

May 28, 2003
Conservation Commission
Approved Meeting Minutes

Meeting opened at Winter Hill Community School cafeteria at 7:12 pm.

Conservation Commission members present were Michael Fager, John Reinhardt, Lisa Brukilacchio, Cassandra Koutalidis, and chair, Delia Kaye (Associate member Leslie Brayton came late), and agent Anne Phelps. Also present were Kim Stollar and Dudley Bonsal (interested residents), Kim Sherman, student at Tufts. Bill Dillon (Goulston & Storrs), Bob Brooks (Halvorson), Dennis Carlberg (Arrowstreet), Matt Verostick (VHB), and Rich DiGirolamo, attended to provide an update on IKEA.

Introductions were made.

Review Minutes

Minutes from April 23rd were reviewed. Discussion followed.

Vote: Motion made by CK to accept minutes as amended. MF seconded. All in favor.

Minutes from special meeting May 15 to review Department of Public Work's Yearly Operating Procedure for their Vegetation Management Plan were reviewed. A few minor corrections were discussed.

Vote: DK moved to accept minutes as amended. MF seconded. All in favor.

Budget

General Operating Fund

Anne reported that we have spent \$1,438.87 out of operating funds (1033) this year, with an additional \$140.38 encumbered. Since the budget has been frozen since about January, this represents primarily emergency spending to carry out the function of the office. Anne has proposed a budget of \$3,610 in operating funds (in addition to her salary) for FY04; this includes the \$1,800 departmental match for the 319 grant, unexpended in FY03, so that the budget request represents \$1810 in un-committed additional funds.

Revolving Funds/Garden Fund

Anne reported the Wetlands Revolving Fund (Fund number: 1525) held \$4,937.11 at the end of FY02. It received a total of \$346.25 in fees during FY03, and currently totals \$5,283.36.

The Conservation Commission Revolving (Garden, Fund number: 1520) fund held \$2,183.61 in unexpended funds at the beginning of FY03. From Garden dues it received

\$550 in revenue, and Comcast donated \$1,100 to Durrell for two benches, for total revenue of \$1,650. The unexpended balance is \$3,833.61. Three POs have been approved, one to Ricky's for plants for Quincy, one to Mahoney's for \$550 for a table and chairs for Quincy, and one to Playground Environmental for 2 benches for Durrell (will cost about \$1147, plus shipping). The total (estimated) unexpended balance is \$1,636.61. Anne is still working on a PO for the Port-a-potty cleaning at the Growing Center.

The CC suggested that Durrell, Hansen, Quincy Street and the Community Growing Center (CGC) be added to the budget track.

New Business

Open Space Brochure

Kim Sherman, a student at Tufts, taking Lisa's class in Urban Ecology and Planning, has developed a draft Open Space brochure for the Conservation Commission. She gave a presentation about the brochure and handed out copies of it. A discussion of possible changes and how to get it printed, followed.

IKEA Update

Because Delia has recused herself from any decisions related to IKEA filings, at this time she asked whether anyone objected to her presence during the (upcoming) report. No one objected, and IKEA proceeded with its update.

Bill Dillon provided an overview of jurisdictional issues, noting that IKEA had filed a Master Plan with the Planning Board and been granted a special permit (which is under appeal), it has concluded its MEPA review, it is still being reviewed for a Ch 91 Waterways License, and it is still in discussion with the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) regarding the park. Bill said there was not much change in the layout of the site, but that changes in the driveway entrance to the underground parking had led to changes that affected the storm water plans.

Dennis Carlberg noted on a map that the entrance to the underground parking (and the water tower) had moved closer to the river, to reduce overlap between car/truck traffic and pedestrian/bicycle traffic moving toward the beach. In response to questions, Dennis said the garage is no larger, and there are no more parking spaces.

Mark V. described several changes, including

- The garage was closer to, but still outside the buffer zone, and the garage entrance is about 24 ft closer to the river
- The irrigation tank has moved upstream
- A catch basin containing parking lot/street run-off that would be used for irrigation after treatment with a Vortech unit will now receive less water than in former plans

- Catch basin water that formerly went to the 24” pipe is now discharged to the 60” pipe
- IKEA has general approval from DPW for its plan to leave the existing 36” “stub” at the Marginal Conduit
- IKEA will extend the 60” pipe so that the end of it is beyond the building, so that if DPW decides it wants to extend the 60” pipe to connect it to the Marginal Conduit, access is easier
- IKEA will agree to connect the 60” line (to the Marginal Conduit) within a 5-year period, if DPW decides to do that, and if Somerville gets the necessary permits from MA Water Resources Authority (MWRA)

CK asked about the destination of water from the trench drain at the entrance to the garage, and was told the water will go through a Vortech unit then to the Marginal Conduit.

Bob Brooks reported on changes to the park design. IKEA has added more connections and paths between the park and the “mall area.” It has created an active play area near the buildings for small-scale sports (Frisbee/volleyball). By pushing fill soil out onto MDC land, it will produce more undulation in the slope, and create a “bowl” in one place that can be a sledding area. This will also produce extra mounding on top of the garage and provide more root space for the trees.

Up-coming IKEA

IKEA will be returning to the CC for approval of

- Changes to the plan, as noted above (requires CC approval under current OOC)
- 36” line – OOC says if IKEA retains the 36” line, IKEA must file new NOI; IKEA will ask the CC to amend that condition, so IKEA does not have to file new NOI
- To meet city’s 4:1 (infiltration & inflow removal) I/I requirement, VHB has identified a region in the Ten Hills area with a combined sewer overflow (CSO); VHB will separate out the storm water (now discharged to the outfall pipe just below the Amelia Erhardt Dam) and direct it to a MWRA storm water pipe upstream of the Wellington Bridge; this CSO has been identified as contributing to surcharging during storms and flooding under I-93, and removal of storm water at this site should help alleviate local flooding
- IKEA also plans to create a new driveway from Rte. 28 into the site, and part of that driveway will be within the 100 ft buffer zone (the land is owned by Assembly Square Limited Partnership)

IKEA expects to file new/amended NOI within next month (for June meeting).

Urban Forestry Forum

Nothing new.

Biodiversity Days

Anne reported that Biodiversity days will primarily be celebrated the 6th, 7th, and 8th of June this year. Michael and Delia will lead a bird/mammal walk from the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse on the 8th.

EMPACT Advisory Group & Mystic Action Plan

Anne reported briefly on the Mystic Action Plan, which is still being reviewed. Nancy Hammett, the new director of the Mystic River Watershed Association, is meeting with the governor to try to enlist state support for the plan.

Vegetation Management Plans – VMP (and Yearly Operating Plans, YOP)

Anne reported that she had not had time to find out where each (railroad submitting a YOP) is in its 5-year plan, and will keep working on it.

Old Business

MWRA Agreement

Anne reported the “agreement” reached with MWRA seems to be still under negotiation, and she will keep the CC informed.

319 Grant

Arthur Screpitis has returned comments on the QAPP, and does not want Anne to be the QA officer and the Program Manager. He agrees Anne should remain as Program Manager. There was discussion about who else could be the QA officer. LB suggested Anne ask John Durant at Tufts to be the QA officer.

DPWs VMP

Anne said she still did not have the promised map and report on last year’s spraying from Joe Foti, but that she would keep asking for them.

Committees

Conwell - MF asked to talk about Conwell instead of Hansen. He suggested we write an easement to attach to the property that there will always be a garden controlled by the Conservation Commission at that site in perpetuity. Then we would have to ask the Bd. of Aldermen to vote to approve it, and it would have to be registered at the Registry of Deeds. JR suggested we write a general description of what we want and ask the Bd. of Aldermen to consider it, because it may lessen the property value. LB suggested that we ask the present square footage, at a minimum, be retained. MF said he would call Denise Provost and champion this idea.

Hansen – MF- reported on last meeting. He said there is a sign that will be ready any day now. When the sign is up, they will invite the mayor and others for a publicity event, then go into a fund-raising phase.

Durrell – Leslie B. reported that we are getting estimates that are much higher than the amount we budgeted. Discussion of how to modify plans to reduce costs followed. CK offered to work on ways to install the water at less cost (and call Joe Foti and find out whether we definitely need a back-flow preventer for the water). Leslie also reminded us that the benches will need poured-in-place concrete footings, which will add several hundred dollars to the price as installation cost.

Administration

Anne's evaluation – In response to Anne's request (in January) the CC asked Anne to fill out some evaluation forms. Anne has not had time to do this. Delia asked Anne to write out her goals. Anne asked the CC to look at what she's doing, how she spends her time, and see whether they agreed with her priorities for the office. She said she feels like she is falling behind on the workload, and would like to "drop" some activities, but is not sure she can. CK asked for a bulleted list of what Anne does, what she does well, and what she would like to improve on. The same bulleted list could be used to look at goals and priorities. The evaluation will be conducted/completed by the end of August/beginning of September.

Vote: CK moved to adjourn. MF seconded. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Phelps, Agent