

BELMONT CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

APPROVED

February 3, 2004

Members Present: M. Flamang, M. King, J. Smith, R. Foster, K. Baskin.
Associate Members Present: M. Velie, S. Sanders, N. Davis, M. Moore.

Additional Attendees: See attendance sheet.

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by M. Flamang.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of November 4, 2003, were submitted and approved as submitted.

The minutes of the meeting of December 2, 2003, were submitted and approved, with the following changes: In the last paragraph under O'Neill Property, the second sentence should be revised to read "He will call Bill Pisano, and he asked that S. Sanders draft a letter to the three-town committee to ask if their engineering resources are available to test the resources on either side of the culvert."

S. Sanders then suggested that the testing be done by placing sticks on either side of the culvert and measuring the water on both sides.

Old Business – Burbank School Oil Tank Leak

No one at the meeting could report on the oil spill. N. Davis went to a meeting a week or two ago and nothing new was reported there. M. Flamang noted that Doug Matson, an Explorer Scout leader, is willing to help organize a group to do replanting at Clay Pit Pond after the cleanup is done.

Old Business – Wellington Brook Culvert Grate Replacement Update

There was a discussion of what should be planted at the site of the culvert grate. R. Foster suggested that any plantings should be approved by the Belmont Garden Club and Shade Tree Committee, because they have a landscaping plan for the area behind the library. M. Flamang stated that we will discuss this at a later meeting.

New Business (8:10)

M. Flamang pointed out that the state is working toward weakening the law, and that the Commission would therefore form a committee to make sure that Belmont is protected. Members should contact him in the next two weeks and let him know whether we are

interested in being on this committee, and he will then choose the members of the subcommittee. N. Davis noted that MACC has some suggested forms of bylaws. Over 100 communities have adopted bylaws. M. Flamang said that he assumed that the committee would meet at least once a month in addition to the regular monthly meeting.

A group of kids from the Unitarian Church is willing to do the stenciling of drains. S. Sanders reminded the Commission that there are 21 storm drains that go to Spy Pond that he would like to find volunteers for. M. Flamang promised to give him the contact information for the church group.

Presentation – Russ Cohen – Massachusetts Riverways Programs

Russ Cohen is currently with the Department of Fish and Game. He has been foraging for about 30 years. He noted that 47 different species grow in Rock Meadow, of the 150 or so edible species in the Boston area. He uses certain ground rules to make sure some of the plants are not depleted by the foraging. He handed out a list describing the plants which are more rare or delicate.

He has a website, which can be found by entering his name into any Internet search engine. Yankee Magazine will be publishing an article on foraging, which includes Russ Cohen, in May or June.

Response to O'Neill Properties' Rebuttal (8:20)

M. Moore drafted a response to the rebuttal of the Commission's position on the O'Neill residential project, which rebuttal was prepared by Epsilon Associates. R. Foster suggested that members of the Commission could each also submit their own letter; multiple letters might have more impact. M. King complained that O'Neill hasn't backed up what they have said about various aspects of the project. M. Moore noted that the Planning Board is still taking comments, at least until the end of the month.

There was a brief discussion of what limitations can be enforce, such as pulling window shades, salting drives, etc. Fred Paulson stated that the condominium documents can include those restrictions and therefore all residents will know about them before they buy or move in. The consensus of the Commission is that the letter should be sent basically as M. Moore drafted it. The second paragraph was discussed in some detail and changes were made accordingly, but the remainder was largely unchanged. The letter was adopted as revised in accordance with the discussion.

The meeting was then adjourned at 9:12 pm. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 2, 2004.

Prepared by:
Johanna Smith