

Cranberry Bog Working Group
Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2022 via Zoom

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

Conservation Administrator: Sylvia Willard

Public: Iva Mooney, Warren Lyman, Chris Spinney, Sara Dunleavy, Betsy Fell, Steve Spang, Wendy Barrow, Ariella Rebbi, Mark Barrow

Meeting began at 7:03 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 for conducting public meetings by remote. This meeting was 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. Reviewed the minutes from September and made changes suggested by Willard and Murphy. Minutes were accepted with changes unanimously.
2. Update on meeting with Chelmsford regarding water level management. Willard said draw down from Heart Pond would begin this week. Murphy suggested we capture the water that comes through to replenish the ponds. Parra said the water was below the boards so it shouldn't leave the bog. Willard explained Heart Pond would not release the water all at once. Murphy said the flumes could use some maintenance which would be easy to do now with the water level being so low. Willard shared some photos that Murphy had sent and Murphy wanted to put in one more board to capture more water. Spang asked whether the commission had the boards and permission to it. Murphy said the flumes were in poor condition and Willard said she would ask Duffy to look into making the repairs. Ballentine suggested that the new group, Friends of the Bog, could do some of the work. Rebbi asked about funding and Murphy explained there is a maintenance agreement. Spinney suggested using a potato rake to keep the flumes clean. Spang commented that the water from Heart Pond may not reach the bog as the wetlands upstream might soak it up. Willard said we also need to be considerate of the downstream's need for water too. Murphy would like a small board at the Curve St. dam to capture some of the water. Slightly upstream of the Curve St. dam the beavers have made a small dam to block water.

3. Pump house - Parra looked at the inside and said the floor was vary rotted and there were holes in the roof, so he felt it was not suitable for kayak storage, which had been suggested by residents, and not sure the town wants to be responsible for private property. Murphy asked if Willard had checked with Mark on this and she hadn't, but would ask Mark about it. Murphy moved to ask Duffy to remove the pump house. Murphy, Young, Parra voted for and Provenzano against. Then voted to bring this up to Cons Com with the same results.
4. Restoration NOI - Parra explained that the Cranberry Bog Dam #1 NOI plan has been received. Parra wants to get the NOI for the Bog in Renovation Mowing underway. Parra felt we might need to consult with MEPA about ~~the due to~~ project segmentation. Need to find out if ~~the~~ we need to do one NOI for the whole bog or can do NOI for parts. Willard suggested that DiPinto help her do the NOI since there was still some funding available for her. Parra suggested DiPinto write the narrative for the NOI and deal with MEPA since she has experience. Parra motioned that Willard ask DiPinto, Young seconded, and it was approved unanimously.
5. Willard talked with a company that does restorations. Just wanted to report that other companies are watching what the town is doing on this restoration. Murphy said he had talked with someone and the town could get money to restore or retire portions of the bog. Parra said that if there was significant money he would be interested, but in the past -there was not enough money to make a difference. Murphy said he would check with the contact. Rebbi added that she attended a conference and came away with some useful information which she would forward.
6. Committee membership and chairmanship - Parra asked what group appoints members. Young felt it was the Selectboard. Willard would check as it depends on the group. All felt it would be great to add Rebbi and Spang to the Cranberry Bog Working Group. Young nominated Murphy for chairmanship, Parra seconded. Approved unanimously.
7. Cranberry Bog Dam #1 and Beaver Lodge - Beaver lodge was removed when it was determined that there were no beavers using the lodge and the site was repaired. More repair plans were received and will be presented to Cons Com at the next meeting. Murphy commented that the dam needed repair and was concerned about timing.
8. Friends of the Cranberry Bog Group - Ballentine had sent out a summary of the groups goals, which were clearing flumes, light mowing, small repairs, and monitoring. He had talked to numerous people who were interested in being part of the group. Willard shared the document that Ballentine sent about the group. Ballentine said the group would contact CBWG for information. Parra feels there should be specific contact person, and specific people in charge of the group and keeping contacts. Spinney commented that this group could be a helpful arm of the CBWG and get things done instead of always relying on Mr. Duffy and other monetary constraints. Rebbi liked the idea and wondered if there was a tracking of activities and Ballentine agreed, but the

group was not that developed yet. Parra wasn't sure if this needed to go before Cons Com or the Selectboard. Willard said Friends groups are usually private and unsure of how they are created. Spang wondered since this is a wetland did the Friend group need special NOI for work done. Murphy felt that the work would already have been approved by Cons Com ahead of time. Parra moved that the group be presented to Cons Com for approval. Young seconded and it was approved unanimously. Mark Barrow asked what happens if the mission of the working group is fulfilled, what would happen to the group. Murphy said then the group would report directly to Cons Com.

9. Water Lilies - no discussion.
10. Phragmites - Parra and Murphy commented that the stands were still very green and growing. Bakewell was out there working on them. Murphy felt that this is one item the Friends group could help with. Willard shared a picture of them and they looked dead and hope that they won't come back next spring.
11. Open discussion - Mark Barrows commented that he -wrote to Rec Com about using the pump house for kayak storage, but it appears the pump house may be unusable and now maybe a rack for town owned equipment may be better. Murphy and Parra said the pump house is not suitable but not opposed to some sort of rack. Murphy asked the public to notify Willard if anything significant is noticed at the bog. Spinney agreed with Murphy that the water control devices needed better maintenance and recommended that the flumes take priority. Murphy asked Parra if a NOI was needed and Parra felt that it was part of regular maintenance. Mooney reported that Chelmsford Open Space Stewards is aware of the problems with the Chelmsford dam berm but nothing has been done as of yet.
12. Next meeting - November 7, 2022 at 7 pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm