

Belmont Conservation Commission Meeting May 6, 2008 7:00 PM
Town Hall Room #2

Attendance: Chairman Miriam Weil, Vice Chair: Martha Moore, Commissioners: Carolyn Bishop, Nancy Davis, Tino Lichauco, Margaret Velie, David Webster
Associates: Darrell King, Monica King
Deb Hartman: Friends of Rock Meadow
Jeffrey North, volunteer, invited to attend as possible associate.
Joe Finn, Blue Bird project;
Madelon Hope: Boston School of Herbal Studies
David Pavlik: engineer for Fred Russell for Greensbrook Way
Walter Scott: builder, Greensbrook Way
Sam Martin: Eagle Scout project, attended with his parents
Mathew Goldman, Jeri Weiss: Agassiz Ave.
Stanley Dzierzeski
Alison Lenk

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM

Monica King announced she was stepping down as Associate at end of her term. She was thanked for her service to the Commission.

Minutes: April 1, 2008 approved as corrected with motion by T. Lichauco and second by D. Webster and unanimous approval.

April 16, 2008 minutes: approval postponed to next meeting with motion by T.Lichauco and second by D. Webster and unanimous approval.

Eagle Scout Project: Sam Martin, Freshman at Belmont HS introduced project to achieve Eagle Scout rank. Proposal: replace overgrown Victory garden path with wood chips to define, fill ruts, limit weed growth; to clean up trash from compost heap; to install Rock Meadow Victory Garden sign; work to be done on three Saturdays before summer vacation so other scouts could help to achieve the necessary 100 hours of labor. Currently some fences are unattractive and gardens could use general cleanup. Removal of carpeting was suggested although N.Davis pointed out that some provides cover for beneficial garter snakes.

*M.Trudeau: will consult with Tom Grimble re. sign and removal of bittersweet along path. M. Trudeau recommended Sam contact Bruce Westgate for guidance on gardeners' needs and individual work. Some cleanup of artificial materials has already been done with DPW. M.Trudeau to be the contact for trash removal, and Bruce Westgate for scope of project.

D.Webster moved approval of the project and commendation for the effort, naming Bruce Westgate and Mary Trudeau as contacts for the project. P.Velie seconded. The motion passed with 5 aye, 2 nay votes. N Davis expressed concern about the impact of too much landscaping and woodchips encircling the gardens.

Beth El Temple Work Day: Trail work to be done by Temple on May 18th will begin using chips on site. 40 volunteers apt to show up, perhaps organized into 6-8 work stations. More chips might be available from the Town. C. Bishop noted the importance of covering only the trails chosen for maintenance during the recent trail map walk. Projects may include: chips onto trails, large debris off mowed site to be gathered near parking lot to be chipped.

Joe Finn: Bluebird Box project: Report on nest box management in 2007 for tree swallows and bluebirds: from total of around 15 nest boxes, 2 pr bluebirds, each produced a brood, 9-10 tree swallows also successfully produced broods; later in the season, 3 pairs of house wrens also produced broods. He plans to increase the number of boxes to the maximum previously allowed. Concern was expressed about 5 birdhouses installed by gardeners in gardening area that may work at cross purposes to his goal by attracting English sparrows to the area. *Joe will observe and report on potential impact for this season.

D.Webster moved that the Commission give Joe Finn permission to continue in 2008 to manage a blue bird and tree swallow birdbox project at Rock Meadow with work and alteration limited to: installing or re-installing up to 22 nesting boxes, mowing access paths no wider than 40 inches, and 15 ft x 45 ft rectangle feeding areas at designated bluebird nesting sites. M.Weil amended motion requiring a report to the Agent and Commission in October.*

T.Lichauco seconded. Unanimous approval. Concern was expressed about herbiciding planned for June and July and potential impact of the birdbox project on any ground nesting birds; issues to be discussed in the fall with a report on the current season.*

74 Agassiz Avenue: hearing opened at 8:05 PM. Notice of Intent for work planned in the Riverfront Area. Proposal for a three story addition to create an in-law apartment. Addition size: 26 ft x 16 ft with two versions: long axis north/south aligning with current side setback or addition turned parallel to house. Topography makes basement level equal to a story requiring a ZBA special permit for third story and extension of existing side setback. According to the applicant, neighbors expressed preference for shorter broader addition aligned with current side setback.

Applicants are seeking approval for either option in case ZBA denies setback variance. Proposal minimizes impact with removal of 12 ft. of paved driveway so net increase in impervious surface is 86 sq ft. New footprint is 416 sq ft replacing an existing shed/deck. Possible retaining wall proposed for end of driveway with screened trench drain. Basement story with poured foundation, floor, walkout basement.

D. Webster moved that in addition to the usual conditions for 74 Agassiz Avenue, be added: no alteration within 50 ft of the BVW, no greater than 420 sq ft of addition, no greater than 100 sq ft of net new impervious surface within the riverfront area, infiltrate runoff from new impervious surface on site, add erosion controls at limit of lawn and show on plan before construction. New plan will be submitted showing final footprint and strawbales at limit of the lawn. N. Davis seconded. Unanimous approval.

*D. Webster moved that the CC express a preference to the ZBA for the project furthest from the wetlands, Option B, requiring a side yard set back variance. Many seconds. Unanimous approval. Hearing ended at 8:30 PM.

*(Shortly after 1991, Belmont Manor Nursing Home extended paved parking lot impacting a triangular piece of property abutting the Weiss property. ZBA ordered pavement removal but fill in wetland was not removed.)

25 Greensbrook Way: 8:30 David Pavlik presented proposal for demolition of one story ranch house and construction of new two story house single family home. Backyard will be regraded to be more level. Many mature shrubs to be saved. Although impervious surface will be reduced by 120 sq ft, with new construction, some infiltration system required such as roof leaders to subterranean system. Discussion ensued with concerns about grade change in back yard, potential erosion, loss of vegetation, impact of 2 to 3 feet of fill to be added. Concern expressed on impact of a retaining wall on wildlife vs defining the border of lawn for maintenance. Many large trees already removed from site. Applicant offered to plant native wetland vegetation although area is already well vegetated.

T. Lichauco moved that the CC request submission of an alternative design including: maximum slope of no greater than 3:1 on side of 50 ft line closer to road, infiltration measures sized appropriately for the extent of the alteration, no alteration within 50 ft of the BVW and showing the preservation of existing vegetation within the 100 ft buffer zone to the extent feasible. D. Webster seconded. Unanimous approval. Applicant requested a continuance to the next meeting. Hearing continued at 9:05 PM

Madelon Hope: Boston School of Herbal Studies: The tops of nettle, ground ivy and sumac have been collected for the past three years for teaching harvesting techniques and making various herbal products. Collection is of small amount and harvesting is not allowed. Continued permission requested. In turn, 24 goldenseal, 12 American ginseng, 12 black cohosh were planted in wooded areas but these have disappeared. Three visits are requested for groups of 12 students: one visit each in May, June, July.

D. Webster moved that Madelon Hope be given permission for her educational endeavor during 2008 for: harvesting the tops of sumac, no more than ten bunches of sumac berries, harvesting ground ivy and nettle on no more than three days with a group of no more than 15 students; planting three rare native non-invasive plants from the Plantsavers List (or similar source) which may include goldenseal, American ginseng, black cohosh in non-wetlands areas, limited to 50 plants on not more than three days of planting. A list of plantings shall be reported to the Commission at least 7 days before the planting that is usually done in September. Amended by T. Lichauco to limit harvest. P. Velie seconded. Unanimous approval.

*(Discussion about the need for an overall plan for Rock Meadow; need to develop list of various groups and their uses of the site.)

Agent's Report: Junction Brook: after meeting with MyRWA, M. Trudeau met with McLean facilities manager, Andy Healy and his assistant over map of old sewer lines. M. Trudeau requested that they attend CC meeting or CC would issue an enforcement action. He intends to attend in June, hire private sampling company to take twice monthly samplings to verify or disprove MyWRA findings. It appears that there is a discharge from sewage system into the brook. Enforcement action would require his presence at the June meeting with evidence of sampling reports and program for resolving the sewage issue. It appeared that the Town and MyWRA had not yet approached McLean on this issue. * The Commission requested M. Trudeau write a letter to Andy Healy requesting his attendance requiring that a plan on investigation and remediation of the sewage contamination be presented at the next CC meeting.

Bittersweet cutting Rock Meadow: Nancy Reilly from Concord: builds furniture from bittersweet vines, seeks permission to cut Oriental bittersweet vines near the ground and remove without berry dispersal. Concord permission slip could be adopted as a model. D. Webster moved that Nancy Reilly be given permission to cut oriental bittersweet in the manner described in the permission slip based on the

Concord model. *M.Trudeau will write letter to applicant M.Moore seconded. Unanimous approval. M.Trudeau will contact Dr. Maria Leza who currently cuts bittersweet and leaves it.

Uplands: M Trudeau's maps on habitat restoration plans from April 1 and 16th given to David Webster. D.Webster listed dates and actions on Uplands appeal and requests for information. Bruce Jacobs sent comments. Waiting for DEP to schedule site visit or issue a Superseding Order of Conditions. *M. Trudeau will write DEP inquiring about discrepancies and about the site visit as per motion by D.Webster and second by M.Moore. Unanimous approval.

Stanley Dzierzesky inquired about Horsley Witten: applicant paid for the consultant during the hearing process but not for the appeal. If CC goes further, Town counsel would be available if needed.

Comprehensive Plan Comments to Planning Board was distributed: D.Webster moved that *this be sent on letterhead signed by the Chair to the Planning Board in response to their request for input. N. Davis second. Unanimous approval.

Citizen Herald: refusal to print correction on incorrect figures in recent column in spite of letters and calls from Chair and Agent.

Rock Meadow: D Hartman submitted report on status of NRCS contract work at Rock Meadow. Cannot submit bill to NRCS until specific task is completed. Lime application is an issue since NRCS refunds less than the actual cost. Liming is next activity, then swallowwort treatment, tree work in west Meadow, foliar spray on buckthorn and other invasives. Smaller foundation removal bid as separate activity for about \$3000. Could be done by volunteers or other funding. Town may have set up a second fund for the trails grant. *N. Davis to check with Gray Lee to contact Chris Polatin for liming.

Trail Map: three bids needed. *C. Bishop will send information to D. Hartman and M. Trudeau about possible cartographer to contact.

D.Webster will send copy of proposed presentation to Commissioners before his and the Chair's meeting with the Board of Selectmen on May 19th.

N.Davis moved adjournment. D.Webster seconded. Unanimous approval
Next meeting Tuesday May 13, 7:00 PM with Rock Meadow as main agenda item along with possible other issues.

Meeting adjourned 10:50 PM

Submitted by C.Bishop

* indicates action items or items for further discussion