



Rockport Millbrook Meadow Committee

P.O. Box 51, Rockport, MA 01966

www.millbrookmeadow.org

*Charmaine Blanchard
Laura Hollowell
Shannon Mason, Vice Chair
Barbara Sparks
Stephanie Woolf*

*Samuel W. Coulbourn, Chair
Marcia Lombardo, Treasurer
Aileen Morrissey
Frederick H. Tarr III*

Minutes of Meeting Wednesday, April 13th, 2016 Trustees' Room, Rockport Public Library

7:05 p.m. Chairman **Sam Coulbourn** called the meeting to order, but announced that since there was not a quorum of five members, there could be no votes. Members present: **Aileen Morrissey, Marcia Lombardo** and **Ted Tarr. Gunilla Caulfield** and **Eric Hutchins**, Advisors to the RMMC, were present. **Shannon Mason, Barbara Sparks, Charmaine Blanchard, Laura Hollowell Stephanie Woolf** were absent. **Ron Alpert**, member of the Conservancy, was also present.

1. Public input. None

2. Committee Business.

Treasurer's Report. Marcia reported that balance in operating account is \$892.12; balance in restoration funds from the Lura Hall Phillips Trust is \$107,940.61. She reported that DPW Director has arranged a system for regular meetings with her to compare notes on funds. Marcia reports that we will need to vote on a bill from David Adams for \$2340.00 for his services in the Meadow. DPW will bill the Conservancy fund \$3452.49 for clearing the Frog Pond.

Approve Minutes of March 9th. Deferred until May meeting.

3. Update status of Millbrook Meadow Restoration

Status of restoration. Laura sent notes to be shared with the Committee, since she could not be present.

a. Meeting with DPW 4/5/16:

Present: Joe Parisi, Sam Coulbourn, Shannon Mason, Frank Hassler, Barbara Sparks, Eric Hutchins, Gunilla Caulfield, and Laura Hollowell

Joe explained that he is submitting the plan labeled "deepest" in the permit application to RCC on Wednesday. The deepest excavation will be 6 feet, rather than the 8 feet of the

original plan. However, the sewer pipe will be protected, and the sides of the excavation will be relatively steep to prevent regrowth of the cattails.

After discussion, Joe indicated that he will ask CPC for \$350K, \$250 K to complete the dredging and \$100K toward the Meadow which could be used at Mill Pond as a contingency, if needed. He asked if the ECCF funds could be used; MMC said that those funds had been raised for the Meadow restoration and would not be available for the Mill Pond. He asked about the approximately \$60K in the Lura Philips Trust. Gunilla consulted her records and stated that yes, that money could be used for the work in the Pond, including dredging.

Members present discussed the right time to go out to bid, when the contract could be signed, and when the permitting would be complete. Frank said that contracts normally need to be signed 30 days after the winning bid is selected. About three months will be needed to complete permitting after the remaining state and federal permits are filed in May. Then the final design can be completed, needed for the bid specs. It appears that the bids could be requested around the time of Fall Town Meeting. It would be best to have numbers for that meeting, but it may not be possible because permitting can take longer than expected.

b. **Rockport Conservation Commission Hearing April 6th:** (Notes by Eric and Laura).

Matt Sanford and Jason Williams gave a presentation that addressed the major components of the dredging project.

Dewatering will occur in stages, sediment will be piled in the pond, letting gravity draw water out. It will then be moved to the eastern edge of the Pond if permission can be obtained from Karl Norwood. When it has dried, it will be trucked out. By law it must be dry enough that the trucks don't drip.

The pond will be dredged to 6 feet at the deepest part.

A pump will be required to be in place for the entire time the Pond is dewatered, and it will probably be operating around the clock, Eric said.

Protection of wildlife: There was much discussion on protection of wildlife in the Pond. Eric will supervise transfer to eels to Loop Pond. Transfer of turtles, etc. will take place well before dewatering has taken place. A system will be used to provide a cylinder with gravel filter around the pump intake, to ensure that fish don't get sucked up.

Eric suggested that we talk with Rick Roth of the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team about volunteers to move the fish. He suggested that this might have a good educational component.

ConComm asked that the verbiage from the MMI Power Point presentation be provided.

Permits: ConComm asked about permits. Matt explained that there will be three additional permits (anticipated in May): 401 Water Quality permit involving DEP (or MA DEP); Chapter 91 Waterways (this was more significant for the Meadow portion), and the Army Corps of Engineers. The permitting process will take at least three months.

Storm water: ConComm asked what will prevent sediment from coming down and refilling the pond. Matt replied that sedimentation control is not part of this project, although important.

Joe Parisi answered that two sedimentation basins are planned for the MBTA Station and Whistlestop and improvements in drainage are planned for Railroad Ave. He expects to

submit these in about two years. DPW is using less sand and more salt to reduce the amount of sand on the street.

ConComm members were interested in protection of the 8" clay sewer line (with new liner) that crosses the eastern side of the Pond. Matt answered that there will be no construction above the sewer line. The line will be marked before any work begins. Material will be left in place for five feet out from the sewer line. Eric suggested putting flags at that line so a shovel operator would know immediately if a flag went missing. The sewer pipe is a lined pipe. Jason said that MMI will add a contingency plan to the documents.

ConComm members asked how oil spills from equipment will be handled. Matt said that included in the contract is storage and cleanup; spills must be reported to the authorities and treatment must begin within 24 hours of the spill. A spill collection kit will be on site.

Plants: ConComm members asked what happens if some of the new plants die? Matt replied that the contractor is responsible for two growing seasons, or time specified by ConComm.

Larry Neal, Chair of ConComm, asked about the MEPA findings. Matt explained that MEPA had looked at the entire project, not just the Mill Pond. Matt approached the MEPA people and explained that the entire project could not be done at once because of funding limitations. After consulting with DPW and MMC, MMI decided to reduce the impact to wetlands by keeping the disturbed area under 5000 sq. ft., removing the boardwalk (which had significant impact), and changing the grading. MMI added restoration of 6,000 sq. ft. in the Mill Pond itself. Previously some of the mitigation for the Mill Pond was in the Meadow, but it would have had to have been done at the same time.

There were questions on the nature of the replacement plants. It was explained that many grow in 8-10" of water and are low themselves, so that they will not screen the pond the way the tall cattails do. There was a discussion on whether cattails are invasive. Matt explained that they are considered a *native* invasive. While they do have food and habitat value, they are also very aggressive and become a dominant monoculture.

ConComm asked what will the new plants do in winter. Matt stated that they die back and are not visible; they will not interfere with skaters accessing the pond.

They also asked if the cattails come back. Matt said that the excavation will have a fairly steep (3:1) slope. The cattails will not be able to grab hold unless additional sediment comes in and changes the slope. Matt pointed out the cross section diagrams in the presentation. ConComm requested that the diagrams be provided to the Commission.

Contamination. ConComm asked if sediment with lead contamination will go downstream. Matt replied that the pipe diverting the water flow should not be contaminated with lead [which is in the sediments]. DEP will mandate a method of control in the sump pump [which will be drawing the deep water from the pond]. That is part of the important 401 water quality permit. They do not expect any turbidity. Eric added that a tank should be provided for separation of contaminants, as was done during construction of the dam in 2012.

Abutter Dr. Martin Ross asked about the littoral shelves and the depth of the plantings. Would cattails repopulate the littoral shelves? Matt explained that they plan to reinstall the weir boards that have been absent since the new dam was built. This will

give about an additional foot of depth around the edge. He noted that there is very little erosion along the Mill Brook as it enters Loop Pond, so the sediment is almost certainly coming from human activities along the streets.

ConComm asked what is growing along the granite edge and how will that be rebuilt. Matt replied that once the Pond is dry, the granite edge will be deconstructed. They do not currently know if it is a single row of granite or a couple on top of each other. So the design is not final; there will definitely be a shelf created upon which the granite will rest. Concrete will not be used. Jason said that he would be on hand for that, and the stones that are removed will be numbered for better reconstruction.

4. MMC Notice of Intent (NOI) for Invasive Plants Work. Laura also reported on a separate hearing conducted after the Mill Pond hearing, attended by herself and **Nan Blue**. They reported on the work on invasive plants in Millbrook Meadow and Mill Pond in 2015 and so far in 2016. After an initial cut of knotweed by the Garden Club (RGC), it was left alone until Polatin Ecological Services treated the knotweed, phragmites, and yellow iris by glove wiping in September. The dead plants were cut a month later by the RGC and removed from the site by DPW. In October Polatin returned to cut and stem paint mountains of woody brush, which was also removed by DPW. This past winter **Mary Mintz** and other volunteers started to remove invasives from the dogwood thicket and to prune the dead and fallen branches. Only half this work could be completed so far because of the extremely wet conditions. Work will continue when the area dries out.

ConComm approved the following work plan: The RGC will consult with the Conservation Agent about specific plantings to hold the soil and to compete with the invasives. David McKinnon of ConComm urged that we consider plantings other than Black Beauty native grass. While it is great for turf areas, it is not so good in wet areas, and under trees. We could do better for the birds and pollinators.

Plan for 2016 work

Phragmites, Japanese Knotweed, Privet, Multiflora rose, Norway maples, Porcelainberry and Bittersweet will be treated by a licensed applicator in a follow up to the treatment carried out in 2015. Some small Norway maples may be cut and covered with black weed control fabric in an experiment to judge the effectiveness of the method. The Invasive Plants Team will continue to work on Scratchy bedstraw, Dodder, Bindweed, Yellow iris, Goutweed (Bishops weed) and English ivy.

Scratchy Bedstraw and Dodder: start hand pulling by mid-June; continue at least monthly.

Bindweed: Organize volunteers to cut and hand pull every two weeks throughout growing season. Most of the Bindweed is located along the wall by the Welcome parking lot, around Frog Pond, adjacent to the Anderson property, and adjacent to the Lura Phillips steps. The last is a special problem area where bindweed is growing up the milkweed stalks. It may be necessary to remove both and replant. It could be a good place to replant with flowers that would attract pollinators rather than just grass. The team will consult with the Conservation Agent about specific species to be planted as the bindweed is removed. In the mean time we will cut and hand pull. Bindweed seeds may remain viable in the soil for 30 years, but Bindweed can often be eliminated by this treatment in 2-3 years if the roots are removed.

Goutweed: Lay and peg down heavy duty woven plastic weed control sheeting over the beds of Goutweed; cover with wood chips to improve appearance; leave in place for two years. If Goutweed creeps out on the edges, the licensed applicator will treat these plants. The highest priority area is along the park wall nearest the Frog Pond and stone bridge. This is the area where three “trash trees” were cut last fall. The next priority is the continuous bed of Goutweed around the Old Mill property stone wall. Here the sheeting would be interrupted around valuable trees or shrubs where any Goutweed would be cut frequently. Goutweed under the cork tree at Mill Pond will be covered with weed control fabric and wood chips. Goutweed seeds are not long lived.

Yellow Iris: Clumps in the lawn will be dug out; the area will be seeded with native grass.

English ivy: If volunteers can be found, we will hand pull the English Ivy which is primarily located on the wall side of the Lura Phillips steps.

5. Fundraising Sub-Committee, Publicity and Community Outreach.

Shannon provided notes on a renewed campaign to encourage voters for Special Town Meeting April 30th.

Please email your friends and neighbors, if you have not already done so, about the STM on April 30th and encourage their attendance.

A MailChimp eblast went out about the date change and a reminder message is planned for this weekend. New dates and notices posted on www.millbrookmeadow.org and Facebook page.

Plans for future outreach and fund raising

Shannon provided: Once we have the STM vote on the 2015 CPC application, we will want to focus on two things: the 2016 CPC application and the balance of work in the Meadow. We need to “package” work in the Meadow into pieces for specific fundraising efforts (See below).

Anyone who would like to assist the fundraising sub-committee, we could use your help. A couple of members are not moving forward. Please let Sam or Shannon know. A meeting for this committee will be planned for May.

Shannon would like to submit an application to “Awesome Rockport” to fund a replacement light near Mill Pond. Grants are given for \$1000. Since she is an AR Trustee, she cannot be the “official applicant”, but will write up the application, submit by May 27th and help with the presentation. “Should we make the finals for pitch night, June 6th, would someone be willing to help me with the application and make the pitch?” We should hear in June about our BJA grant application which was submitted in February for continued support of Frog Pond.

Campaign to seek donations for specific projects [Shannon]

The May meeting for the Fundraising Sub-Comm. will focus on grouping projects in the Meadow to assist in private donation solicitations. Packages like the playground, Frog Pond, a meditation garden, specific areas for plantings, lighting, seating, etc. Please share your ideas for fundraising projects!

Plan for Motif No. 1 Day, May 21st [Shannon]

Time frame is same as years past: Set up 8:30, or so, until 10:00 a.m. Festival runs from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Shifts will be 9-11, 11-1, 1-3 and 3-5 with two volunteers per shift

Shannon will do set up and first shift.

Volunteers needed for rest of the shifts with the last two responsible for breaking down and removing all event materials.

Shannon will send a Volunteer Spot list out by the end of April for sign up. If you know now that you want a particular shift, email Shannon.

6. Earth Day Cleanup. Plan for Earth Day Cleanup April 23rd [Notes by Shannon]

MMC is signed up with ConComm office to participate in Earth Day Clean Up.

Hours will be from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.; Bring gloves, rakes, loppers and tarps.

Trash bags will be supplied, though we usually have more piles of materials.

Laura has given a list of areas to focus work as she will still be in California, so Shannon will help coordinate efforts.

7. New Business. Eric suggested opportunities for Educational Outreach with Carolyn McWilliams. Rockport Schools' annual event will be held June 7 & 8.

Eric announced that there will be a dedication of the Little River stream restoration project in Gloucester on May 20th at 1 p.m. State and city officials will be present, Eric led MMC members on a tour here last year, because the project has many similarities with our project. Eric also volunteered to give interested Rockporters a presentation on this project.

Eric offered to take interested members on a tour of Mill Brook above Loop Pond. He suggested that this can be a fun event.

8. Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 11th, 2016, at Trustees' Room, Rockport Public Library.

9. Adjournment: Meeting informally adjourned at 8:25 p.m..

Approved:

Samuel W. Coulbourn

Copy to: Town Administrator; Director of Public Works; Conservancy Board and Advisors; Conservation Agent; DPW Commissioners