

May 16, 2024 - Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

(Hybrid Meeting – Zoom, In-person)

Submitted: David Kaplan – September 19, 2024

Approved: September 19, 2024

Advisory Board Members in Attendance:

Janice Snow (Chair), Janet Burns, Candace Young, Susan Agger, Jim Barton, David Kaplan, Sophia Emperador (remote), Deborah Masterson (remote), Adam Corbeil

Others in Attendance:

Duke Bitsko (Hatch Engineering); Ken Vorspan (public); Patrick Barton (public); Elizabeth Wylde (public, remote); Omar Mejia (Reservation Ranger, remote); Jo-Anna Krupa (Director of Golf, Fresh Pond Golf Course)

Meeting opened at about 7:10

Meeting Minutes: D. Kaplan

Item 1: Review Agenda

No changes proposed.

Item 2: Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2024 Minutes: C. Young moved and D. Masterson seconded the motion to accept the minutes as presented. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Item 3: Watershed Manager's Report (D. Kaplan)

The Watershed Division is working with Hatch and Earthwise Aware to develop five, 20' x 20' test plots in the Huron Forest that will be fenced, documented, and “restored” differently to compare approaches over time. Study duration and fence heights were discussed. J. Barton asked about informal path crossings over the Watertown-Cambridge Greenway to the perimeter road. Circulation and access ideas were discussed.

D. Kaplan provided a project update for the Little Fresh Pond and Old Field Birch Grove Seating Area reconstruction projects.

J. Snow asked about electric vehicles on Fresh Pond Reservation and signage to inform the public that electric (and other) motorized vehicles are not allowed. D. Kaplan explained existing signage types and locations, and Ranger enforcement. There was a request for electric vehicle signage at Maher Park. V. Falcione will explore.

V. Falcione talked about ticks which are present but rare at Fresh Pond Reservation, the success of over seeding the lawn adjacent to Fresh Pond Pkwy with a native wildflower mix, and the reported presence of avian bird flu in geese and swans.

J. Burns asked about the status of replacing the fence at the Maher Community Garden. No one present had current information.

Item 4: Golf Course Landscape Report (A. Corbeil)

The presentation has been posted online https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/freshpondreservation/advisoryboardagendasandminutes/Minutes/2024/2024_FPGC_LandscapeReport.pdf

A. Corbeil introduced the new Director of Golf, Jo-Anna Krupa. J. Krupa explained her background in golf course architecture and how that informs her appreciation for environmentally sensitive design and her interest in protecting the Reservation. A. Corbeil noted the amount of golf played and discussed public programming including the Mayor's Youth Program. They have employed consultants to review their turf maintenance program. Goals include promoting healthy soil biology and reducing turf diseases. The turf maintenance program considers environmental impact and collects and uses data to minimize nutrient and other chemical inputs.

Regarding tree planting at the golf course, C. Young asked if pH testing was done to match pH requirements of specific tree plantings.

J. Snow commented that habitat type and groupings should be considered when planting native trees.

Ranger O. Mejia asked about parking and traffic challenges resulting from the Huron Ave. roadway construction. Discussion ensued.

Item 5: New Buffer/Transition Zones Section to 2019 Master Plan Plant List Update

J. Snow explained an approach to defining transition zones and their significance for protecting ecosystems.

Item 6: Fresh Pond Day, June 22 Planning and Board Sign-Up

J. Snow passed around a sign-up sheet for Fresh Pond Day tabling.

Item 7: 2024-2025 Term Proposed Meeting Schedule

Dates for quarterly meetings were discussed. D. Kaplan motioned to approve. No formal second or approval vote, but tacit agreement on 3rd Thursday of the month meeting dates Sept. 19, 2024; Nov. 21, 2024; March 20, 2025 and May 15, 2025. Optional meeting dates if needed are Jan. 16, 2025 and April 16, 2025.

Item 8: Preliminary Agenda for Sept. 19, 2024

Watershed Manager's Report; Huron Forest Phase 1 Report; FY 24 & 25 Budgeting Master Plan Projects Update; Wildlife notes (Monarchs, etc.); Upcountry Reservoirs Report; Status of designating Joe Harrington Way

Item 9: Public Comment

K. Vorspan discussed his interest in fencing and managing poison ivy. He commented that the tall, old, rusted fencing ruins the views of the reconstructed seating area near the Old Field Birch Grove. He expressed his interest in our agreeing to lower fence heights at specific locations surrounding Fresh Pond Reservoir.

He then expressed his interest in the Water Department committing to physically removing poison ivy from the fence line between the pond road and Fresh Pond Reservoir. He recommended having a poison ivy table at Fresh Pond Day.

Before adjournment, D. Kaplan formally recognized Ranger Tim Puopolo for his nomination and receipt of the City's 2024 Outstanding City Employee award. All agreed that this award was well and rightfully deserved.

D. Kaplan moved, and A. Corbiel seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:05