



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE**  
**MAYOR**

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26<sup>RD</sup>, 2019, 7:00 PM  
**MINUTES**

MEETING AT SOMERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL  
93 HIGHLAND AVENUE  
3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

*Meeting notes prepared by Malik Drayton*

**Commission Members in attendance:** Rachel Borgatti (Chair), Cristina Kennedy, David Turin, Aladdine Joroff (*departed 8:47 pm*), Michael Fager

**Commission Members absent:** Vacant,

**Others in Attendance:** Dan Meegan (VHB), Gene Crouch (VHB), John Flaherty (FRIT), Newton Tedder (pending Commissioner), Tara Mitchell (Garden Coordinator)

**Staff:** Malik Drayton (Conservation Agent)

Rachel Borgatti called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm followed by introductions.

**New Business:**

1. Assembly Square – replacing tree box filters with pocket rain gardens
  - Gene Crouch (VHB) - Engineers for the developers of Assembly square
  - Filterra units – Stormwater biofiltration units with an opening in sidewalk special soil; filtration and vegetation
  - Replace filterra untis with specially designed rain gardens that have a similar operation.
  - Same foot-print of the filterra untis
    - In the edge of the sidewalk, breaks in gutter line allows water to flow into system
  - Vegetated system, grass, flowers, etc
  - Plans → Mulch → Bioretention Reservoir → Underdrain → Water carried out
  - How long does it take for water to run through the system? 72 Hours.
  - Provides storm water treatment
  - Landscapes / Streetscapes feature
  - Larger capacity than the filterra units
  - Concern for inlets in regards to erosion and sediment controls and protection
  - Block 5 under construction
  - Block 7 → Timeline – 1+ Year away; Starting design

- When will work start Spring 2020.
- Dead trees in filterra units
- City maintenance Agreement
  - Maintenance falls to the City
  - Federal Realty to maintain the landscaping
  - Property lines are disclosed in presentation
    - Sidewalks vs. the Street which are City owned
- Who Maintains?
  - Street retail
    - Landscape
    - Trash / general upkeep
  - City
    - Bioretention Materials
    - System
- Timeflex Gate is described as a 72 inch pipe for events of high tide
- Allows for storage of rain pressure
- Not a back flow preventer, it drops into a manhole
- How do you communicate to the City that they have to maintain a new storm water system?
  - Pass- off Meeting
  - Notify in the event of passing off
- Planting List – Public Space Planner’s concerns are discussed
- Why submit an RDA instead of an NOI?
  - Project is in a totally developed area
  - Project is not in a buffer Zone
  - Streets are only affected
- Any more questions?
  - Constituency has high support for pollinator plants
  - Federal realty is open to get the right species and early season plantings that are needed
- Negative 2 determinations with special conditions.
- **Motion:** Issue a Negative 2 Determination of Applicability with special conditions [Motion – Joroff, Second – Turin, vote: 5:0:0]

2. Community Gardens forms and manuals

- Conservation Commission oversees the Community gardens
- Updates made to forms and manuals
- Updates made to Application forms and renewal form
- Discussion ensues about Chuckie Harris Community garden
  - No one gardens there
  - Garden is not fenced in, it’s wide open
  - Described as in a place of stasis
  - Not having it in the document may be a good idea
  - No one has Gardened there in two years
  - Garden being located in East Somerville may be one of the only garden plots in the area
  - Garden has 7 Plots
  - Fence vs. No fence
  - Garden Plots are too small and irregular shaped
  - Not an ideal location
  - Is there a process to remove or decommission a community garden?

- What of the waiting list?
  - Who is on the wait list?
  - Are these garden plots desirable?
  - There are great demand for garden plots
- Remove Chuckie Harris from Online forms?
- **Action:** Agent Drayton to ask Public Space Director Luisa Oliveira for background and thoughts on Chuckie Harris community garden
- Site visit should be conducted before January meeting
- Stop recommending Chuckie Harris
- No contact information for Chuckie Harris has been provided
- Should we re-commission the garden
- No sense of community
- Remove from active list → defacto decommission?
- Should we schedule Chuckie Harris decision for January
- Could it be a pollinator garden?
- Reach out to wait-list?
- Tara is manager of the master waitlist
- Interested heard about Avon and Bikeway Community garden expansions
- Coordinators are self-sufficient
- ConCom to write letter to remind garden coordinators to send in wait-list garden information
- Gardens are exclusionary with little to no turnover How to communicate to community gardeners?
- Reach out to other cities and towns (Erica San Martin Hernandez has this data)
- Community gardens open house
  - Gate policy would problematic with an open house
- Desire to get everyone on board
- New community garden Plots coming online
- Term limits
- Fences – privatization of public land
- Options Shared plots after limits
- Would turnover affect garden coordinator turnover?
- Communal Plot?
- Re-visit term limits in January?
- 100% Turnover vs. Continuity
- Is now the administrative time of gardening?
  - You must maintain a master list
  - Tara and Chair Borgatti to draft memo
    - New requirements must be in the manual
    - Must fill out financial tracking sheet
- Transition to electronic makes it easier.
- Forms and manual s must be added to website along with maps for the community garden.

### 3. CPC Representative

- 2 3 years Terms
- Commissioner Fager explains the CPC
- Affordable Housing Funds
- Open Space preservation Funds
- CPC Meetings 1 per Month
- Applications process discussed
  - Public Presentations

- Commissioner Kennedy will be the Conservation commission's CPC Representative for the next term.
- 4. Ongoing Projects (*Tabled*)
- 5. Jurisdictional Inquiry for the Alewife Brooke
  - Storm Water drains go to the Alewife Brooke
  - Is this more than 1 acre?
  - If so they need an EPA permit
  - Water Separators
  - Removal of impervious areas
  - Increase in landscaping by 20%
  - Are you allowed to infiltrate and old gas station?
  - 4 stories – 23 Units
  - Engineering Report → Drainage Report
- 6. Approval of Minutes
  - September 03<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 [Motion- Kennedy, Second - Joroff]
  - September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 [Motion- Kennedy, Second - Joroff]
  - October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 [Motion- Kennedy, Second - Joroff]

**Adjourn:**

- 1) Motion to adjourn meeting unanimously approved at 9:07 pm [motion – Fager , second – Turin, vote: 5:0:0].

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## Action Items:

### 2019

#### November:

- **Action:** Agent Drayton to ask Dr. Boukili for more information on how the financial tracking sheet should be utilized.
- **Action:** Agent Drayton to get a copy of the signed Conservation Restriction and file appropriately
- **Action:** Agent Drayton to find more information on another pending Conservation Restriction at Winter Hill
- **Action:** Agent Drayton to contact AAC member in regards to memo, possibly aiding in creating draft memo.

#### October:

- **Action:** Agent Drayton to update Garden Map to include more street names (remove walkshed circles or put on interactive map so that people can zoom in and out).
- **Action:** Send correspondence l to DPW, Planning, Engineering, Capital Projects, and any other departments who might review construction or development projects. Remind them of Conservation Commission jurisdiction and requirements that must be following when working near the river.

#### September:

- **Action:** Agent Drayton to work with T&I staff on educational brochure formatting.
- **Action:** After reformat this brochure to be able to easily print it, put this on website.

#### March:

- **Action:** ConCom to send letter to Patrick and DCR asking for details of milfoil treatment plant and meeting summary from discussion of chemicals to be used.

#### February:

- **Action:** Garden subcommittee will submit a draft of all garden documents to be sent out to the ConCom and Garden Coordinators in time for the March 26<sup>th</sup> ConCom meeting.
- **Action:** design and price out signs to add to Medford's outfall poles.

### 2018

#### November:

- **Action:** Commissioner Fager to draft letter to DCR re: Draw 7 Park, Commissioner Turin and Kennedy to assist.

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**List of Meeting Documents** (located here K:\OHCD\Shared\Conservation Commission\Agenda + Minutes + Legal Notices 2019\2019\_10\_22\_Meeting\_Documents):

- Agenda (2019\_11\_26\_Agenda.pdf)
- Ongoing Projects spreadsheet (Ongoing Project Data.xlsx)
- Block5B Rain Gardens.pdf