led application before June 30, 2024. Soil characterization, design of site amenities signage and connections. Working on grant funding, hopeful to apply this spring and talking to Town of Stoneham.

Operations and maintenance plan for trash and issues raised by community.

Jessica Gerke asks if proposed access points are new? Jen Relstab answers same trail head locations that exist, access through public property. Jessica Gerke asks if there are other drainage pipes from surrounding neighborhoods and answer is everything is overland flow. Adjacent neighborhoods outlet to other areas, culvert underneath high school.

Richard Jackson asks if Buckman Pond is involved with this area, answers no. Does stream end up in Doleful Pond? Yes it connects through and down to Doleful Pond towards Spot Pond eventually. Is Karen Drive a new access spot? It is existing, footpaths connect. Construction start 2025 funding dependent. Should be a 6 month project. Access on northern side of property coordinate with SHS construction contractors. Long term maintenance of pathways proposed to handle same as parks. Limited stairs, annual inspections proposed. Town is responsible for maintenance. Looking for funding for invasive species management.

Domenick Cimina asks how far south of Karen drive? Answer is not far, 10-15 feet as least amount of disturbance to stream. Not extending to Doleful Pond watershed area. Have talked to DCR but not proposed at this point. Not changing flow, proposed connection to help with hydrologic connections to improve water storage.

Megan Day excited to see, how much money is needed to complete? MVP and other sources for funding estimated \$1.5 million.

Jessica Gerke asks if notice of intent is needed for grant work? Answer is to prepare Town for grant opportunities. Permits need to be in hand with applications.

Alex Rozycki asks for layout of proposed treatment of wetlands, outlined in project benefits, don't want to box ourselves out to include second portion. Determine end line of invasives which will take years to battle. Invasive species management strategy will be difficult, intent to do 3 acres. Grading work will remove some species. Left an area on the south where a connection could be proposed. Will need to talk to DCR with phased approach. Sara White is climate resiliency staff at DCR they've been talking to. Alex Rozycki suggests leaving Karen connection wider as an option. Topography challenges, some encroachment on Karen Drive is response. Alex Rozycki talks about what access would look like, difficult to do test pit without tree removal, how do we plan to manage export of soil on site? Soil borings with geoprobe, some machinery is small, steep slope off Karen Drive. Get close to location of boardwalks, relative information. Concern about export of contaminated soil, minimizing grading and reuse boulders, some soil may be removed.

Martin Wantman 20 Gerald Rd intermittent stream can it make it to Buckman Pond? Answer no. Headwall question of size? 36. Martin Wantman says it comes from North meeting house brook from Brookmeadow property, would like to see more flow from Weiss Farm issues. Drainage area map shared from SHS project. Alex Rozycki believes this project will help with watershed.

Camille and Bob Thomas 33 Dapper Darby Drive concerned with liabilities. Coyotes howling, packs of coyotes could attack, dogs are threats and not afraid of people. Fires as concern, can firetruck get through trail. Pollution from teenage parties. Safety and maintenance – light pollution in residences, put cameras around and spotlights. Will trails be patrolled by police. 31 years ago moved to private wetlands and don't want trails developed. Responses are no lighting, coyote and wildlife impact will improve with balanced ecosystem, no deterrents for wildlife. Visibility for safe space with distinct access points. Town parcel not private property. This project will include wetlands restoration.

Alex Rozycki motions to close public hearing seconded by Richard Jackson. Roll call yes Megan Day, Alex Rozycki, Richard Jackson, Domenick Cimina and Jessica Gerke 5/0

Amy Ball looking for order of conditions within 21 days.

DISCUSSION

Weiss Farm

January update provided by David Cowell

Richard Kirby LEC for 170 Franklin St, superseding order of conditions with DEP and Hancock Associates Environmental Scientist. Met with David Cowell last Friday at Weiss Farm late morning. Walked site clockwise from site entrance. Pictures shown. Erosion controls inspected on perimeter. Boulder rolled down hillside. Storm water runoff seemed solid. Enlarged basin when water levels were high. No discharge or pumping of water questioned by Alex Rozycki, Rich Kirby saw no evidence of pumping or dewatering apparatus.

Blasting pads keep debris from ejecting out of ground. Compost sock correct means and methods because they last longer than hay bales. On site aggregate processing. Stream crossing bridge structure shows erosion controls. Dewatering hose in northeastern portion. Area for sediment to collect and functions as a dam.

Weir installed and replaced in 7 hours so limited work in the stream. Planting plan to revegetate bank with shrubs and saplings. Bank stabilized. Will seed erosion control pollinator mix this spring.

Townhouse foundation installation, limit of work line with erosion controls and storm water infrastructure. Recommended street sweeping, scheduled once per week with Millennium. Recommended silt sacks in 2 catch basins on north side of Franklin Street. Entrance will need to be watched and refreshed as needed.

Rich Kirby spoke with David Cowell about revegetating bank, and stabilizing bank and test run with pump house. Potential for downstream flooding. Walk downstream with Brett Gonsalves to see if anything needs to be cleaned out. Culverts are hard to evaluate. Once pump house is turned on David Cowell/contractor/Brett Gonsalves should walk stream to see how it is flowing towards Doleful Pond. Told Silt sacks will be installed on Saturday but hasn't heard back from David Cowell yet.

Will culverts be camera'd asked Richard Jackson? Rich Kirby refers to Brett Gonsalves' expertise. Will there be a pump building? Enclosure proposed per Rich Kirby. Who is responsible for maintenance of pump station in the long term asks Richard Jackson? Corcoran will be responsible per Martin Wantman. Richard Jackson asks for access. Rich Kirby says David Cowell can walk people around the site.

Level of silt in road unacceptable per Alex Rozycki. Rich Kirby said rain Thursday into Friday explains tracking, sweeper came same day. Silt sacs will help protect resource areas. Resource area needs to be impacted for enforcement order. Proactive with respect to responding to rain events.

Jessica Gerke asks how often visits to site would be appropriate? Rich Kirby reviews site monthly and review reports. For issues can be there more often.

Richard Jackson says once a month a lot can happen.

Inspection after every inch of rain per Alex Rozycki. David Cowell is there once a week and after half an inch of rain. Superseding order of conditions monitored by David Cowell. Contractor relates to storm water report. Superseding order of conditions measures discharges to DEP.

Alex Rozycki frustrated by not being more in the loop, the decision of Town to turn pump on has been made with the contractor. Rich Kirby suggests being proactive because no one knows what will happen when pump is turned on.

Megan Day can site walk be documented by Brett Gonsalves flooding resource areas. Asks if area across the street is jurisdictional if flooded?

Alex Rozycki doesn't believe Conservation has a say in what happens once pump is turned on. Megan Day says if they impact another resource area it becomes jurisdictional.

Richard Kirby says adding water or hydrology to an already wet area the impacts to the wetlands would be open for interpretation, it may improve hydrology. If it starts flooding and damaging areas its more of an impact. Rich isn't familiar with downstream area. Richard Jackson thinks a new problem is going to be created when pump comes on.

Martin Wantman asks who is going to suffer if pump is turned on. Alex Rozycki invites Martin Wantman to contact the Town Engineer to walk property. Martin Wantman hopes to be at site walk when Conservation Commission is there. Shoveling sediment off his property, half a wheelbarrow. Alex Rozycki says if there are wetland violations they should be reported to DEP.

Whip Hill

Liz Cohen Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation requests 6/17-6/21 staff training.

Legacy permission as past use of park per AJ Jamgochian. Approved by Commission.

Update from Subcommittee

Job descriptions will need to be weighed in by full commission. Will be circulated to commission for discussion at next meeting. Conservation commission members can attend subcommittee meeting as residents not as Conservation commission member.

Were current residents involved in discussion asks Alex Rozycki. Megan Day sat down with caretakers and asked to send description of what they do. Caretaker piece without DPW role, Bob Galvin made minor changes. One year contract proposed. No sweeping changes. Zoned as private residence currently.

AJ Jamgochian asks who weighs in. Megan Day responds everyone can weigh in. Day to day tasks, job description can be added to drop box, similar to what was on file with Human Resources.

Approve Meeting Minutes from February 5, 2024

Motion made by Alex Rozycki seconded by Richard Jackson Roll call 4/0/1 yes Jessica Gerke, Megan Day, Richard Jackson, Alex Rozycki, Domenick Cimina abstains

Next Meeting March 18, 2024

Motion to adjourn by Alex Rozycki seconded by Megan Day Roll call 5/0 yes Jessica Gerke, Megan Day, Richard Jackson, Domenick Cimina, Alex Rozycki