



TOWN OF WELLESLEY

MASSACHUSETTS

## NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Town Hall, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, Massachusetts 02482-5918

Raina McManus, Chair  
Laura Robert, Vice Chair  
Allison Burson  
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Bea Bezlaminiovic

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### MEETING MINUTES

**Approved 4-14-2021**

**April 1, 2021, 7 PM**

**Present:** Raina McManus, Chair; Laura Robert, Vice Chair; Jay McHale; Allison Burson; Bea Bezmaliniovic; Brandon Schmitt, Director

**Guests:** Lisa Moore, NRC Environmental Outreach Coordinator; Steve Park, Trails Committee Chair; Nick Kunkler; Patrick Hayden

**Public Speak:** No one was present for Public Speak.

#### **Action/Discussion Items:**

- **Education Update** NRC Environmental Education and Outreach Coordinator Lisa Moore was present to discuss her educational efforts in the town, which she has been able to continue despite the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. These included expanding outdoor classes with Wellesley Public Schools, the creation of video offerings and virtual field trips specifically for the Remote Learning school, and work with the Wellesley High School Evolutions class on vernal pool life cycles and invasive species. Upcoming programming will include a 4<sup>th</sup> grade storm-water series and more outreach with the Remote Learning school. Ms. Moore also provided programming for the public at large, including nature story walks and the citizen-science City Nature Challenge, (coming again in April!), as well as her work on a Silver Awards project with the Girl Scouts which addresses mental health and loss during COVID-19 that will culminate with a tree being planted to create a meditation garden. Other environmental outreach included a tree decorated with reclaimed materials for the Elm Bank Festival of Trees, and a winter-inspired Call to Art which resulted in three local artists' works being displayed in unoccupied downtown windows. Current and upcoming activities include a nature-based geocache treasure hunt (information available on the NRC website and Facebook page), upkeep of the 4-C community vegetable garden which provides weekly donations to the Wellesley Food Pantry, and a new garden at the Wellesley Housing Authority for residents to grow their own food. Ms. Moore has also been attending an eight-week pollinator course through the Schoodic Institute to work to expand Wellesley's own Pollinator Coordinators through the *Pollinate Wellesley* initiative, which will encourage residents to plant native species in their own yards. Commissioners were impressed with the depth, variety and amount of programming Ms. Moore is able to accomplish as a part-time employee and thanked her for her important efforts on behalf of the Town's residents. Any resident or Wellesley organization is welcome to contact Ms. Moore to inquire about the NRC's educational programming.

- **Tree Hearings:**

- *After discussion, a motion was made and seconded, the board voted 5-0 in favor of the removal of the 24" Sugar Maple at 28 Livermore Road at the owner's expense, and to require*

*the payment of \$1,500 to the Town's Tree Fund, which can be reimbursed upon the planting of a native tree on their own property. After discussion, a motion was made and seconded, the board voted 5-0 in favor of the removal of two 24" Norway Maples at Church Park.*

- **Unauthorized Public Shade Tree Removal: 69 Forest Street @ Park Street:** Seventeen (17) Eastern Hemlock trees were removed at 69 Forest Street, which were identified as Public Shade Trees and previously denied for removal by the NRC on November 16, 2017. *After a motion was made and seconded, the board voted 5-0 in favor of the levying of fines for the unauthorized removal of seventeen (17) trees at 69 Forest and Park Street in the amount of \$17,340, as well as damages to the Town for the loss of seventeen (17) trees in accordance with the Town's Tree Bylaw for an additional amount of \$20,700, for a total of \$38,040.*

- **Climate Emergency** Ms. McManus shared that an Act Establishing a Municipal Tree Reforestation Program in the Commonwealth is in the process of being formed at the state level, sponsored by Representative Lori Erlich, and Senator Cynthia Creem, which is a powerful strategy for climate change remediation and social justice, and recognizes the vital role forests play in combatting climate change and meeting the State's goals of becoming net-zero by 2050. The Bill requires each municipality have a reforestation plan that the Commonwealth will pay for and support with technical assistance.

- **Pollinator Habitat Project: Pollinate Wellesley** Ms. Bezmalinovic reiterated the need for healthy pollinator corridors to help create resilient and sustainable landscapes. One way to achieve this is to create connected native ecosystems. Residents are being asked to create "pocket habitats" in their own yards to expand these areas. The current initiative will include making native plants available to residents, and an informational speaker series including Doug Tallamy's Landscapes for Living presentation, designing a native garden, and maintaining a healthy yard. Later this summer a Pedal to Petals garden tour of local native gardens is planned. Members of pollinator groups in neighboring towns are also being consulted in order to maximize efforts and further extend native habitat to give insects room to roam.

### **Liaison Reports:**

**Trails:** Ms. Roberts stated that at its next meeting on April 12, the Trails Committee will be discussing some issues which have arisen at Centennial Reservation, which include the extreme widening of trails and the creation of unsanctioned trails. A review of the formal Land Management Plan for the Reservation will be part of the discussion to make sure any action steps will be in compliance with the defined regulations. Steve Park, Chair of the Trails Committee, also summarized additional issues including redundant trails, cut-through trails, and visitors using private abutting land, and explained possible mitigation options which might be considered, such as the rerouting of paths. Any changes would involve discussions among the NRC, Trails Committee and the Department of Public Works. . These issues are of concern because the widening of trails, and excess trails, degrades the natural environment and diminishes the ability of the Reservation to provide valuable wildlife habitat in this important wildlife corridor. The area itself is a delicate ecosystem, and any damage incurred will take years to recover from. . Mr. Park also mentioned that he had reached out to the administrator of the Sisters of Charity about closing off an abutting trail in order to establish clear boundaries to help shield its residents from park users and dogs, and to keep its residents from venturing into the Reservation. The Trails Committee is also working on its five-year plan which will include an educational component, so users have a better understanding of the importance of protecting our common natural resources.

Ms. Robert reported that new self-guided walks for spring are available and, on the Trails', website, and that anew trail will be blazed at the North 40 on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Mobility Committee:** Ms. Burson reported that a virtual Sustainable Mobility Forum will take place on April 15<sup>th</sup> at 7PM; the public is encouraged to attend and to provide feedback.

### **Director's Report:**

- **Review and Possible Vote on Permit Requests:**
  - **Outdoor Entertainment at Post Office/Church Park: Wellesley Square Merchants Assn.**

Wellesley Rocks requested at the last meeting performing entertainment at the Post Office/Central Park (not Church Park). They replied with not having issues regarding informing abutters. Ms. Robert brought up the question of if the NRC should vote to approve before abutters have been notified. The sound is the main concern for abutting merchants. The request for the permit is from April 17<sup>th</sup> to the end of July with the possibility of going into August. Ms. McManus proposed to approve the permit for the first month and see if there is any feedback. Ms. Bezmalinovic proposed approving the permit with the condition that the abutters propose concerns (if any) that could be mitigated before April 17<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Patrick Hayden (one of the founders of Wellesley Rocks) called in and spoke regarding concerns of abutters. Of the abutters Mr. Hayden spoke with, they have expressed interests in hopes of the bands drawing in business. He also reassured that the volume will be managed at a controlled level. *After a motion was made and seconded, the board voted 5-0 to approve the permit for Wellesley Rocks to perform music from April 17<sup>th</sup> through to the end of July on Saturday afternoons at Wellesley Central Park, and to address any issues if they should come up.*
  - **Hunnewell Basketball courts: Wellesley Power Play WMS Basketball** Wellesley Power Play requested a permit for one outdoor court at Hunnewell from 2:30 to 4 PM from April 30<sup>th</sup> to May 28<sup>th</sup> on Fridays. *After a motion was made and seconded, the board voted 5-0 to approve the permit for Wellesley Power Play to reserve one basketball court at Hunnewell Field on Fridays from 2:30 to 4 PM from April 30<sup>th</sup> to May 28<sup>th</sup>.*
- **Project Updates**
  - **WHS Track and Field Facilities Update** There have been conversations and ongoing work exploring facility options for the Track and Field. Mr. Schmitt and Mr. McHale reported they had visited the town of Hudson to see the new concrete precast buildings as an example for bathrooms and team rooms at Hunnewell Field, and were pleased with the structures
  - Mr. Schmitt shared that he is nearing executing tree plantings in two areas at Fuller Brook Park, using the appropriated funds remaining from the Boulder Brook Reservation enforcement. He also mentioned that all of the site visits for the street tree plantings have been completed, and planting will hopefully begin in April
  - Mr. Schmitt updated the Board on the Charles River Watershed Climate Compact and how they are working on a goal of reducing the amount of pervious pavement within the watershed by 30%. They are ambitious and curious about how they can model this.
  - The Wetlands Protection Committee approved three extension request permits for phosphorous removal as part of the Morses Pond Plan, as well as and hydro-raking along the shore.
  - The softball field had a request for a Wellesley “W” put on their helmet rack and wanted the NRC’s approval. The Board was in agreement.

### **Approve Minutes:**

*After a motion was made and seconded, the board approved the meeting minutes for 3/18/2021 with a 5-0 vote.*

**Schedule Future Meetings:**

N/A

**Urgent Items Not Anticipated Prior to 48-hours of Posting:**

N/A

**Adjourn:**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Leah Wallner, NRC Clerk*