



City of Cambridge Conservation Commission

147 Hampshire Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
Ph. 617.349.4680

Jennifer Letourneau, Director

jletourneau@cambridgema.gov

Public Meeting – Monday, March 25, 2024 at 7:00 PM Zoom MEETING MINUTES

The following meeting minutes were taken by Tracy Dwyer and are respectfully submitted.

Present Commission Members: Jennifer Letourneau, Director; Kathryn Hess; John Leo; David Lyons, Vice Chair; Michelle Lane; Elysse Magnotto-Cleary; Erum Sattar

Absent Commission Members: Purvi Patel, Chair

Attendees: Tracy Dwyer, DPW; Kara Falise, DPW; Paul Ippolito, Museum of Science; Lena Frappier, DPW; Laura Laich, VHB; Elizabeth Clarkin, Consigli; Angela Nelson, Museum of Science; Rick Azzalina, Stantec; Hannah Van der Eb, Brown Richardson Rowe; Nina Brown, Brown Richardson Rowe; Marlin Hueil, Stantec; Andrea Kendall, LEC Environmental; David Glenn, Stantec; Dan Driscoll, DCR; Cynthia Smith; David Ames; Franziska Amacher; Gail Flynn; Jane Morse; John Hanratty; John Patrick; Maggie Booz; Marc Levy; Rochelle Sharpe; Steve Owens; Elena Saporta; Cole RS; Thomas Pounds; Sandra Fairbank; James Williamson

David Lyons opened the meeting.

7:01 – Request for Determination of Applicability

Museum of Science – Blue Wing Renovation
Barges on the Charles River

Laura Laich from Stantec was in attendance to present to the commission. Laura also stated with her on the meeting was Elizabeth Clarken from Consigli as well as Paul Ippolito and Angela Nelson from the museum. Laura stated that the section of the museum that they will be working on is the Blue Wing which is on the Cambridge side and that this structure hangs over the water and is on piles. Laura stated that part of this project included the Charles River and that is where there will be barges which will be needed for construction on the Blue Wing. Laura said because there is no land access at this location cranes will need to be on barges to install the façade. Laura stated that there should be three barges in total for a crane and equipment. She also stated that six of the piles will undergo some repairs. Laura said that the work on the water consists of anchors to the barges that will be anchored to the bottom of the Charles River and the work on the piles. Laura said there is potential for platforms for lay down as well as a quick deck storage system. The quick deck system will be used for egress between the barge and land as well as for

the pile repairs. Laura said for work in the wetland resource area the barge will be anchored by spuds which will have a temporary impact and once the anchor is removed there will be no permanent impact.

Jennifer Letourneau asked Laura to explain what a spud is.

Laura said the spuds are a typical way of anchoring a barge. She said that steel shafts are placed into the mudline.

Laura said that the repairs to the piles are very minor and there is no permanent disturbance.

Laura said that divers will access the piles with hand tools to pull the sediment around the pile away. She said that there is bordering land subject to flooding on the museum property but there is no impact to that resource area and there is no impact to the 100-foot buffer zone to the bank. Laura wanted to emphasize the mitigation measures that will be in place, for example the barge will have double turbidity curtains around them. They are not anticipating any sediments, but the curtain will be up in case. The other measure will be protective netting that will be installed around the building just in case there is any falling debris.

David Lyons asked if they are all set with their paperwork for DEP.

Jennifer said an RDA is typically presumed to be submitted by the landowner, in this case the landowner is the state. Laura was able to get confirmation from Priscilla Geigas from the DCR that this work has been reviewed and approved and they will be going forward with the DCR for access permits for this project.

Jennifer said that Kara Falise from DPW did not do a technical review for this project.

Kara said it was important work but there was nothing technical about it and is a standard construction on the surface of water.

David asked if there was prior permitting for the Museum of Science of this nature in the water.

Jennifer said she was not aware of any of this type of work being done.

Kathryn Hess asked Laura to explain how the boats and barges would get into the river. She asked if the curtains would temporarily open to allow them to get in and out.

Laura said that the barges will be traveling through Boston and through the canal to get to the museum and that the barges will only stay for as long as needed.

Elizabeth Clarkin from Consigli said that the boats and barges will be launched from a marine yard in East Boston and the goal is for them to move through the locks get set in place and stay put with the spuds. Elizabeth said any material barges will be moved off hours not to disrupt daytime traffic. She said they were working with Black Dog as the contractor, and they specialize in marine and coastal work.

Jennifer explained that the barges will need to use the drawbridge and canal that is located beside the museum and that is why they are moving those off hours.

Kathryn asked if the jackets were going to be replaced on some of the piles and wanted to know if that is affecting the footprint of the piles.

Laura said that was a replacement and there was no increase in the diameter itself.

Elysse Magnotto-Cleary said she was very familiar with the museum and knows that part of it is in Boston as well and wanted to know if they also needed to present this before the Boston Conservation Commission.

Laura said that all the work within the wetlands is all in Cambridge. They would need to travel through Boston, but all work is in Cambridge.

Erum Sattar asked if there was a timeline for the project and how long the barges will be there and will there be any issues with any potential storms.

Elizabeth said that for the use of the barges and crane it would be about a year, but the project may take longer than that. She said in terms of designs around the crane and associated barges they are considering any of the wind loads so the maximum that they can list is four degrees, but they are targeting 1.5 degrees, so they will have counterweights. She said if there is any concern with wind or a freak weather event the cranes can condense, and those barges can move because they will only be temporarily in place.

John Leo asked while the work is going on in the winter if there were any methods in place if water freezes around the barges.

Elizabeth said that Black Dog has used steel hull safety boats and tugboats to break up any ice build up.

7:20 – Public Comment – no public comment

7:22 – Public Comment Closed

6 – In Favor, 1 – Absent, 0 – Abstained

David asked if Jennifer had any special conditions or just the standard conditions for the RDA.

Jennifer said just the general conditions would be fine.

7:24 – The commission unanimously approved a negative determination.

6- In Favor, 1 – Absent, 0 – Abstained

7:24 - Notice of Intent

DEP File #123-324

Department of Conservation and Recreation – Memorial Dr. Phase 3

Dan Driscoll, the Director for Green Transportation for the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) was present, he stated he was the project manager for this project. Dan stated that phase I and phase II of the Memorial Drive project were in the same limits, the Longfellow Bridge to the BU Bridge. Dan said that this project was a demonstration project that has been highly successful to show them what they might be able to do in other segments of Memorial Drive, which did include a road diet one eastbound travel lane was removed and has not resulted in any notable problems for traffic but has provided a big increase of safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Dan stated along with this project there were new benches that were put in, a stabilized aggregate path and multiple tree plantings as well as storm water improvements and new traffic signal equipment and did a major refurbishing and replacement of the embankment fencing. Dan stated that the cost on phase I was \$6.2 million dollars. Dan stated that phase II of this project from the Longfellow Bridge to the BU Bridge included a continuous shared use path bi-directional, a pedestrian stabilizer path that was widened and designed so pedestrians have a respite away from the cyclists. This also featured additional stormwater improvements, a new

lighting system and some upgraded traffic control equipment for safer crossings. Also, part of this project included three hundred and twenty (320) new tree plantings and some lower riverbank plantings and that phase of the project was \$9.2 million dollars. Dan stated that the Memorial Drive phase III project goals is that they are looking to fulfill in their design is to be consistent with all the major documents that have been produced that includes the Charles River Basin Master Plan, the historic Parkway Preservation Guidelines, their Parkways Master Plan, and the City of Cambridge Riverfront Plan. Dan stated that they are really striving to protect the London Plane trees and that will include planting twenty-three (23) new London Plane trees and they will be removing seven (7) and will also be planting fifty-six (56) native species of new trees. Dan stated as part of this road diet they will be expanding parkland by 1.16 acres, preserving historic features, and improving stormwater treatment. Dan said the additional goals of this project would be geared toward safety because this section of the pathway is one of the most dangerous, its non-compliant with 20-year-old standards from ASHTO and MUTCD and non-compliant for ADA and they are excited about the enhancements. Dan stated that some of the enhancements would be a new eleven (11) foot shared use path and a five (5) foot stabilized aggregate path with signage “no bicycles allowed” on the five (5) foot path to give a respite for the elderly and slower moving pedestrians. The other improvement are two (2) mid-block crosswalks to safely connect large sections of Cambridge which have not been there for decades, as well as ADA accessible viewing and seating and other amenities including water fountains, bake racks, rest areas as well as security lighting where appropriate.

Dan stated that this project originally started in 2017 following the completion of Memorial Drive Phase II and hired AECOM and the original scope of work included the BU Rotary, Western Avenue and River Street which was a much larger scope and prove to be complicated. He said for two (2) year they did planning and traffic studies and with all the traffic analysis what it showed was that this segment from the Anderson Bridge to the Eliot Bridge was the one segment that additional road diet was not going to cause major traffic problems. Dan said that they did a public outreach process with AECOM, lots of public listening sessions, two (2) public meetings and they had an interactive wiki map that led to twelve hundred (1200) comments and many of those were in favor of a road diet a lot were in favor of just closing the road. Dan stated that when COVID hit the project got delayed and during the delay they started thinking about the project and it made more sense for them to downsize it and reduce the scope. They decided the scope from Anderson Bridge to JFK was one where they could make major impacts of safety improvements and it would be within a budget realm that was implementable by DCR. Dan said that DCR hired Stantec consultant to provide a hundred percent (100%) design and update of the Memorial Drive phase III project. Dan stated once they restarted the project in 2021 over the last three (3) years they have an extensive engagement process with the City of Cambridge, professional staff, with the public, the Cambridge Boat Club, MEPA through both an ENF filing where they got two hundred (200) comments as well as EIR filing where they had an additional four hundred (400) comments and all of those comments have led to design modification to try and accommodate as much as they could from the excellent input they received from the public. He said in June of 2022 they had their 25% design meeting and following the Conservation Commission hearings they will be having their 75% design public meeting later this spring in May. Dan said that they have had Chapter 91 meetings with DEP as well as site walks to look at the trees that are going to be removed. Dan stated that the scope of this project will be from the Anderson Bridge to the Eliot Bridge which includes both sides of the parkway, the sidewalk as well as all the parkland and pathways along the Charles River, which is about 1.1 miles in length.

Dan said that they went through MEPA twice for an ENF and an EIR and now have documented about sixteen hundred (1600) public comments and their final certificate with MEPA was issued in June of 2023. Dan went through some of the feedback that was given to them and the responses that were given. The first comment was not to remove any of the London Plane trees, Dan said that they will have to remove about seven (7) of them but have modified the pathway design to preserve any healthy London Plane trees and they will not remove any healthy trees on this project. Another comment that they received was to reduce the amount of retaining wall they didn't want to see hard edge treatment so Dan said that they have changed that to low height retaining walls using bioengineered core logs which will provide a much more naturalized look along the rivers edge. He said that they have reduced construction impacts to the London Plane trees on the north side of the parkway. They were proposing to move the curb inward to give the trees more room but have been advised just by touching the curbs they might damage the roots of the trees and after talking to two arborists they have decided to leave the curb where it is. There was a request for more London Plane trees to fill in the gaps, so they will be planting twenty-three (23) more London Plane trees. Dan stated that the city and city engineers asked them to eliminate the free right turn onto Hawthorne Street so they will be doing that. Another request was for the shared use aggregate path to be separated wherever possible from the paved path and not allow cyclists and they will be accommodating that request. Dan said people wanted them to preserve historic features and minimize impacts and they will be doing that wherever possible. Dan said there were comments made that they were negatively impacting access to the Cambridge Boat House. Dan said that they have met with them about six (6) times and believes that they are happy with the design now that they have modified it. Dan said everything they were concerned about was addressed including providing ADA access into the boathouse building. Dan said that people talked about DCR removing Jerry's Landing Road and being able to widen the parkland down by the boathouse and they will be doing that. People wanted a separate bicycle path to be where the road diet was occurring. Dan said that they can accomplish that on part of the project but not all of it and he will later show images in the two segments. Dan said people wanted a twelve (12) shared use path, but they cannot accommodate that but will be doing eleven (11) feet and then an added five (5) foot stabilizer path so that will be sixteen (16) feet of cross section compared to the six (6) feet today and that exceeds the ASHTO guideline for shared use facilities. Dan said that originally the two mid-block crossings were going to be rapid flash beacons which means they would never completely stop vehicles and people were concerned about that. Dan said they have upgraded those signals to be hawk signals which means you will get a full red light stop of traffic at both Hawthorne and Spark Street crossings. Dan showed a plan of the cross section between Hawthorne and JFK Memorial Park. He said from the left over there is a sidewalk which is in poor condition and will be replaced with flexible porous pavement that will allow inflow of water to help with the trees. Dan said there will be two ten-foot travel lanes with three feet of shoulder on each side which do not currently exist and because of this new buffer they will be able to remove the guardrails which will make it feel like a parkway. Dan said then there will be an eleven (11) foot shared use path inside the London Plane trees in this section and then there will be a five (5) foot aggregate path. Dan then showed a plan of the cross section from Riverbend Park at the west end to Hawthorne Street, here they can move the shared use path upgraded to eleven (11) feet. Dan also showed a plan for the Cambridge Boat Club which depicted improved sight lines on their curb cuts and will provide an area for trailers to load and unload. Dan said that that loading area for the trailers will be a grass Crete material that will make it look like grass and parkland but will be supported underneath. The plan also showed the expanded parkland because of the closure of Jerry's

Landing which will still allow vehicular access to Memorial Drive. Dan said there will also be a plaza area with seating, drinking fountain, benches, and space for the Head of the Charles where they put their tent and platform. Dan stated that with the landscape they will be protecting one hundred and twelve (112) of the London Plane trees and planting twenty-three (23) more. They will be expanding and reserving the LA and they will be doing that by air spading and pruning everything possible. In the future as trees die, they also want to make sure that they are properly replanted to keep the historic look. Dan said that the removal of seven (7) London Plane trees is due to vehicle strikes, internal decay and mechanical damage at the base. Dan said that all the trees on the project have been photographed and assessed, which is a rare thing to do but shows that they are taking the health of the trees seriously. Dan stated that they will also be planting fifty-six (56) new native trees which will be consistent with their vegetation management plan which the Conservation Commission approved. Dan said that one thing that the Charles River does not have is enough of is healthy understory and they plan to plant some that to make it more biologically diverse.

Dan explained where they were with their permitting, he said that they have their MEPA certificate, they are before the commission of their Notice of Intent and that will also be filing for their Chapter 91 for a minor modification of the overall project. Dan said they will also be filing for a Chapter 91 license for the proposed viewing and resting wood deck. Dan said they will also need to apply for an 8m permit with the MWRA because of some utilities under the project area. Dan went through the schedule of the project, spring of 2024 they are filing their NOI and the final public meeting will be later in the spring, then they will have their 100% design completed by late summer of 2024 and they will advertise and bid the project this fall and anticipating in the spring of 2025 a construction start. He said some people are curious about the cost, he said they had it at \$11 million but he said it's probably up around \$14 million given all the additional design modifications. Dan wanted to mention that at the Anderson Bridge and the JFK Street intersection there is no road diet and they come back at least one hundred (100) yards so that all the lane configuration going into that intersection will not be reduced. Dan turned the presentation over to David Glenn and Andrea Kendall, members of the consultant team, to talk about some of the technical elements under the jurisdiction of the commission.

David Glenn from Stantec introduced himself as the lead stormwater engineer for the project. David said that they will be implementing stormwater treatment as well as installation of green infrastructure, pavement reduction, stormwater BMPs to help improve water quality to the Charles River. Some of the improvements include construction of bio-retention swales that will treat the stormwater run off for the project and will be reducing approximately 1.16 acres of impervious area within the actual project which will improve water quality, peak water runoff and ground water recharge. He said that they will also be adding three thousand (3000) linear feet of porous pavement that will replace the existing sidewalk on the northern side. David said for the stormwater system they will be providing a new drainage system with pipes, deep sump catch basins and the catch basins will have hoods. David stated that all these stormwater improvements will help reduce the phosphorus runoff to the Charles River which is a category five impaired water body. David showed an area where run off will be directed into a bioswale. He also showed a typical drawing of a dry swale. David said that the underdrain system will tie into a drain manhole which again will tie into the existing outfall before discharging into the Charles River.

Jennifer Letourneau asked David if this was bioretention or bio detention since it's connected and ultimately goes out.

David said that it's connected to a drain manhole which will go to the Charles River.

Jennifer said that is not a retention system then.

David said they would have flow through the system and will get some groundwater recharge then the flow will go to a drain manhole and then eventually out to the Charles River.

Andrea Kendall from LEC Environmental went through some of the offsets. Andrea stated they have two cross section views overlayed on to Google Street view to show what their project will look like as it related to existing conditions. Andrea explained that to the left is the parkway surface with a twelve (12) foot landscape buffer with an eleven (11) foot wide shared use path adjacent to that is the five (5) foot aggregate path. Andrea said that there is some slope grading that goes down to the existing vegetated area, so lawn will be converted to lawn with a little bit of a slope at the top of the twenty-five (25) foot river front area. Andrea stated that a portion of the aggregate path and the shared use path is within the buffer zone, but they are staying out of the flood plain and bank of the Charles River. Andrea said there are some instances where work will occur in the flood plain and one of those areas is where the overlook will be constructed. Those overlooks will be constructed in two areas, and they are thirty (30) feet wide by ten (10) feet deep and sit on eight (8) helical piles and three (3) of those will be in BLSF with a very low impact they are just screwed into the land below. They do not anticipate vegetation growth but they want to keep it stable so they are converting that to rip wrap under the overlooks and some of that will occur within BLSF and will reestablish that at grade so there no result in any impact or fill within BLSF. Andrea said she believes it will be about two hundred and fifty (250) square feet. Andrea stated that there is another area near the Eliot Bridge that the existing path is within the flood plain and they will be reconditioning that path, and some grading will be done adjacent to the path that will be in the flood plain. Andrea said that they will be lowering the grades in that area so there will be an increase in flood storage capacity in comparison to today. Andrea explained that in terms of the riverfront area there is a slight increase of impervious area due to the increase in the width of the shared use path and that is 14,500 square feet along the whole corridor and other riverfront impacts are related to site re-vegetation. Andrea stated they are in receipt of Kara's comments regarding stormwater management and other aspects and will be providing a formal written response before the next meeting.

David Lyons said that they will review Kara's memo and then they will go to public comment. David reiterated that public comment will be limited to three (3) minutes per person. David also wanted to remind people that the Conservation Commission has limited jurisdiction related to the impacts of the wetlands and other interests that are protected by the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA). He said that they have no jurisdiction over topics like traffic management, bike safety or other traffic related topics as Dan Driscoll mention there has been a lot of public process that has happened and will have more in the future where those comments would be more appropriately directed. David said people should comment on whatever they feel within the three (3) minutes and that the commission will be taking written comments as well.

Kara Falise from DPW thanked the project team for their presentation and said some of the questions she had were addressed but she happy that they will be submitting a formal response to her memo. Kara said her first comment is consistent with the conversation that they have with notices of intent that the application was a little silent on temporary impacts to the resources area associated with construction. Kara stated that the entire Memorial Drive cross section is located within the one hundred (100) foot buffer zone and any staging area, truck access or storage could

have an impact on a resource area in a temporary way and would need to be mitigated. Kara stated it would be helpful to have more understanding of how they anticipate this project be constructed however they acknowledge that the contractor has rights to means and methods, but they should think about how viewing platforms and other elements and how they are going to be constructed. Kara said that this project will need a NEPDES construction general permit because it's exceeding an acre of disturbance and will require a SWIPP which will address some of the erosion and sediment controls, but she said some elaboration on that would be helpful for the commission to understand.

Kara said her second general comment is thinking about the long-term viability of the project and this project will be reusing a lot of existing outfalls and stormwater outfalls that currently serve Memorial Drive. Kara stated that catch basins from Memorial Drive are collecting stormwater and conveying it to an outfall in the river and they are reusing the outfall structure and the piping to the structure as part of their design and for areas of the roadway that aren't tributary to one of their proposed bioswales some of that infrastructure will remain in place. The application didn't talk about the condition of some of the pipes or if there was some evaluation of condition of those pipes they are proposing for reuse and they would like to have an understanding if the condition and if there is not going to be work required at the river's edge or in the bank to make improvements to that stormwater system. Kara said her second comment that falls into this group is specific to the sizing of their stormwater BMP's, the City of Cambridge as well as the commission and DEP draft revisions to the stormwater handbook and policy are all leaning towards designing stormwater BMP's to handle projected 2070 rainfall events that are increasing sort of the depth and intensity of rainfall which is more consistent with the storms we are seeing as a result of climate change. Kara stated that this project is meeting standards to the maximum extent practicable, but the concern is how are these going to function in these shorter more intense rainfall events or a larger event. The standard is that the BMP's should be able to handle those events. Kara said the memo is asking the consultants to run the projected 2070 storm events through their design to the BMP's to see how that would function. Kara said her third block of comments and Andrea did touch on a little when she mentions the resources areas and that the project talks about a net reduction in impervious area tributary to the river which is good and that information is in there but she would like if they could go in and pick it out and do the math and provide a summary of the change of location to some of these impervious areas and it is a change of condition of some of the impervious area. Kara said that Andreas slides helped to better show that in terms of showing where the riverfront area limit was and the grading and how the stormwater was going to flow but she thinks a few tables talking about how much of the roadway is being treated by the bioswales and how much is going to remain untreated where these other impervious area land is really important to understand the change in conditions of the area between the existing tree way and the rivers edge.

Kara wanted to add that there was a significant amount of process associated with the removal of the trees for this project and that the city always supports the preservation of healthy trees that provide canopy are a very important part of a lot of broader city goals. The trees along Memorial Drive are under DCR's purview but the city has been engaged in some of the discussions, but they are DCR's trees to make the decisions on. Kara said she appreciates that the proponents will be providing a written response to the memo because it is helpful.

Dan Driscoll said that the memo was helpful and that they will respond in detail to all the comments. Dan said he wanted to remind the commission as well as the public that we can talk about the flood plain but from the Watertown Dam to the Charles River Dam there is really no

flood plain and it is completely controlled by the Charles River Dam although he understands jurisdictionally there a flood plain but in terms of functionality and practicality that water level is held consistent all the time and Bill who runs the dam will lower it if there is a big event coming. Dan said depending on if it is spring and the fish are running, it's a completely man controlled manipulated system and the natural flood plain as it ever existed has not existed for decades and now Dan said they have three massive pumps and the third of which to date has never been needed. Dan stated these big events that are happening Kara is right we need to think about them, but they are all controlled by a multi-million-dollar structure which is recently getting upgrades and hardened with what is coming regarding climate change.

David thanked Dan for his comment and said that they love the natural features of the Charles River but important to note that is really a man controlled, even controlled environment. David also thanked Kara for her comment as well.

Jennifer stated that last week Kara and herself met with the proponents on site and reviewed items including what was going to be in the memo and had asked for a reflagging of the wetland resource area including the bank. She said her discussion with Andrea in particular, was how would Jennifer feel about adding some slides using Google Street view. Jennifer feels like it missed the mark completely with a linear projection and Jennifer says she feels it doesn't tell the story. Jennifer said they will have to figure something else out for that aspect of the delineation and the flags on the plans.

David has a question for Kara, Jennifer and DCR and asked if the commission has permitted one of the outfalls in the area. David said it was for a reconstruction of the outfall and asked if that stormwater infrastructure is owned by the city.

Jennifer confirmed that the Willard Street Outfall Project was permitted, and that the city did redo that project. She said that those drawings have been shared with Rick and Dan.

Kara stated that there are several small outfalls that convey the drainage from Memorial Drive to the river.

Jennifer agreed with Kara that there are lots of catch basins that are conveyed to several outfalls along the river.

Dan said he has done some preliminary investigation into that comment because it's a good comment. Dan stated that Tom who runs DCR's entire storm system and maintains all of those basins said he doesn't think at this time anything would need to be upgraded. Dan said that they would reiterate that in their written responses and Tom said he would double check the outfalls.

David just wanted to confirm that there is no city infrastructure in this area that should be upgraded and coordinated with this project.

Kara said that there is one outfall that she believes that they are removing the railing around it as part of this project and that is a city owned outfall but none of the drainage from the road goes to that outfall, she said Stantec can confirm. Kara said that the city will confirm that there is no work needed on that outfall.

Jennifer said that there is a drainage structure at the backside of the Mount Auburn Hospital that is in the road that they will coordinate a clean out for. Jennifer said there is also a flow meter that will need to be installed at Hawthorne into an existing manhole.

8:19 – Public Comment Opened

Jennifer said there was one comment in the Q & A from Cole RS, “will you add a pedestrian crossing at the path connecting Memorial Drive to University Road”.

Dan stated that it is not in the plan, he said that they can look at it quickly, but their budget is well beyond what was anticipated in both the design and the permitting.

Rick Azzalina from Stantec wanted to comment and said they do have crossing one is opposite Park Street, and the other is down by the University Avenue connection along the park.

Franziska Amacher and Pat Seckler, they are the Trustees of Riverbend Park, they appreciate the work that Kara did, and they are concerned about the whole volume of stormwater that they are expecting and wondering whether they have covered enough and maybe should have a plan for 2070. The other issue that they were concerned about is that the 25-foot setback is not adhered to so there are quite a few intrusions into that. The separation of bikes and pedestrians was explained nicely but they are still wondering why they want to keep pedestrians onto that eleven (11) foot path when they have that five (5) foot path could be used by pedestrians. They stated its not safe for bikes or any fast-moving vehicles or even runners and wondering if they could separate the two and using the five-foot path an asphalt path instead of an aggregate path and just pedestrians could use it and they were wondering what their thoughts were behind need to have this shared path. They said in many places the two paths are right next to each other and they won't really feel safe from bicycles because they could easily cross over to the five-foot path and question if this really works. They are also wondering about the necessity for the large concrete platforms for the benches, have these benches doubled.

Jennifer said they also received their written comments and those have been shared with the commission and proponents.

Gail Flynn said she appreciates all the work that has been done from 2017 to today. She said she is here at the meeting tonight because she is an abutter but also an architect and has a keen interest in what happens in the planning world. Gail stated that the work that has been done by the teams has been excellent so far, but each section is different in character and this phase III section even within itself has different contexts, for one it's probably having the most property owners in one per foot and the one mile stretch and she happens to be one of those property owners. Gail stated she's been in a condominium building overlooking the river and sees what has been going on day-to-day for the last fifty (50) years. Her hope is that since the property owners have a lot invested in what is happening that they will make use of them. Gail said one of her main points is that the number of trees in the plan in front of what now is a relatively pastoral area in stretch of one mile and is a change in its aesthetic and those who view this area would be concerned that the river is going to be walled off from them and they won't be able to see it. She stated as it is now the weeds are already overgrown along that area even when you are sitting on the benches in the area you can't see the river anymore. Gail would like them to reconsider the location of the 24-30 trees in that area.

James Williamson is from North Cambridge. James stated that he really appreciates Dan Driscoll's presentation and appreciated the most the separation between pedestrians, bicycles, and racing vehicles. James stated he hasn't had a chance to study the plan, but it seems good to have that separation. James said that he would frequently walk along the north side near the convent of the project area, and he said that pavement was wide in that area, but bicyclists would

race along that section as well as the south side. He would like to know what would be done regarding the width and the issues involving bicycle use in places that he seems to think should be reserved exclusively for people walking. His second comment was he would do delivery work for Harvard Square business and would drive in that section frequently and would love to take the illegal left turn onto Hawthorne back when you could do it. He was concerned with the congestion issue in that area and what the analysis was of the traffic situation with reducing the travel lanes. Lastly on the separated pedestrian zone aggregate path which he appreciates but he would like to know how they got to eleven feet he said he hears from people in Cambridge that you need fourteen feet, he thinks the eleven feet is a great solution.

Dan Driscoll wanted to comment, he said the north sidewalk they did consider, and he agrees it's a pedestrian zone and that they will probably sign that bikes must yield to pedestrians. Dan said they wouldn't want to ban it from bikes because in some cases that will be their only way to access the crossings, so they need to be careful about they allow it or don't allow it. Dan stated that the way they came to eleven (11) feet is that they were counting the five-foot stabilizer path in the cross-section toward ASTO standards which puts us at sixteen (16) feet well over the standard of twelve (12) to fourteen (14) that ASHTO currently recommends when bikes and pedestrians are going to be along the same facility.

Jennifer announced that there were fourteen (14) attendees and sixteen (16) panelists in the meeting currently and public comment is still open.

Elena Saporta is a founding member of the Memorial Drive Alliance, a group that came together in 2019. Elena stated that since the beginning they have consistently advocated for the separation and protection of cars from bicyclists and bicyclists from pedestrians and believe a shared use path allows for conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists and creates dangerous and uncomfortable conditions for children, the elderly, and the mobility impaired users of the park. She stated that signs will not prevent cyclists from using the aggregate path and vice versa. Elena last point was she takes issue with the point that the Sycamore trees are at the end of their life. She said that there are Sycamore trees in the commonwealth that are four hundred (400) years old and the trees on Memorial Drive have been hit repeatedly by trucks that are banned from parkways, so if that was enforced those trees would be in better shape now.

Jennifer wanted to reiterate that she has received written comments from several people that are in the attendees tonight and have been shared with both the commission and the proponents.

Maggie Booz wanted to compliment Dan and stated that the team did a great job, and the project is just beautiful and thinks it's going to be a huge improvement. Maggie wanted to urge them not to skimp on trees unlike one of the previous comments. Maggie stated that there is 1.16 acres of previous ground and would say that seven nine (79) trees isn't enough for that amount of additional space. She said that there just wasn't lip service paid to public comment this time and felt like the public was listened to with retaining walls reduced and paths separated as much as they can be and appreciates everyone's efforts towards this project.

Erum Sattar stated that Dan stated that the outfalls and drains were all checked and that there is nothing at the moment that requires any kind of attention. Erum was wondering if there was a

process built in for when those inspections are done and when other work will naturally come up in terms of maintenance and how that will take affect of what they will be undertaking. Dan said Tom was not aware of any upgrades but would check and get back to Dan. Dan said that the commission may be aware already but DCR was cited by the EPA and they are under a federal mandate on the stormwater along the Charles River Basin and Tom is really diligent about the maintenance of those basins because he has to file reports about the maintenance and copies can be provided to the commission if needed. He said the EPA gets filed reports about the maintenance and the regularity with which it happens. Before they provide written responses to the commission, they will make sure they are checked again to make sure nothing needs replacement, especially with the outfalls.

Pat Seckler stated that she is the head of the people for Riverbend Park and knows the river quite well. Pat stated she is 91 years old and has been out there all these years watching how it's used and how she uses it herself. She said people her age do not walk in the straight line not because they don't want to because they can't and sometimes they wiggle from side to side and if there is a bike on the same path as her she does not feel safe therefore is not using the pathways. Pat stated according to Cambridge statistics her neighborhood is 30% elderly and young and that is one third of the population and we need to take care of those people and not ignore them. Pat said if she needed to push her husband as she used to push him around the neighborhood, she would need to push him on the eleven (11) foot path because the other path would be too soft, but the eleven (11) foot path is not safe. Pat asked if the path that is proposed could be an aggregate path so it would be safe by the river.

Dan Driscoll thanked Pat for all her work over the years, he stated that she's been an amazing advocate. Dan said that material is called stabilizer and there are other sections along Memorial Drive that it's currently being used. He said it is one of the few stone dust materials that has actually gone through testing and cited as being fully compliant for ADA and wheelchair access and that is why they are using it. Dan said this material is more expensive than asphalt and it's an excellent material and they have had a lot of success with it when it's put in properly. Dan said there is a new section long Charles River Road in Watertown they just complete as part of a braille trail for the Perkins School for the Blind. Dan stated that this material is as hard as asphalt. With a hard rainstorm it can soften briefly but then it re-hardens, and he believes this is the right material and it will discourage bikes from going on it. Dan said having two different materials is an effective way at separating and somebody said they might ignore the signs if bikes are not allowed, and people will break rules, but he thinks they will respect it when they have adequate space with the new eleven (11) foot path.

David said there are various examples of walking and recreational areas in Cambridge that have this same material; Cambridgeside Galleria and Fresh Pond.

Kathryn Hess wanted to circle back with the stormwater and she hears, yes the state is under a mandate from an EPA court order, she asked when they are responding to the comment memo they lay out what the standards are they following that the design is, so when they say it's adequate and they know they can't make them design to Cambridge's standards but at least be transparent and tell the commission what standards they are using.

Dan said they will do their best on that, it's a fair comment. Dan said one comment he would like to make is that they are flipping hard surface of road to hard surface of path and somehow correlating that as a similar storm water issue and fundamentally he does not think that is true that bike paths don't generate pollution. He stated they are reducing the asphalt of a road which is where all the pollution is, and they are committing to not sanding or salting the new bike path. Dan said the only thing on the paths are runners, bikers or walkers and they don't generate pollution outside of maybe a bike tire. Dan said all the antifreeze, oil and petroleum are the problems on a road and that is the major reduction, and they did not take credit for that because they added the hard surface of the path back into their calculations, but in truth the major reduction of the polluting source which is four lanes of traffic.

Kathryn Hess asked if DCR expects less traffic when it goes down from four lanes to two lanes or will it be the same amount of traffic on two lanes instead of four.

Dan said it was a great question and their traffic studies show no that people may find alternate routes during commuting hours. Dan said the only real traffic problems on that road are commuting times, ninety minutes in the morning and evening. Dan said on this section from the Anderson Bridge to the Eliot Bridge there is a lot of space there that is appropriated for cars and there will be the same number of cars from pre-COVID times to now that is what they are anticipating. Dan said they are not planning any road diet at Anderson Bridge, so that will have no impact and they don't anticipate any longer queuing. He said right now the rating is a D and they are not making it any better or worse. Dan said that they took two lanes out of Greenough Boulevard, and he heard for two years what a nightmare it was going to cause, and he said if you drive Greenough Boulevard today it is no different. He said the residents of Grove Street said they were going to wreck their lives but it did not happen and what happened was there is not a safe pathway along the river and also took a lane out of Nonantum Road in Newton, they took a lane out of Truman Parkway and if you want to see what this construction is going to look like right now they are taking two lanes out of Hammond Pond Parkway in Newton between Beacon Street and the Chestnut Hill Mall. Dan said it's not their first time doing this and they have shown that it can be done and it turns out that a lot of their roads historically were over appropriated for automobiles and they are trying to correct that for the safety of pedestrians and bikes.

Kathryn said he appreciates their time and effort of documenting and studying the trees to figure out which ones really should be taken out and which ones should be saved.

David asked if they had any arborist reports or opinion letters in the filing of the ones that they plan on taking out.

Dan said they have an inventory report with the photographs and the documentation. He said Jeff Knox is their arborist and Dan is not sure if they had him officially sign off on it. Dan said Jeff was on the site walk with them and has looked at all the trees and if the commission wanted a concurrence, they could get that. Dan said having a hundred and nineteen (119) London Plane trees and only needing to remove seven (7) is impressive.

David said that Elena spoke earlier during public comment, but she also submitted written comment and she suggested an alternative orientation to the layout of the traffic way and the

paths and David was wondering if Dan had a response to that, it would be a redesign to a lot of the project.

Dan said it would effectively kill the project they are at a design fee of about 1.2 million dollars and a design that started at \$650,000 a lot of the additional money was really striving to accommodate all the excellent input they received over two years and to be at 75% design set and change in alignments, stormwater systems, things like that you are talking about all new survey and design work it would kill the project when they are already trying to figure out their capital plan the \$12-1 million to build this and they are confident that they have it.

Jennifer said there was a question in the Q & A, “will there be a budget to maintain the trees in the future”.

Dan said not in a particular pot of money, but they do have an arborist contract with Northern Tree and every year there is always a budget to take care of the trees in the metropolitan park system at different locations. Dan said they have talked to the Cambridge arborist and will continue to do so and are open to creative ideas that people think they should be doing to help the longevity of the trees. Dan said trees in this type of environment being so close to a road trees don't last long and they need to be on top of replacing trees to keep the historical character of the road that everyone wants.

David was looking for an answer of when the proponents could get the comments back to the commission.

Dan said he would like to have them in advance of the next meeting and Andrea agreed.

Jennifer said the next meeting is April 8th and asked for the review and comments by Friday or Monday.

Andrea said they would try and get comments by April 1st but was looking for an answer from Stantec. She said if they can't get the information then they would ask for a continuance for the next meeting which is April 29th.

8:55 – The commission agreed to continue the hearing till April 8, 2024.

6 – In Favor, 1 – Absent, 0 – Abstained

Jennifer stated that public comment remains open and can email any comments to Jennifer. She said people can also give additional public comments when the hearing is continued.

8:56 – Administrative Topics

Meeting Minutes Approved – March 11, 2024

6 – In Favor, 1 – Absent, 0 – Abstained

Jennifer said that David had emailed her earlier and she asked Kara the question and she checked on the CSO activations and has information on that.

Kara said surprisingly the city had no CSO activations in Alewife or Charles over the weekend. Kara stated that the MWRA Cottage farm CSO in the Charles River did have an activation. She said that CHA issued a health alert specific to the MWRA CSO discharge into the Charles at Cottage Park but there was none in Alewife or on the city discharges to the Charles. Kara said the city's rain gauges had the city just over two inches of rain where areas to the south got over four inches.

Jennifer reported to the commission she will be meeting with Green Cambridge and city staff and taking a tour of Alewife Reservation to see how that looks and to provide feedback to the city.

James Williamson asked where the materials can be found for tonight's presentation and will that include the memo.

Jennifer said that she will send the information to James in an email.

James asked if there was a website for members of the public to access information from the meeting.

Jennifer explained that the city has invested in new software, and they are rolling it out slowly starting with the city council first.

9:04 – Meeting Adjourned

6 – In Favor, 1 – Absent, 0 – Abstained