

TOWN OF WELLESLEY
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 24, 2014, 7:30 PM
NRC Office, Lower Level, Town Hall

Approved 4/17/14

Attending: Heidi Gross, Chair, Stephen Murphy (arriving at 8 pm), Vice Chair, Neal Seaborn, Dr. Sarah Little, Joan Gaughan, Janet Hartke Bowser, NRC Director.

Guests: David Himmelberger, Raina McManus, Lise Olney, Bob White, Trails Committee, Ellen Korpi, Sustainable Wellesley Committee, Suzi Littlefield, Sustainable Wellesley Committee, Andrew Wrobel, Recreation Commission, Melissa Wilson, High School Stadium Task Force, Cliff Canaday, High School Stadium Task Force

Public Voice

No one attending the meeting spoke at Public Voice.

Recognition of NRC Commissioners Neal Seaborn and Dr. Sarah Little's Service to the Town

The NRC thanked Mr. Seaborn and Dr. Little for their service to the Natural Resources Commission and to the Town of Wellesley and recognized their outstanding efforts and commitment to protecting Wellesley's natural resources. Neither member will be seeking re-election to the NRC for an additional term. Mr. Seaborn served as an elected member of the NRC for nine years, three of which he served as Chair. During his time on the NRC, Mr. Seaborn provided extensive leadership on many projects including the NRC's tree replacement and improvement efforts, the Fuller Brook Park Preservation Project and the development and implementation of the Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan. Mr. Seaborn was a critical player in the planning and drafting process of the plan, as well as in its execution. His extensive efforts and leadership as a tree warden have resulted in securing continued funding for the NRC's and DPW's Public Shade Tree Management Program and Wellesley received its 30th consecutive Tree City USA and Growth Awards in 2013, the longest of any municipality in Massachusetts.

The NRC recognized Dr. Little's contributions to the NRC and noted that she served as the NRC's first Pesticide Awareness Coordinator from 2000 - 2004, where she was responsible for the development of the NRC's Integrated Pest Management Policy that prohibited the use of pesticides on NRC land, which was also adopted by the School Committee and the Board of Health. As the NRC's Pesticide Awareness Coordinator, she received awards from the State Legislature, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Toxic Use Reduction Institute at UMASS Lowell. As part of her continued efforts in the field of toxic use reduction, she developed and obtained funding for the NRC's Pesticide Awareness Campaign and conducted regional Pesticide Awareness Workshops for over 21 area towns, leading to recognition of the Town of Wellesley as the State's preeminent municipal pesticide awareness community.

Public Shade Tree Removal Hearing – Ash Tree at Corner of Abbott and Church Streets

Ms. Bowser stated that she posted notice of this hearing in accordance with State Law and that the required legal ad was published. Mr. David Himmelberger, representing Edens, the owner of the commercial property located at the corner of Church and Abbott Street, attended the meeting and stated that Edens intends to construct an outdoor patio for a new restaurant to be located at 45 Church Street. Keith Hague, the Project Manager for Edens has been in contact with the Town's Assistant Tree Warden and DPW arborist, Mike Quinn, regarding the potential impact of the construction upon the public shade tree, which Mr. Quinn confirmed is a 9 inch Ash tree. Mr. Quinn has advised that he does not believe the tree will survive the proposed construction activity adjacent to it and recommends it to be removed. It is unlikely that there is any space in the immediate vicinity in which to plant a replacement tree. Mr. Himmelberger indicated that the

owner is amenable to arranging for replacement trees to be replanted elsewhere as requested by the town, or reimbursing the town for the lost tree. Ms. Bowser, Ms. Gross and Mr. Seaborn inspected the tree and confirmed that it is a relatively healthy tree that would not be recommended for removal except for the pending request and unique circumstances. The NRC discussed the request and agreed that under the circumstances they would allow for the removal of the tree and require that Edens compensate the Town for the loss of this tree.

After a motion was made and seconded, the NRC voted 4-0 to approve the removal of the 9 inch Public Ash Tree at the corner of Abbott and Church Streets. The NRC requires that Edens compensate the Town for the loss of this tree, as allowed under MGL Ch.87, in the amount of \$1,800 (9 inch caliper tree times \$200 per caliper) and submit a check to the “NRC Tree Fund” since replacing the tree in this area is not a viable option.

Presentation on Sustainable Energy Committee’s “More Power to Choose” Campaign

Ms. Ellen Korpi, chair of the Wellesley Sustainable Energy Committee, attended the meeting to update the NRC on the Town’s “More Power to Choose” campaign that is offering homeowners a free thermal image report that displays an exterior heat loss image of your home and an analysis of what the image implies. The image is only viewable by the homeowner. Ms. Korpi stated that this campaign is working to “Make Wellesley Even Better” by offering the following:

- FREE home thermal image report
- No-Cost home energy assessment
- Advice on how to accomplish one’s list of efficiency recommendations
- FREE preliminary analysis of a home’s suitability for a solar installation
- Discounted price for solar panel installation through a group purchase program
- The chance to sign up or increase the amount of clean, local renewable energy purchased through Wellesley’s Municipal Light Plant

Ms. Korpi stated that a thermal image report informs homeowners through a visual demonstration of exactly where their homes are losing energy. Sagewell, Inc. is Wellesley’s partner for this aspect of the campaign. The Cambridge-based firm drove through Wellesley on a very cold night last winter in a vehicle equipped with heat loss sensors to get the images. More than 400 Wellesley residents had assessments during the Town’s 2013 Power to Save campaign, but some still need assistance to get started on the recommended improvements that will make their homes comfortable, healthy and high performing. Assistance is available through this year’s “More Power to Choose” program. Wellesley residents can save \$1,000 a year or more on energy costs by making these improvements and those homeowners interested in solar can get a free preliminary solar suitability analysis. Ms. Korpi stated that later in the spring, through a Wellesley group purchase, Wellesley’s solar partner Astrum will provide residents very competitive pricing for solar installations, which is possible because the vendor passes on the cost savings from the benefits of economies of scale and the avoidance of marketing costs. More than 30 communities in Massachusetts have already participated in similar programs and Wellesley is one of 16 more – including Needham and Lexington – that are rolling them out in 2014.

Ms. Korpi stated that the SEC’s 2012 Power to Choose renewable energy campaign enabled Wellesley to have the third highest participation rate for voluntary renewable energy in the country behind Palo Alto, CA and Portland, OR. Wellesley is also the only EPA-designed Green Power Community in Massachusetts. This means that more than 11 percent of Wellesley customers voluntarily pay a 4 cent per kilowatt hour premium to purchase 10 percent, 25 percent, 50 percent, or 100 percent of their power from renewable sources. For the median household at the 10 percent level, this cost less than a gallon of gas per month. Ms. Korpi stated that residents can go to www.WellesleyPowerToChoose.com or call Wellesley’s Municipal Light Plant at 781-235-7600 x3366 to sign up or get more information. Ms. Korpi stated that Wellesley has

more to do when it comes to making our community even more energy efficient and sustainable and that while the Town has exceeded our carbon footprint reduction goal of 10 percent between 2007 and 2013, we have the opportunity to set a new reduction goal for 2020 and to continue our successful progress. As many members of our community take these modest steps, it adds together to achieve a material difference. Ms. Korpi asked for the NRC's endorsement of the program and assistance in publicizing the campaign. **After a motion was made and seconded, the NRC voted 5-0 to endorse the "More Power to Choose" campaign as presented and to assist with publicizing the campaign.** Ms. Bowser will work directly with Ms. Korpi to further publicize the campaign through the NRC's social media network and e-newsletter.

Discussion and Vote to Support Fuller Brook Park Preservation Construction Project – Phase 4

Ms. Gross, Mr. Murphy and Ms. Bowser updated the NRC on the status of the project. Ms. Bowser reported that Phase 4 construction bids have been opened and BETA, the Town's consultant, is expected to complete their bid evaluation and make their recommendation shortly. The current Phase 4 construction estimate is \$5.4 million including project management costs and a contingency of 12%. **After a motion was made and seconded, the NRC voted 5-0 to support the implementation and construction of the Fuller Brook Park Preservation Project Phase 4.**

Public Hearing and Vote Re: Hunnewell Athletic Field Ice Skating Rink Project

Mr. Andrew Wrobel, Chair of the Recreation Commission, attended the meeting to present the proposal for this project. He indicated that he sent letters to abutters in the Hunnewell Athletic Field neighborhood regarding this project. He stated that last year's skating took place at Phillips Park and was successful, but that parking was a major issue and that the Recreation Commission would like to request that winter skating be permitted at Hunnewell Field on the basketball courts, which had previously been converted to temporary HS parking during the new school's construction phase. Ms. Bowser stated that the NRC previously approved the conversion of this parking area back to basketball courts and that the reconversion project will likely be completed by the PBC this coming summer. Mr. Wrobel stated that the rinks have been recently installed and that it was an oversight that a permit from the NRC was not secured prior to installation.

Mr. Wrobel reviewed with the NRC the following project details:

- Background: Create three ice skating areas at Hunnewell Athletic Field:
 - One skating area, "tot rink", will be smaller (35' oval) and be for beginners (no hockey).
 - Two areas, "adult rinks", would be larger (approximately 85' x .40') and will allow hockey.
 - The rinks are up and running for the winter season (approx. January thru March 15th).
- Construction: The "rinks" consist of plastic boarded and plastic lined kits placed on the basketball court made by a company named Nice Rink. The Recreation Dept. installed the rinks and will take them down in early March.
- Water: Wellesley Fire Dept. will provide the water from the hydrant in front of the HS to fill both rinks and help maintain the ice using a pumper truck with a 500 gallon capacity.
- Labor: Wellesley Fire Department, Wellesley Recreation, WHS Key Club, Wellesley Youth Hockey, and community residents will help with the regular maintenance. WFP has offered to add some additional water if necessary.
- Parking: Parking will be limited to the WHS parking lot.
- Hours: Rinks will be open from 7:00 am – 9:30 pm Sunday -Saturday (standard park hours).
- Lights: There are currently the small parking lot lights that provide some light in the evening.
- Sponsors: The WFPD, DPW, and Wellesley Water Dept. are assisting with the sandbags and water. Rec. Dept. is seeking addition sponsors to help cover the cost of the plastic rinks and line
- Rules: Rules will be posted – same rules as last year that worked so very well at Philips Park. A sign indicating if the rink is OPEN or CLOSED for skating will be near the walking path from the

WHS to the rinks. In addition, the OPEN/CLOSED status is also available on the Wellesley Recreation website and SWELLESLEYREPORT.com

Ms. Bowser reviewed with the NRC its “Policy and Criteria for Evaluating Changes to Resource Areas Under NRC Jurisdiction” and there was discussion regarding the policy’s application to this project. The NRC concluded that the proposed rinks were not a substantial change to the existing use of the site and that there would not be a substantial negative impact to the surrounding neighborhood or environment.

Cliff Canaday, an abutter in the neighborhood and a member of the High School Stadium Task Force, stated that the other neighbors he’s spoken to about this project did not have concerns and he asked who will handle any problems related to the rinks including addressing noise concerns if people bring sound systems after hours of use? Mr. Wrobel stated that he and the Recreation Dept. will handle all concerns and problems. Mr. Canaday stated that since the lights in this area are quite low level, he has no concerns about their use.

Melissa Wilson, an abutter in the neighborhood and a member of the High School Stadium Task Force, stated that she is not opposed to this project since it is not intrusive to the neighborhood, but wanted to make sure that acceptance of this project shouldn’t be viewed as support for the possible inclusion of lighting for the High School Stadium project.

After further discussion, a motion was made and seconded, and the NRC voted 5-0 to approve the Hunnewell Athletic Field Ice Skating Rinks Project as presented.

Discussion Re: Fuller Brook Park Tree Art Proposal

The NRC briefly discussed a proposal to install a number of artistic seating installations in the trunks of trees to be removed in Fuller Brook Park as proposed by Herb Nolan, a former member of the Fuller Brook Park Coordinating Committee. Ms. Gross stated that she will work with Mr. Nolan and the artist to further develop this proposal and budget.

New Business/Continuing Business/Liaison Reports

Update on New Trails Committee Charter and Operational Guidelines

The Trails Committee’s comments on the proposed charter and operational guidelines will be circulated to all members for review at the NRC’s next meeting.

Update on Fuller Brook Park Tree Work

Mr. Seaborn and Ms. Gross updated the NRC on the status of this tree work and stated that they will be meeting with Mike Quinn and Kent Warren of the DPW to review the next phase of this effort.

Trails Committee Request for DPW to Install Signage at Town Forest

Ms. Gaughan, liaison to the NRC’s Trails' Committee, asked Ms. Bowser to send a request for signage at the Town Forest on Oakland St. Ms. Gaughan stated that the Town Forest entrance off of Oakland St. has no sign designating it as the Town Forest and that there is a beautiful sign on Madison Road by Fiske School and another on Rt. 9 but none at the Oakland Street access. There is an out of date sign near the Oakland St. parking lot by Longfellow Pond that should be taken down where the butterfly garden was created years ago, but this area is now overgrown with weeds and is no longer relevant and she said that would be a great location for a new wooden sign similar to the Madison Road sign. Ms. Bowser will forward this request to Mike Quinn at the DPW and will inform the NRC when a response has been received.

Director's Report

NRC Environmental Education Film Series – “Simple Steps to a Greener Home” on Feb. 25th

As previously discussed with the NRC, Ms. Bowser stated that she and the NRC's Environmental Education Coordinator, Laura Kiesel are organizing an environmental film series as part of the NRC's Green Wellesley Campaign's effort to inform Wellesley citizens about aspects of sustainable living, climate change, and toxins, as well as engage them in making small but significant changes in their daily lives. The first film will be “Simple Steps to a Greener Home” that will lead viewers through some easy steps to a greener home and is scheduled on Tuesday, Feb. 25th from 1 – 2:30 pm in the Wakelin Room at the library. The film will be followed by a brief discussion by NRC board member Dr. Sarah Little, who will offer simple step-by-step green cleaning recipes for your home and a Q & A session. Ms. Bowser stated that the film series will be held bi-monthly and the three additional films to be shown are “Six Degrees that Could Change the World,” “A Tour of Selected National Parks” and “Bag It.”

Town Inter-Board Meeting/FY15 Financial Projections

Ms. Gross, Mr. Murphy and Ms. Bowser attended this meeting and updated the NRC on the Town's FY15 financial projections. Currently, the Town is anticipating a FY15 \$3.5 million override primarily due to the school budget and the Town's other departments may be requested to re-examine their budget requests.

Wellesley Green Collaborative Meeting – Jan. 22nd at 9:15 AM, Library

Ms. Bowser stated that she attended this meeting and updated the NRC on the issues and projects that were discussed. She stated that she is working with several collaborative organizations on future projects and initiatives of interest to the NRC.

Fuller Brook Park Land Manager Job Description

The NRC reviewed and discussed the draft job description prepared by Ms. Bowser and revised by Ms. Gross for this position that was first referenced in the “Fuller Brook Park Preservation Project Park Maintenance and Management Plan.” Ms. Bowser will forward a copy of the revised draft job description to the FBPCC as requested.

NRC/Morses Pond FY15 Operating Budget Presentation to Advisory Committee

Ms. Bowser stated that she and Ms. Gross made a presentation on the NRC and Morses Pond FY15 Operating Budget Requests to the Advisory Committee on February 5, 2014 and that the Committee voiced preliminary support for the requests.

Wetlands Protection Enforcement Actions Update

Ms. Bowser provided an update on current Wetlands Protection enforcement actions that she is working on with the Wetlands Protection Committee and Town Counsel.

NRC Strategic Planning Initiative Update

Ms. Bowser reported that the NRC's strategic planning consultants, ESC, would like to work with the NRC to begin a dialogue with the DPW to assess and improve the NRC's land and water resource maintenance and management practices. Towards this end, Ms. Bowser stated that she has sent copies of the following documents that currently provide maintenance and management guidance to the NRC and the DPW:

1. Fuller Brook Park Maintenance & Management Plan;
2. Morses Pond Comprehensive Management Plan;
3. NRC Law, Policy and Regulations Handbook that includes extensive guidelines for NRC Park and Conservation Land Management that includes #4- 14 below;
4. NRC Annual Maintenance Standards for Conservation Lands;

5. NRC Misc. Management Guidelines;
6. NRC Encroachment Correction Policy and Procedures;
7. NRC Policy and Criteria for Evaluating Changes to NRC Resources;
8. NRC Approval Process for Plans and Designs on Park and Conservation Land ;
9. NRC Hunnewell Park (Town Hall) Policies and Standards;
10. NRC Town Forest Policies and Regulations;
11. NRC Public Trees and Public Shade Trees Town Bylaw, State Statutes, Policies, Planting Guidelines and Tree Removal Procedures ;
12. NRC Wildlife Management Policies;
13. NRC Resource Management Policies;
14. NRC Integrated Pest Management Policy ;
15. NRC Organic Turf Management Plan for Playing Fields written by our consultant Chip Osborne;
16. NRC's IPM Policy Waiver for Treatment of Invasives in Fuller Brook Park;
17. Brookside Community Gardens Rules and Regulations;
18. NRC/DPW Winter Moth Control Program;
19. Wetlands Protection Permit to DPW for Town-wide Stream and Brook Maintenance;
20. Centennial Reservation Land Use Maintenance and Management Plan;
21. DPW Open Space Maintenance Manual -over 100 pages of detailed site plans for all open space in Town;
22. Mass. DEP's Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) Report ; and
23. Mass. Stormwater Management Policies and Guidelines - DPW NPDES Phase II Small MS4 Permit.

NRC Winter Green Wellesley Campaign E-Newsletter Publication

Ms. Bowser stated that the NRC's winter *Green Wellesley Campaign* E-Newsletter was recently sent out and the feedback has been very positive.

Review and Approval of January 6, 2014 NRC Meeting Minutes

After a motion was made and seconded, the NRC voted 5-0 to approve the January 6, 2014 Meeting Minutes as revised.

Next Scheduled NRC Meeting

The next NRC Meeting was scheduled for March 18, 2014 at 7:30 PM in the NRC Office.

Adjournment

After a motion was made and seconded, the NRC voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Hartke Bowser

Janet Hartke Bowser

NRC Director