



Rockport Millbrook Meadow Committee

P.O. Box 51, Rockport, MA 01966

www.millbrookmeadow.org

*Charmaine Blanchard
Marcia Lombardo, Treasurer
Aileen Morrissey
Frederick H. Tarr III*

*Samuel W. Coulbourn, Chair
Shannon Mason, Vice Chair
Barbara Sparks*

Minutes of Meeting Wednesday, August 13, 2014, 7:00 p.m. Trustees' Room, Rockport Public Library Rockport Public Library

7:02 p.m. Chairman **Sam Coulbourn** called the meeting to order. Members present: **Charmaine Blanchard, Marcia Lombardo, Shannon Mason, Aileen Morrissey, Barbara Sparks,** and **Ted Tarr.** Also present were **Gunilla Caulfield**, Trustee of the Lura Hall Philips Trust; **Laura Hallowell**, new Advisor to the Rockport Millbrook Meadow Conservancy (RMMC); **Eric Hutchins**, RMMC Advisor; and **Stephanie Woolf**, candidate for membership in the Committee.

1. Update Millbrook Meadow Restoration. Sam asked for members' reaction to the July 23 Presentation of Concepts by Milone & MacBroom (MMI). He noted that several people have sent in very comprehensive comments, including **Larry Neal** of the Conservation Commission, **Gunilla Caulfield** and **Laura Hallowell**. [Note: **Tim Corrigan** of RMMC submitted one a few hours later.]

Charmaine: "I thought the presentation was informative, but I felt afraid of things that might be difficult to maintain long term, like the amphitheater." She agrees with removing and replacing the willows, widening the Brook, and improving drainage. "I also like the idea of a boardwalk through the wetlands." She also likes the rain gardens used to absorb runoff from Peg Leg parking lot.

Ted: "The presentation was very good. I like open space, and would not be in favor of losing it to construction, or to shifting the Brook too much. I believe that DPW should handle the repair or rebuilding of the culvert under Beach Street. I like the boardwalk, and would like us to find a way that visitors coming from the MBTA Station can access the boardwalk to enter the Pond and Meadow area. Perhaps through Henderson Court."

Eric: No amphitheater, but perhaps there could be several well-placed stones suitable for seating, near the spillway, where they wouldn't take up much space, but could be used for story hours or educational programs, or just for people to sit and visit. "I like the idea of boardwalks. In my work I have seen many, many of these, and they are helpful in allowing more people to explore. Right now, our paths on both sides of the Pond are dead-ends. I don't like dead-ends—they cause trouble. We should work to create a circuit around the Pond and wetland." Sam noted

that we have had a problem with people sitting up at the end of the Eagle Scout path next to Union Cemetery and drinking and smoking and probably more, and left their trash.

Eric added that the boardwalks can produce a net gain in stewardship. The lower Brook needs to be fixed, it may soon require emergency action. Eric did not think that the culvert posed a limitation to Brook flow. Although the interior of the culvert should be cleared, and unused pipes cut out, that is a DPW project, he said.

Aileen: “As I heard the presentation of Concept A and B, I asked myself ‘What about Concept C?’ I look for a simple plan that restores the vitality of the Meadow and Pond, but does not add a lot of new features.” She also stated that as an abutter to the Pond she was against any scheme that would have paths that would allow strangers to intrude on private property. Sam assured her that any design will be very carefully discussed with abutters.

Sam reminded members that MMI designs and builds parks and waterways all over the country, and they are trying to show us possibilities that we might want to adopt. Many that they have included in these concepts are from visioning that Rockporters have provided in the past. They merely show what *could* be. It is for us to decide what goes in the final design.

Barbara and **Laura** discussed the steep bank on the northwest side of the Brook and asked how it could be made less steep. Members discussed the opposite bank and agreed that we don’t want to consider having a path on that side, as we all want to avoid losing much open space in the Meadow. Members seemed to concur that the Brook will need to be widened, but perhaps not as much as 12 feet, as MMI has proposed. Laura noted that now the Brook banks are so soggy that widening should be a real improvement. Members also agreed that some sinuosity would be helpful and attractive. Eric suggested that it might be possible to raise the grade of the Brook from the Frog Pond to the culvert five or six inches. **Shannon** suggested that this might help in being able to run drain lines from the Meadow into it.

Laura brought up handicap accessibility, particularly from Meadow to Pond, and members noted that MMI had suggested that perhaps a switchback ramp might be used. Barbara suggested that such a system would be costly, but might be able to be designed so that it would be an interesting and attractive feature.

2. Discuss priorities for Restoration actions Barbara reported that the team of members and advisors who are providing liaison with MMI and DPW met recently and discussed “Next Steps” for the Restoration, and this meeting tonight is the first of those steps. Next, based upon what we have heard and discussed tonight, we plan to meet with Director Joe Parisi and Assistant Tim Olson, and later with Jason Williams of MMI. She noted the very helpful, long critique of the MMI Concepts provided by Larry Neal, and his suggestion that we arrange a meeting with Gerri Falco, the Conservation Agent.

Barbara asked: “If we go to Spring Town Meeting in April 2015, do we need to do something to show the public that this project is actually happening?” Members discussed the possibility of addressing rebuilding the Brook as an early project, particularly where it is in danger of collapsing, near Beach Street. Barbara then said, “But I’d like not to break the project up into pieces.” Sam agreed that there will be those who will attempt to cut this project like a salami, until we can’t recognize it. Eric said that emergency actions need to go first. Barbara said, “Maybe, do them, but first let’s have the Master Plan.” Shannon added that in terms of emergency repairs, the willows should go. “It made me very nervous seeing all those people seated beneath the big willow at the Acoustic Festival.” Eric said that we could eliminate the real danger of falling branches from the willows by hiring a tree service to cut them off without taking them down. Barbara disagreed with this approach.

Laura brought up the repair to the culvert. Eric estimated that the culvert is a \$500,000 project, but it is not critical to flow.

Priorities: Sam noted that the liaison advisors had compared notes in proposing priorities for the various tasks in the Restoration, and dredging the Pond was at the top of everyone's list. Some have suggested that we not touch the aquatic life; others have suggested that we might not need to dredge to the full eight feet depth of the original Pond. Sam recalled that Eric had earlier said that the reason fish cannot survive in the Pond now is that it is so shallow. Eric added that dredging is costly, but when we do it, we should do it right, so that it doesn't have to be done again in a few years. While we are at this, he added, we should work on DPW to install new Stormceptors <http://www.stormceptor.com/en/products/stormceptor-osr/index.html> upstream that will catch a lot of the sand and other residue, instead of letting it get into the Pond. Charmaine asked about how the sewer pipe that runs through the Pond will affect dredging. Eric said it will add expense to the project, maybe \$50,000.

Barbara said that we need to work hard to get dredging on the CIPC list, and get it at a high enough priority to get funded.

Barbara summed up Next Steps:

a. Meet with DPW

b. Meet with Conservation Agent

c. Boil down the tasks—get rid of those that we don't want.

d. Meet with MMI to discuss Master Plan

e. Produce warrant article and Community Preservation request

f. Begin a campaign to brief every interested board or committee, and to inform the public of this project as it is refined and finalized.

3. Fundraising Sub-Committee, publicity and community outreach.

Status of FSC fundraising and grant research efforts. Shannon reported that we are about to send out a donor appeal letter to Friends of the Meadow and selected others. We now have reached \$11,835.00 in donations.

Outreach and community connection at MMI Presentation Marcia reported that 60 people had attended the Presentation on July 23rd and we obtained a few new email addresses.

Results of Acoustic Festival. Sam thanked Shannon for setting up and organizing our participation in this event, and thanked Marcia and Aileen, as well as Shannon, for working the table during the Festival. He asked if we should continue this. Shannon said she thought that whenever a major event is held in the Meadow, we ought to have a presence there. We took in only \$48, but many saw our displays and we discussed the restoration with some. Sam added that we posted photos of the event on our two websites and we had many people who saw those and commented favorably, which means they see that the Meadow is being used and enjoyed.

Outreach to Abutters ---Shannon asked Aileen if she would work on the idea of a gathering of abutters to brief them on the plans for the Meadow and Pond, and to gain their input and support. Aileen has produced a sample invitation, and has begun to collect names of invitees. Laura has such a list of abutters to invasive plant zones and offered to provide those. Shannon suggested that we schedule the event in September, before it gets too cool, and while there's daylight. Members agreed to schedule it for Sunday afternoon, September 14, from 4 to 6 p.m. Sam will ask Karl Norwood if he will let us use his back yard for the gathering. If that is not possible we may consider putting up tents and holding the gathering near or on the Dam. As for program, members agreed on a short briefing with graphics on display, then plenty of time for questions and answers and just informal visiting over wine, beer and light snacks. Sam suggested

that it would be nice to invite all members of the Conservancy, Advisors, DPW Director and Assistant, as well as MMC members.

4. August-October Event Planning

Promotional material, including logo clothing [Sweatshirts, caps, t-shirts in other colors?] Shannon suggested that we had sufficient t-shirts for the present. Members did not think that expanding our clothing line would be productive.

Harvestfest October 18th. Sam asked for ideas for this event, which will be held in Harvey Park. Shannon noted that this is a popular event, and we are in a good location to expose our displays and wares to a large population. Marcia suggested that we offer a 50-50 raffle. Shannon asked about members' ideas on time slots for manning the table, and they agreed to keep it at two hours. Shannon said that she had invited Conservancy members to participate, and **Betsy Giannoccaro**, RMMC Advisor, had volunteered. We must do a better job of encouraging them to take part, as it is a good way for them to meet the public and help explain what we are doing. Shannon suggested that we prepare a large banner that we can display at these events, hung on a tent or if we use no tent, perhaps on our table. She will obtain prices and we will decide at our September meeting.

Shannon asked that members think of new ideas for making our table more interesting at Harvestfest. She will update the visual displays.

6. Committee Business: Minutes of July 7th were approved.

Marcia, the Treasurer, reported that rent is due on our Post Box. Sam stated that he had paid it for the year, \$106.00, as a donation. She also reported that when she checked on our finances she found that the Town Treasurer had moved some of our funds into the wrong location, and Marcia is working on resolving it. She also reported that we are allocated \$275.00 from the Town, \$1 more than last year.

Stephanie Woolf. Stephanie told the meeting why she would like to become a member of MMC. She heads the Town Beautification Committee, she is working on a project to beautify Front Beach, and she would like to form a closer relationship between MMC and Beautification. She said that she thinks she can be a help to us.

Shannon moved to accept her application, Charmaine seconded, and all (7) voted to approve. Stephanie will provide Sam with her application and he will submit it to the Town Administrator.

8. Set Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 10th, 2014 at Trustees' Room, Rockport Public Library.

9. Adjourn 8:12 p.m.

Approved:

Samuel W. Coulbourn

**Copy to: Town Administrator
Director of Public Works**