

**City of Somerville
Conservation Commission
Draft Meeting Minutes
March 23, 2005**

I. Administrative Matters

Meeting opened at Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (SPCD) conference room, 3rd floor of City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, at 7:07 pm.

Present were: Conservation Commission (CC) members John Reinhardt, Michael Fager, Chair, Delia Kaye, Cassandra Koutalidis, Lisa Brukalachio, Ben Ericson and Stephen Winslow of SPCD. [Prospective member Elizabeth Pyle was not present].

Minutes from Last Meeting: The February 23, 2005 minutes were approved with minor changes after a motion by B. Ericson seconded by C. Koutalidis.

0. Nomination of Elizabeth Pyle for Membership: S. Winslow spoke to the Mayor's Chief of Staff Mike Buckley who said that this nomination has been sent to the Board of Alderman.
1. Chair of Commission: D. Kaye announced that she would like to step down as Chair after the May meeting. Commissioners were asked to consider whether they are interested in serving as Chair.

II. Financial Report

S. Winslow has requested that funds be shifted as per the Commission's request at the February 23, 2005 meeting. He needs to confirm that the shift has occurred with SPCD's new Finance Director. S. Winslow also needs to put in the requisition for \$60 for the non-profit membership for the Mystic River Watershed Association.

III. Old Business: Wetland Matters

1. Requests for Determinations of Applicability by MBTA, CSX, MBCR: S. Winslow reported that he had taken the necessary rail worker safety training courtesy of MBCR. He contacted Wayne Duffet of TEC regarding the deficiencies in the Requests for Determinations of Applicability. He requested that TEC either send new RDAs signed by the respective organizations or provide letters from the organizations that he is authorized to act on their behalf. He also requested a new plan of the Somerville Maintenance Facility. D. Kaye thought that the RDA's should all include better maps and that the wetlands should be flagged by a wetlands specialists before any inspection.
2. MWRA work on Route 28 near the Mystic River: S. Winslow noted that he had visited the project site this month and met with MWRA project manager Mary White and the construction foreman and engineer. A gap existed in the sediment controls [haybales and silt fences] near the Route 28 bridge over the Mystic River. Mary White expects that a subcontractor should install haybales this week.

IV. New Business: Wetland Matters

1. None

V. Other Announcements / Updates

1. Durrell School / Park / Garden: S. Winslow contacted Steve Smith, LSP, of Geohydrocycle of Newton who indicated he will prepare a sampling plan and the 21E RAO to close-out the MA DEP paperwork. Two bids have been received for the school property. A question has arisen whether the 21E issue on the Park must be addressed in conjunction with the closing of the property sale.
2. Community Gardens
 - a. Inspection: S. Winslow and Gretchen Kinder inspected the gardens and found them to generally be in good shape. Tufts Garden could use new fencing. A tree down at Osgood Garden was much smaller than expected.
 - b. DPW Relationship: S. Winslow reported that he and G. Kinder met with Stan Koty and Frank Santangelo of DPW regarding a list of potential issues with the gardens. DPW proved to be very cooperative on all issues. Gretchen and Stephen will be the direct contacts with DPW. Water should be turned on around April 1st. Garden waste can be put in yard waste bags, trash can be bagged and Gretchen can arrange for a pickup by calling Frank. A fallen tree at the Osgood Garden should be pulled out so DPW can chip it. DPW does not have a small size chipper but can make a rotatiller available.
 - c. Waiting Lists and Plot Sizes: Waiting lists exist for Tufts and the Bikeway Garden. Concerned was expressed that plot sizes may need to be re-established at Tufts.
3. Communications Discussion:
 - a. Website: The Conservation Commission web site is hard to find since there is not a link of the SPCD web site. S. Winslow will check with Kevin Scott about adding a link. Commissioners should look at the existing site (under Boards and Commissions) and make other suggestions.
 - b. SCAT Video: Last year the Commission hired SCAT to do a 28-minute video. Some shots of the Herring Run were taken but the video had never been completed. C. Koutalidis offered to contact Wendy Blum to find out the status of the video. S. Winslow offered to organize and moderate a panel discussion about Conservation issues but did not think he would have time to be the “producer” of the video.
4. Hazard Mitigation Planning: S. Winslow reported that the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) will be developing a Natural Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan for the City of Somerville under a federal grant. The focus of the planning will be to identify improvements to infrastructure and regulations that can prevent or mitigate the effect of natural disasters. This efforts does not focus on either Homeland Security or Emergency Response and Preparedness. The Conservation Commission will be asked to provide input, especially on flood matters. Commissioners mentioned that flooding in Union Square and on Elmwood Street near Tannery Brook have been problems in the past. MAPC should be asked to attend an upcoming meeting to further discuss the Plan. Also, former DPW Engineer Tom Donahue would also be a good contact for the MAPC.
5. Regulation and Technical Updates
 - a. Regulations: S. Winslow provided a brief overview of the most significant changes to the MA DEP wetland regulations. The most significant change involves the creation of an “Order of Resource Area Delineation” that allows work to be conducted 50 feet from certain resource areas without the filing of a Notice of Intent. Notes from the discussion are attached.

- b. Technical: S. Winslow attended MACC conference sessions on erosion control and methods of mapping of wetland violations. The erosion control session had the most relevance. Many other states have surpassed Massachusetts in controlling erosion from construction sites. Methods focus on minimizing the amount of soils exposed to run-off through construction staging, dispersing run-off a way from exposed soils, capturing and diverting run-off before project limits. The mapping session covered methods MA DEP has used to identify wetland alterations through high-quality aerial photography.
6. Event Announcements:
- a. Mystic Super Clean-up: This will be occurring on April 23rd.
 - b. Herring Run: will be on May 1st at 9 am from Blessing of the Bay Boathouse.

Motion for Adjournment at 8:50 pm by Fager, Second by Reinhardt. Approved Unanimously

Respectfully submitted,
Stephen Winslow, SPCD