

Cranberry Bog Working Group
Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2023 via Zoom

Members Present: Alex Parra, Susan Provenzano, Luke Ascolillo,
Helen Young, Brian Murphy

Conservation Administrator: Sylvia Willard

Public: Iva Mooney, Mark Duffy, Chris Spinney, Warren Lyman, Chris Roberson,
Mark Barrow, John Ballentine, Mark Barrow, Ariella Rebbi

Meeting began at 7:08 pm

Vice Chair Parra initiated the meeting by doing a roll call of all members, administrators, and public. He then recited the Massachusetts governor's order and rules for conducting public meetings remotely. This meeting will be covered by the minutes and not recorded. Parra also explained public input will be taken when the Vice Chair asks for public input and will call on persons and each will have 3 minutes.

Agenda Item:

1. Review minutes from December 19, 2022 meeting - One change by Willard and the minutes were approved unanimously.

2. NOI proposal - Willard sent draft to CBWG members last week for their review and requested input from members. Parra submitted some changes and a new draft was sent out prior to this meeting. Parra's changes were to eliminate historical information and focus on the purpose of the NOI. Parra heard that there was a regulatory obstacle but Willard at this point didn't think there was any problem. Parra also wondered whether we need to detail how we would control the water levels to manage the bog. Willard is not very familiar with the water level management and Duffy would be the person to ask. Parra knew that using boards at the Curve St. Dam could be problematical, but wondered about adding boards to the other two culverts from the under renovation bog and the cultivated bog. Basically managing the water levels from the culverts inside the bog not at the two dam culverts. Ideally, Parra wanted some permanent adding of boards to limit the water leaving the bog. Murphy would like to raise the water level over the whole bog by about 8" of water. Willard reminded the group that blocking the outflow affects the water levels and water dependent wildlife downstream. Duffy said that flooding the Martin St side or the Sand bog side is difficult because the dikes are not water-tight

and the water will seep through. The Curve St dam culverts also don't hold back water because the elements around the culverts are not mortared into place. In addition, there is one flume that has no water control capabilities. Murphy asked what Duffy thought might happen if 4" of board was put in. Duffy said yes it would work temporarily, but to drown the plants the water has to be quite high and be maintained for a while. There is also a risk of the water going over the dike. Duffy said he is concerned that the water level changes may not be possible ever and certainly is not possible given the current dike conditions. Willard said we can't disturb the culvert at the Curve St dam because it is a Significant Hazard Dam and the Office of Dam Safety would have to be notified. Murphy wondered how then can we raise the water level of the bog. Willard would like to get the crest of the Fiske Street Dike more level so it would be easier to manage water levels. Parra summarized that given the current condition of the bog using water levels to help manage the bog would not be possible. Willard said she has someone to ask that might be able to help and cautioned that once boards are put in then we have to actively manage the water levels. Parra asked that Willard talk with the person. Back to the NOI, Willard commented that she found the NOI had not timeline for activities, so she added one. Willard also renamed the dikes to make them easier to identify. The new names for the inner dikes will be North/South dike comes from the Bog house to the Cranberry Bog Dam #1 and the other will be the East/West dike which comes from the direction of Martin Street to the North South Dike. The East/West dike was formerly called the Ginger Ale dike. Wording was adjusted on the NOI application to reflect this. Willard showed pictures to illustrate some of the repair issues that are currently at the bog. Parra summarized for the NOI that these are spot repairs that require landscape fabric and either gravel or rip rap. Willard also asked to raise the end of the dike to make the whole thing more level and fix some of the erosion issues. There will need to be reporting on the activities and their completion and Willard thought this might be a good Friends of the Bog activity, which Spinney and Ballentine agreed with. Spinney also commented the Fiske St and Martin St flumes need protection from the beavers. Spinney said a metal box around the front of the flume would allow the beavers to build up in front of the box, but make it easier to clear. Spinney said he would make a report about these boxes for a future meeting. Willard added the beaver box information to the NOI. Willard queried what entity was making the application, the CBWG or ConsCom. Parra said ConsCom was ultimately responsible, so they would make the application. Willard said that the environmental monitor letter would have to be submitted by the first week in May and we want to get the NOI out this June. The NOI wanted a project completion date and Parra suggested ongoing management but the plan would be reviewed after three years.

3. Willard reported that the Office of Dam Safety wanted an Annual Emergency Acton Plan report on the Curve St. Dam. She contacted them explaining that the town was working on the future for the bog and currently the Curve St. Dam was not functioning as a dam. Willard said the plan was to be updated annually.

4. Master Plan - Willard could send a document from the Master Plan Committee wondering about items to include. Willard summarized that it would be the management and maintenance of the dams and dikes and removal of invasive plants. Ballentine wondered about the future of the Bog House. Murphy wondered about the current tenants, and Duffy said that the House is fully occupied by his farm workers.

5. Annual Maintenance Agreement - Willard shared the maintenance agreement on screen. Murphy queried how much got mowed last year. Willard reported that the Curve St bog, the Fiske St. Bog, and part of the Martin St bog got mowed before stopping because of a lack of a notice of intent. Murphy wondered what was needed to get the flumes cleared on a regular basis. Murphy or the Friends have been doing this and Parra feels this is ok for now because of the lack of the order of conditions, which most likely not happen this year. Parra is concerned that mowing on the bog is not allowed without the NOI signed, and feels that this agreement is not feasible this year. Parra suggested that he and a few others from Cons Com meet with Duffy to figure out something for 2023 and to do it soon.

6. Bog Dam #1 Repair Update - Willard reported that we are still awaiting a response from the Office of Dam Safety. Murphy said that we need to rethink the 100-year overflow area and that the bridge is unnecessary.

7. Friends of the Bog - Ballentine reported that Cons Com agreed to the group. The group is ready to go once CBWG and Cons Com has repairs and activities that need to be done. Ballentine said he would find out a release document from the Carlisle Castle group. Parra said some of the activities overlap what Duffy does and to make sure the Group coordinates with Duffy. Spinney didn't know what was in the maintenance agreement, but his big concern is the water levels and keeping an eye on those. Spinney feels now the water levels are at the high and wants to document this level so that we can take action to try to keep the levels up.

8. Maintenance Update - Murphy felt this has been covered.

9. Charter - Need a charter and to reappoint the members annually. Willard shared the draft and everyone felt it was fine but to change the terms to three years. Ascolillo said in June when you go to the Selectboard then the term lengths would be assigned. Willard encouraged us that our efforts would be appreciated.

10. Public input - Mooney wondered if there was a specific water height that the CBWG was looking for. Murphy said that it was undetermined at this time. Mooney also asked about the status for the Friends the FB page and web site, and Spinney replied that both are still being put together and had not been made public yet. Spinney asked if the water level specification would be part of the NOI. Willard said this NOI doesn't deal with the ponds just the bog itself. Mooney commented that the Hart Pond puts boards in their end around Patriots day. Spinney says the focus should be on maintaining the water level so we don't lose as much as in 2022. Willard is concerned about overflow at the low end of the Fiske St. Dam. So wants active management and others felt that it would be managed.

11. Bog House Parking Complaint - person wants the parking area enlarged. Willard says that there are a lot of issues that would have to be dealt with in order for this to happen.

Next meeting: April 10, 2023 at 7 pm

Adjourned at 9:16 pm

Submitted by Susan Provenzano