

## Cranberry Bog Working Group

### Meeting Minutes

May 9, 2022 via Zoom

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Members Present: Ken Belitz, Alex Parra, Susan Provenzano, Helen Young, Brian Murphy

Conservation Administrator: Sylvia Willard

Public: Iva Mooney, Warren Lyman, Chris Spinney, Wanda Avril, John Ballentine

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Meeting began at 7:05 pm

Chair Belitz initiated the meeting by doing a roll call of all members, administrators, and public. He then recited the Massachusetts governors order for conducting public meetings by Zoom. This meeting was covered by the minutes and not recorded. Belitz also explained public input will be taken when the Chair asks for public input and will call on persons and each will have 3 minutes.

1. Changes made of dam to lodge and then unanimously accepted.
2. Pump house removal – Abutter would like the pump house to be removed. Belitz asked if equipment in the pump house had been removed and Willard responded yes, but there may be piping and so may need a plumber to close everything off properly. Belitz also wondered about the ownership of the irrigation piping in the bog. Belitz would like to determine the ownership of the piping and pump house, and asked Willard to find out for the group.
3. Bog Restoration Plan – Belitz shared his screen showing a document that declared a goal and a list of objectives for the ecological restoration of the bog. The group discussed objectives and made some additions and edits. Discussion consisted of passive recreation, water rights, and water quality. The water issues are in some ways covered by the objectives to maintain and enhance ponds. It was mentioned by Willard and Mooney that the Chelmsford pond was treated and houses are on town sewer.
4. Dam Funding – Parra reported that town meeting approved the funds to do an engineering study to repair the dam. Willard has contacted Stamsky and McNary to start the process.
5. Beaver Lodge – Willard reported to MA Fisheries and Wildlife that the beaver lodge was changing shape and they felt the lodge was abandoned and gave permission to just get rid of it. Willard has asked Duffy to remove it. She is concerned about what the dam looks like under the lodge and expects a lot of holes. Willard asked Parra if this could be an

emergency order and he agreed. Willard said there would be no trapping and Duffy would remove the lodge. Belitz said that now this action item could be changed to beaver lodge and dam repair.

6. Bog House Fire System – Willard met at the Bog House with fire department and a person who can install a radio system. The radio option is being heavily pursued by the municipal facilities building committee. A pole needs to be installed and would probably work in attic.
7. Grants – Found some grant funding, but Willard feels we are not prepared yet to apply for them as there is a lot of work involved. Belitz asked how much lead time would be needed and Willard responded that it would depend upon the grant source and objectives.
8. Water Lilies – Abutter Chris Spinney had a presentation and shared his screen. He proposed a kayak launch on the opposite shore, a trail to the launch, and then a water trail around the bog pond. When building the houses off Fiske St. a requirement was trail access to a boat launch. Spinney shared an overhead view of the pond and a path that could be cut through the lily pads to view the pond. He also offered some places to mulch the cut lilies and had a list of items that needed to be done to accomplish this. This boat launch and trail were originally proposed as part of CR59 when he built his house. Spinney showed a list of groups that the project would have to get permission from, but he believes that this pond does not have a “great pond” classification so all this should be possible. Spinney would also like a better understanding of the water level controls. The higher the water level the easier to control the water lilies and to be able to kayak or canoe. No funds are necessary for this project. Spinney displayed some images of the small dock and puncheon, and an image of a weed razor which would be used to cut the lilies. The weed razor works by cutting the lilies at the base and they float up and a landscaping rake with pool noodles attached to rakes them up. The final slide had information from the CR59 that supported this project. Murphy commented that a dock or boardwalk might cause a chapter 91 permit. Spinney said this was not a factor because this did not have a “great pond” classification. Willard said a “great pond” classification must have 10-20 acres in a natural state. Parra wondered if the proposed mulching areas are within CR59 area and if that is permissible. The general group impression was that this plan is attractive and workable. There is still a lot of work, but everyone liked the idea. Willard followed up with Wrentham which had a lily pad problem. They are not harvesting but treating with herbicides because they have two invasive types of plants. Willard will share that plan with the group. Belitz suggested we take a vote of support. Young moved that the CBWG support the concept of allowing kayak trail and lily pad removal along the trail. Murphy seconded and it was unanimous that Spinney continue with the project. Willard would like Spinney to monitor the test area that he did last year and see how quickly the lily pads grow back. Belitz suggested a

staging and calculating how much area will be cut. Young suggested photo/video documentation. Belitz commended Spinney with his idea and effort on the project.

9. Community Input – Mooney from Chelmsford asked about the access area. She is on a phone so couldn't see the project. Asked Willard to send both the lily pad project and Belitz's objective. Also wondered about wildlife restrictions on removing the pump house being so near the beaver lodge. Lyman commented on the objectives: one was to stop the water circulation to raise the level of the water would make it more like a wetland than it is now. To keep the water circulating would make it be more upland like. But this would affect the mowing and woody removal. Also concern about the phrase "enable transition" implies actively changing the environment. Belitz said that the supporting activities would clarify these words and create the boundaries. Ballentine asked about the governance going forward. Belitz said to get this restoration plan set and approved and then Cons Com would take over. Spinney commented that the water levels are important for success of lily pad control and he wondered if he could get clarification on methods and governance of the boards. Willard said it is a very dynamic water shed and Duffy knows it well. Belitz said the water control is Cons Coms and there are many factors involved. It's a balance with Heart Pond above. Belitz asked to put in an agenda item concerning the control of the flumes.

Next meeting: June 6, 2022 at 7 pm.

Adjourned unanimously at 8:33 pm

Approved on June 6, 2022

Submitted by Susan Provenzano