

DPW Commissioners Meeting  
April 15, 2015  
Peggy Brenner Friend's Room, Rockport Library

In attendance are: Bill Wagner/Finance Committee, Joe Parisi/DPW Director, Jim Gardner and Bruce Reed/DPW Commissioners, Sam Coulbourn, Chair of the Millbrook Meadow Committee, Barbara Sparks, Shannon Mason, vice chair; Marcia Lombardo, treasurer; Frederick Tarr, Charmaine Blanchard, Aileen Morrissey and Stephanie Woolf. Also here are advisors, Laura Hallowell, Eric Hutchins, Gunilla Caulfield, Frank Hassler, Betsy Giannoccaro, Susan Gray, Laurie LePine and Jack Campbell. Also in attendance are members of the Conservancy Board, Deborah Cowan, Chester Clark, Tim Corrigan, Dianne Anderson, Karl Norwood and Maura Wadlinger.

A brief history was provided by Sam Coulbourn: The dam was built in 1938, in 2006 it was damaged, six years later, with assistance from FEMA; a new dam was built. The pond was drained, 4' of sediment had built up; this allowed a lot of cattails to grow across the pond. The Garden Club recommended that we join forces. John and Barbara Sparks led the charge to restore the meadow and pond. John Sparks died last May; Barbara Sparks is carrying on with the project. Lura Phillips had left money in trust for just such a project, and Gunilla Caulfield, trustee of her fund, worked with us to turn that money over to this restoration. In all, it came to \$182,500. We turned to the town for help, and Town Meeting voted \$60,000 in the spring of 2013 and \$100,000 the fall of 2013 in Community Preservation Funds.

Barbara Sparks spoke about the plan. She said a managed landscape doesn't have to be formal, she said flowers can be used as informal splash of color.

She said the Master Plan gathers into one document a wealth of information--historical, survey and analysis of existing conditions, accounts of meetings that have been held with consultants and with the public-- and organizes this information in an understandable way so that someone completely new to the project can read the Master Plan and quickly be brought up to speed.

MMI presented two design concepts for consideration. One took inspiration from the ecology of the site, and the other was inspired by an historical viewpoint. After public presentations and MMC discussions, a third conceptual plan was developed that incorporated the best elements of both concepts, and eliminated elements thought to be inappropriate or unnecessary.

The plan for the Meadow and Pond will include these items:

- 1) **Dredging** of the Mill Pond: removing tons of sediment deposited over many years, and also much of the invasive aquatic plants on the part of the Pond near the dam. The granite stones along the bank will be re-set.
- 2) **Rebuilding of the watercourse** that carries water in Mill Brook to the sea. It will be widened to reduce the chances of its flooding its banks, and the course will be slightly sinuous, to slow the water flow, and make the channel more accommodating for fish, eels and aquatic plants. The new design will make the Brook more accessible to children, as well. Rebuilding water course (widened and it will slow the water flow).
- 3) **Willows.** Replacing the old, dying willow trees on April 2, 2015, with new, vibrant willow trees and other species.

- 4) **The Meadow** will be graded and re-shaped, its drainage improved to reduce the chance of flooding.
- 5) **Rain gardens**, designed to absorb water runoff from the adjacent parking lot, will be located along the Meadow path (if feasible, due to high water table).
- 6) **The Meadow path** will be rebuilt using pervious paving, and low-intensity path lighting will be installed.
- 7) **Planting throughout the Meadow** will be restored, using primarily native species, with special steps taken to eliminate invasive, alien species, like Japanese knotweed.
- 8) **The playground** will be refurbished with new equipment.
- 9) **The Frog Pond** will be dredged and made more accessible.
- 10) **Boardwalk.** After the Pond has been dredged, footings will be installed for a future boardwalk that will cross wetland areas and connect paths along either side of the Pond. The boardwalk would roughly span the area between Union Cemetery and Holbrook Court. The wetland area is pristine, and is now inaccessible. A boardwalk is a relatively low-impact way to give the public access to a very special area of the park.
- 11) **Water and Electricity.** For the first time since the park has existed, a water supply will be provided. Likewise, electrical receptacles will be provided for use during special events in the Meadow, and for low-level, night-sky friendly overhead lighting.

In December the master plan was approved, with CPA funding, construction is planned for 2016, at a cost of \$1,291,000.

Sebastian Stuart, Holbrook Ct., said it's been slowly filling, and questioned how much can be removed. Eric Hutchins said that consultants are developing a dredging plan to figure this out. No one is considering dredging the whole pond; it's too large a footprint. He said it's not a great spot for fish.

Stephanie Cole, King St., spoke about the upstream storm drains, and asked if anything can be done to have those better maintained so they don't fill in. Director Parisi said where there are public utilities; the DPW can clean them out on a regular basis. He said the private areas will be more difficult for improvements.

Sam Coulbourn said there is a \$12M plan to refurbish the MBTA station and including a receptacle to take water out of that area and separate it out. That plan is on hold.

John Catena, 14 Summer Street, questioned the cost estimate. He said this is a concept design; this is a drawing with a lot of work. We're in the process of developing the design; the engineers determine what is actually going to be done. We still don't know about the dredging, is it premature to be asking for \$1.2M.

B. Sparks said the consultants have said this is the probable cost, at this scale. We will not have bid quality figures. The most important parts will be designed first.

J. Cateno questioned what is the urgency, why not wait?

B. Sparks said it seemed like this was the time to push for this.

C. Blanchard, King Street, said this could not be called urgency, this has been in the planning this since 2006. If we continue to wait, pretty soon there will be no pond. Then the state and the Conservation Commission will say we can't dredge the pond.

S. Coulbourn said we're asking for \$1.29M, we may not get it at one time. We need to be flexible, we need the momentum. Lura Phillips kicked in \$182,500.

Craig Moore, Union Lane, said he is curious why John wanted to wait on asking for the funding.

J. Cateno said taxpayers want to know more, they want to see due diligence.

C. Moore asked if there is anything in place for rodent control? S. Coulbourn said no.

It was stated that a dead-end path is not a good idea; kids party there. It was stated that a path is planned that goes all the way around.

June Michaels, Finance Committee, questioned the amounts discussed tonight. She said they're asking for \$1.3M on top of the \$240,000 that is detailed on the charts presented at the meeting. J. Michaels asked how much of the \$1,291,000 has already been raised. S. Coulbourn said \$30,000 has been received in private donations the rest is town money, Lura Phillips, and CPC.

Kate Van Demark, BayRidge Lane, said the whole vision was shared but one part may be the only one possible.

Frank Hassler, Finance Committee, said the problem with phasing in the project is what if you can do only one piece of it.

Z. Seppala asked 1) do we have real scientific data on all aspects, is it just engineering at this point? B. Sparks said yes, that's true. 2) Dredging, is there a means? The dredging for the golf course, there was 40 years of sediment; they vacuumed it out and put it in bags. 3) He questioned if that was one of the methods. Director Parisi said the contractor will develop those plans.

S. Coulbourn said this needs to be carefully permitted.

E. Hutchins said some studies were done before. MMI has been baseline information. The design is being developed. The dredging will be permitted and in the design process. The information is there, but we're waiting for it to be put together.

Mary Devaney, 1 Holbrook, said she appreciates the dream; there is so much detail and research. The dam now, there are pillars, poles that go through, there is a big gap between the bottom one, it's dangerous. A toddler could fall through there.

T. Arsenian, 95 Granite St., said there is limited funding, whether it's Community Preservation or otherwise we need to choose how we spend our money. He said this is extravagant; we should be buying land in the watersheds. He questioned how much money is currently in the Open Space Account, how much will CPC have in the coming year; 10% has to go into Affordable Housing.

Commissioner B. Reed inquired if any of the permitting processes have started yet, the answer is no.

Frank Hassler said it's probably prudent to have 50% of the design set before we ask for approval.

J. Michaels inquired if there is a better time of year for dredging? E. Hutchins said April, May, and June will be out at a minimum; we won't be doing in-water work.

John Catina said we could be speaking with regulators to let them know what we're thinking. This is not going to be a trivial permit process – this is premature. Some ducks need to be put in a row.

June Michaels inquired about the cost of maintaining the park in the future once the work is done. Director Parisi said the DPW will be weed whacking and mowing, but the DPW employees are not gardeners. He said we will occasionally repair boardwalks, etc.; the Garden Club or others with expertise will take care of that.

S. Coulbourn said we're not designing an elaborate park. A fund to endow significant maintenance issues, conservancy is that part of the plan.

R. George, CPC Chairperson, inquired when the bid documents and firm numbers will be available. B. Sparks said the plan is to isolate what is absolutely necessary and all its components and get those into design/development quickly to get quotes.

S. Coulbourn said we expect by the end of May.

J. McMahon, 45 Poole's Lane, said she sees problems, out of control sediment sources to the pond and the blocks falling in right above the culvert clogging the stream. She recommends addressing the sediment sources, more of a concrete effort prior to spending \$300,000 to \$400,000. She would like to see those two as priorities rather than dredging.

B. Sparks said the funds we have raised are for the plan. Though those things should be addressed by the town; we can't wait for that for our project.

Z. Seppala said the dam was breached, and J. McMahon says one problem is there is no control on what is filtering down in there for new sediment. B. Sparks said we need to do a good job of dredging but it will need to be dredged again.

T. Arsenian said wing walls may be a necessity; they're going to be huge concrete eye sores. He asked if the committee is planning on covering them with Rockport granite. B. Sparks said yes. Rain gardens may not be practical, is there drainage from the parking lot onto town property. Why should voters pay for that? E. Hutchins said there is no regulatory process for a small parking lot that is impacting Rockport's open space.

Mary Devaney, 1 Holbrook, asked why people are allowed to put contaminated sediment into the pond? E. Hutchins said the contamination is lead, this will continue after this project; this has existed for over 100 years. He said around thirty pipes discharge into Millbrook.