

Cranberry Bog Working Group
Meeting Minutes
May 15, 2023 via Zoom

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

Conservation Administrator: Sylvia Willard

Public: Iva Mooney, Bill Risso, Mark Barrow, Chris Spinney, Warren Lyman,
Mark Barrow, John Ballentine, Chris Roberson, Mark Duffy

Meeting began at 7:05 pm

Chair Murphy 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. Murphy 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.

Agenda Item:

1. Willard redlined the March minutes and sent them around, Parra moved to approve the edited minutes of March and April and the group approved both the March and April minutes unanimously.
2. Mowing NOI - Willard conferred with DiPinto and they worked out a lot of details. Willard suggested we look at the end section where she had separated out activities into a time line and a maintenance plan. Willard discussed the leveling of the Fiske St dike and how this is allowed because it was created before the Rivers Act. Ballentine suggested a flow control structure like on Dam #1 and Murphy commented that maybe sandbags could be used temporarily. Murphy wondered about removing trees and Willard said they were limited by available money. Spinney asked whether documents discussed, such as this NOI, could be made available to the public. Future meeting minutes will have discussed documents included with the minutes. Discussion then moved to dredging ditches and using equalizer pipes instead of dredging. Provenzano asked whether the ditch maintenance would still happen, but Willard explained that the DEP only allows 5000 sq ft. of dredging. Equalizer pipes would only be used under the sand ramps. Another option is to have aluminum ramps which are portable. Ballentine asked about conferring with the Chelmsford Conservation Commission. Willard agreed that we should meet and there used to meet twice a year before Covid. Barrow asked about the cutting of small trees and allowing the cut trees to degrade. Provenzano brought up the maintaining of the bog ditches and removal of sand ramps. Murphy concurred that the

perimeter ditches should be kept clear to help with water movement and reduce mosquitos.

3. Water control - A 5" board was put in during the spring and then removed recently due to an expected rain event. There was not as much rain as expected but the board was not returned to the culvert. Parra reported that DiPinto felt the boards could be removed/added as needed. Willard felt the board removal/added was part of the NOI. Murphy was concerned about drought conditions and losing too much water. Parra thought it was exempt as it was built prior to 1996. Willard said she would look into it. Murphy was concerned that this would take too long. Willard talked with Coontz from Chelmsford Cons Com and wanted to talk about how little water was coming from Heart Pond is coming to the bog. Provenzano moved that if DiPinto says it is okay to add a board then we would. Young seconded. Murphy, Young, Provenzano said Aye and Parra abstained. Motion passed. Murphy then asked that if there was a water event that we could have an emergency motion to put in sand bags. Spinney commented that he had posted a water management plan and that if that was implemented there shouldn't be concern or continuing discussion. Murphy summarized that an overflow like that proposed on Dam #1 could be installed in the Fiske St. Dike. Parra agreed that there should be a management plan once Dam #1 is repaired. Parra is concerned about emergencies and having a public group handling it. Parra isn't comfortable having the general public adding/removing boards. Murphy suggested that Duffy handle it. Ballentine agreed that there is a concern about who is responsible, but the Friends group has a lot of eyes and then would communicate with the responsible party. Spinney commented that the water height is controlled by the boards in the risers. He feels that there should be data and measurements. Murphy summarized that part of the bog annual maintenance have Duffy add/remove boards as necessary. Duffy commented that this is a complex issue and that having maximum amount of water in the ponds is impractical and that he feels that this would be asking for trouble. The dikes are not strong enough to handle the maximum amount of water. Duffy feels all the dikes/dams are vulnerable and is not comfortable adding/removing boards all the time. Duffy just wants to keep the top open to allow water to flow. Ballentine asked what is a reasonable level for the water to be? Murphy asked how can we have a good level of water without risking the dams/dikes? Spinney shared a graph showing the riser top, the Fiske St dike top, and the water level. The highest the water was still 12" below the top of the dike. Water level dropped to 20" below and most would like the water level to get back to 12" below. Risso commented that there needs to be more data. Army Corp of Engineers has many years of data with a hydrology study. Then one can make an educated decision. But otherwise it is better to be conservative. Spinney shared a diagram of the spillway for Cranberry Bog Dam #1 and compared the water level of the Martin St pond and the Elm St pond. There is a beaver dam that causes a significant difference in the water levels of the pond. Spinney felt that Stamski & McNary did study the flows but not the

Chelmsford dams. Ballentine asked what has to happen to make progress on this issue? Murphy replied that he hopes that when asking the engineers to confirm their calculations on CB Dam #1 we might get more answers.

4. Curve St Dam - received a requirement that ODS needed the Curve St. dam to be a registered and recorded dam and this has been completed.
5. Cranberry Bog Dam #1 Repair - The proposed spillway was 18" inches below the current water level and so needs to be redone to make a proposed 6" inches. Also an issue of riprap on the spillway would make the surface too rough to travel over. So the spillway has to be re-examined. Murphy asked if the Dam should be raised to the level of the Chelmsford Berm. Spinney said a real study as suggested by Risso would really need to be done to understand the flow of water. Spinney said the report should have the 100 year storm data.
6. Bog Maintenance Agreement - Willard told Duffy that Cons Com would like a detailed report of actions. Pipes, Pump house removed, Phragmites cut. Murphy said Duffy had heavy equipment out on the bog and can't do that without an NOI. There was an NOI for the Phragmites so a bit of mis-communication on how the Phragmites would be cut.
7. Bog House discussion by the Select board has been postponed.
8. Open Discussion - Mooney reported that water management issues are a big topic with the Chelmsford Cons Com. Mooney would also appreciate a copy of the NOI. Mooney also commented that when the Chelmsford Cons Com has a meeting they provide a link to any document mentioned on the agenda. This might be helpful here for discussions.

Next meeting: June 12, 2023 at 7 pm

Meeting adjourned 9:17 pm

Submitted by Susan Provenzano