



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, September 10, 7:00 p.m. Trustees' Room, Rockport Public Library Rockport Public Library

7:00 p.m. Chairman **Sam Coulbourn** called the meeting to order. Members present: **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**, Advisor to the Rockport Millbrook Meadow Conservancy (RMMC); **Todd Norwood**, representing Karl Norwood, Member of RMMC Board, and **Lisa Glover**, visitor. **Charmaine Blanchard** arrived at 7:52 p.m.

1. Update Millbrook Meadow Restoration.

Meeting with Conservation Agent (9/4/14): Barbara reported on a recent meeting held by the DPW Liaison Team with **Gerri Falco**, Town Conservation Agent. [Liaison Team: Barbara, Sam, Shannon, **Eric Hutchins**, Advisor; **Laura Hallowell**, Advisor; **Frank Hassler**, Advisor; and **Jack Campbell**, Advisor.]

“We found the visit very encouraging”, she said. However, Gerri had a cautionary red flag for the proposal of a **boardwalk** across wetlands at the Pond. Members discussed this—the general sentiment is that this is a project that will come later, after the Pond is dredged and other essential improvements are made. Barbara noted that there is considerable public support for the boardwalk. Members agreed that before filing a MEPA request for the boardwalk MMC would want to discuss it with the Conservation Commission.

Barbara noted that Gerri suggested that restrictions on Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) may not come into play in the Meadow because of its relatively small size. [See <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/water/laws/a-thru-h/bvwmanual.pdf>] The Team also discussed how to handle the **dogwood wetland cluster** near the Frog Pond. Gerri agreed that it would be possible to clean out invasive species and perhaps lower the height of plants growing there.

At this meeting Eric brought up the idea of constructing a **headwall** next to the Beach Street culvert to support the entrance of the Mill Brook into the culvert.

Meeting with DPW Director (9/5/14): Barbara then reported on a Liaison Team meeting with **Joe Parisi**, DPW Director, and **Tim Olson**, Assistant Director. Barbara noted that Joe was very

supportive of developing a firm funding plan, and emphasized that this restoration is a Town project. Eric brought up the headwall idea again, and Joe suggested that we visit the Brook soon to see the situation there. It appears that all agree that the **culvert** needs to be repaired, but it is not critical to the flow of the Brook to the sea. At present the critical flow limitation is the stricture in the Brook just before the Brook enters the culvert. Repair of the culvert will not be a part of the restoration project.

In order to protect the Meadow from **backflow from the sea** in a storm, when large amounts of debris enter the Brook from sea, a tide gate had been mentioned by Milone & MacBroom (MMI), the Contractor. Joe suggested that a temporary grate, placed at the seaside entrance to the culvert by DPW before a storm would help greatly. Tim added that this would facilitate mechanical cleanup, rather than having men pick up debris by hand.

Barbara noted that Tim emphasized the importance of the **playground** in the Meadow. Sam said that this had been discussed considerably at visioning sessions in 2013 and 2014, and we will need to listen to parents of young children on this. Charmaine, a parent of young children, agreed.

Site Visit with DPW (9/9/14): Sam reported on a site visit he and Eric had with Joe Parisi and Tim Olson. Main object of visit was to look at the very poor condition of granite blocks meant to line the **Brook** as it enters the Beach Street culvert.



Joe and Eric agreed that the first, perhaps emergency, step was to replace the tumbled-down **granite blocks** in the part of the Brook within about 20 feet of the culvert. (See photo above.) Sam says he is hearing a lot of support for keeping the Brook much as it is at present, perhaps widened a bit to handle rain events, but not the 12 to 15 feet width suggested by MMI. As for **sinuosity**, Eric showed where the Brook could veer a few feet into the Meadow and go into what is now the dogwood wetland cluster. This might allow the northwest bank, which slopes steeply at this point, to have its **slope reduced**. The Brook would then return to its old course before the Founders' bridge.

At this point Laura suggested that having granite blocks on both sides might not be the best thing for **wildlife habitat** in and around the stream.

On the site visit Eric also suggested that the area of the Meadow near Beach Street, although on the FEMA Flood Zone map, could probably have its level raised. Joe suggested a course of gravel (to improve drainage) with a **layer of topsoil**.

Discussion of Items in Gunilla Caulfield Questionnaire. Barbara led the committee in discussion of points in the questionnaire prepared by Gunilla.

Ted said he thought it would be good to push back the **line of cattails** to give more ice skating area to the Pond.

Aileen remarked about making the **Frog Pond** “wade-able” for children that the snapping turtles there might make that dangerous.

Discussing the water that drains off Peg Leg parking lot and into the Meadow, Marcia asked if we could block the runoff. Members discussed the **rain gardens (infiltration beds)** intended to absorb that runoff. They also discussed the currently **useless catch basin** at the edge of the parking lot, and if this could be made to accept the runoff.

Barbara discussed the **willows**—can we prune the dead leaders of the trees to make them less dangerous, until the whole trees are cut down? Members agreed that we need to learn more about what to plant to replace these trees—more willows or another species. Shannon suggested that willows are seen as a symbol of the Meadow, and we really should replace the old willows with mature young ones.

Laura stated that the **planting** of the new, renovated Meadow and Pond edges will be a lengthy program, taking several years, because of the persistence of the invasive species.

Lisa Glover, visitor, suggested that it might be very helpful to begin a program to educate school children about **invasive plants** and how to encourage growth of native species. Laura said that this already exists, but could perhaps be improved.

Barbara discussed the **switchback ramp** proposed for allowing handicapped persons to operate wheelchairs from the Meadow to the Dam and Pond. She said that Jason will provide us with a sketch to show where this would go; he said that when built it would blend in with the surroundings. Members also discussed an alternative handicapped parking space.

Access to the park from the MBTA Rail Station. Todd Norwood and Aileen noted that at times large numbers of visitors come to town on the train, and head downtown via three routes. If many of them were to troop through the Meadow, the whole objective of quiet paths to observe nature would be defeated. This should be considered at a later date.

Playground. Charmaine suggested keep the slide and swing set. Members were also interested in learning more about other more natural objects for children to climb on and explore.

Meadow Seating. Gunilla and Sam described semi-circular schemes using stones at two towns in Maine. Placing large granite blocks in the area between the spillway and the Mooring Stone might be an attractive and useful addition, but no one supported the idea of a circular stage.

Infrastructure (Water and electricity). Members are very much in favor of an electrical system that provides power for special events, as well as low-key path lighting, and potable water for watering plants.

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

Status of FSC fundraising and grant research efforts. Our latest large donation is \$2000 in honor of John Sparks from the Peter and Kate Van Demark designated trust at Essex County Community Foundation.

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 about \$13,000 in donations.

Sam and Marty will host a letter-signing evening at their home for members to sign and address letters to the mailing list. Date to be arranged by Shannon.

Marcia advised of the fact that Institution for Savings, which has acquired Rockport National Bank, is setting aside a fund for grants for local causes. Shannon will notify **Betsy Giannoccaro** and ask her to look into this.

3. September-October Event Planning

Abutters’ Briefing Sunday, September 14th at 4 p.m.: Aileen reported that she had mailed invitations to abutters. Sam, Todd, and Betsy Giannoccaro will move tables, tent, beer, wine, soft drinks, ice tubs and trash barrels to event site, in the footprint of the old Reuben Norwood ice

house. Todd Norwood, appropriately, will provide the ice. Aileen will bring her truck down with a table and other items for the event. Shannon will provide the Rockport Garden Club tent and material displaying information about the Meadow and Restoration. **Susan Gray** and **Alec Dingee** will help serve beverages. **Chester Clark** will assist at the information table.

Conservancy Briefing, Thursday, September 18th at 7 p.m. at Brenner Friends' Room at the Rockport Library. **Jason Williams** of MMI will meet with board of the Rockport Millbrook Meadow Conservancy, Millbrook Meadow Committee, RMMC Advisors, DPW Commissioners and DPW Director to discuss all aspects of MMI's proposal for Restoration of the Pond and Meadow, just a short time before MMI produces the Master Plan for the Restoration. While this is an open meeting, it is aimed at a dialogue between MMI, MMC, the Conservancy and town officials.

Harvestfest October 18th. Shannon reported on plans for this event, which will be similar to last year. Shannon showed proposed designs for a 2' x 10' banner that we can display. The Committee voted to authorize purchase of it. Shannon will order it. Marcia asked for a motion to approve funding the fee for our booth. The Committee voted to approve the expenditure of \$___. Shannon collected assignments for manning the booth.

4. Committee Business: Minutes of August 13th were approved with change in amount donated for the Conservancy post box.

Members voted to spend \$75.00 for a Millbrook Meadow banner for use at various outreach events.

Members voted to spend \$132.81 for printed envelopes for the forthcoming mail campaign.

Treasurer's Report: Marcia, the Treasurer, reported that fund allocation problems have been solved. We have \$2792 in our operating account.

She also reported that we have spent \$90,000 on the Restoration contract with MMI to date. We have \$70,000 of CPA funds and the Lura Hall Grant fund (\$162,000) remaining.

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

6. Adjourn 8:53 p.m.

Approved:

Samuel W. Coulbourn

**Copy to: Town Administrator
Director of Public Works
Conservancy Board and Advisors
Conservation Agent**