

MMOC Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2022 ZOOM Meeting, 6:00-7:45pm
As approved November 9, 2022
Minutes prepared by Matt Eddy, MMOC Staff

Member Attendees:

- Tom Brady, Kelly Brilliant, Elisabeth Cianciola, Elton Elperin, Jan Henderson, Parker James, Lisa Kumpf, Kay Mathew, Karen Mauney-Brodek, Tom Timmons, Freddie Veikley, Matt Eddy (MMOC staff).

Other Attendees:

- Dira Johanif (CRWA), Pam Jorgensen, Jun Lee (ENC), Emily Norton (CRWA), Caroline Reeves, Jack Schleifer (ENC).

Phase 2 Update:

- Drought conditions have caused visible stress to trees, shrubs, and ground cover throughout the Phase 2 work areas. While some plants may have entered a dormant state and may recover, others will likely require replacement. All Phase 2 landscaping is still under warranty by Charter.
- Tom Brady reported that dredging work is mostly complete in Work Area 6 (just upstream of the cofferdam at Back Bay Yard). Charter and the Army Corps are waiting for approval from MWRA to complete delicate dredging operations around the MWRA sewer pipes in that area. Supplementary Phragmites removal on both the Boston and Brookline sides of the Riverway just upstream from Work Area 6 is complete; these areas will be landscaped with turf to the water's edge.
- High construction fences at Work Area 12 (the Fens) have been replaced with low vinyl fences. Landscaping in that area is delayed until drought conditions subside.
- Stone-dust paths are being installed in Work Area 11 (between the Victory Gardens and the Agassiz Road Bridge).
- Phragmites is growing speedily in areas where it had been removed in Work Area 10 (upstream of Agassiz Rd Bridge). Charter will be treating these areas with Rodeo herbicide in the coming weeks.
- Downstream herring migration season begins September 15 and will run through November 1. Tom explained that, instead of re-deploying turbidity curtains, four-foot sections of the curtain would be raised up so as to provide open passage under the curtain. This technique will allow the above-water portion of the curtain to continue to serve as a barrier to catch floating Phragmites stems. Visually, the curtains will appear to cross the entire river's width.
- Tom Timmons reported that he is still waiting for a calendar from John Rudd identifying dates of hand-off of responsibility for each work area from USACE to Boston Parks and Recreation.
- Tom Brady reported that lightning had struck a tree [where?].

Carlton Street Footbridge:

- Reinstallation of the columns and span of the Carlton Street Footbridge is scheduled for the period between September 24 and October 2. Pedestrian paths on the Brookline side of the Riverway will be closed during that time window, and pedestrians and cyclists will be detoured to the Boston side, which will be opened.

Phase 1 Update:

- Tom Timmons reported on his recent walk through the Phase 1 area with representatives from Terraink and Leahy Landscaping. The consensus was that conditions were not as dire as anticipated given drought conditions; many of the shrubs were deemed to be in a dormant state and not requiring replacement at this time. Knotweed treatment has been deemed successful, although other invasive species (including dodder) will require additional management in the coming weeks.
- Matt Eddy presented slides showing green ground-cover on the upland flats of the Phase 1 area. Much of this growth is purslane; it has the advantage of having a bright green color and serving as a deterrent to geese, but it will die away in winter, exposing bare soil.
- Tom Timmons summarized recent maintenance activities by Leahy Landscaping, which have included some weeding and weekly litter removal. Previously proposed mulching of the top five feet of embankment was reconsidered in favor of trying to establish white wood aster to better define the embankment edge. Results of soils tests (conducted in June) suggested no change in plans for fertilization or seeding. Mowing was suspended because heights of vegetation on upland areas did not require it.
- Upcoming planned maintenance activities include upland treatments (core aeration, fertilization, slice seeding), pruning of vines and shrubs, and supplementary plantings. Fall clean-up is scheduled for mid-October.
- Geocells are visible in significant sections of the Phase 1 area. Matt Eddy communicated the perspective of the Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee that the exposed geocells may be contributing to silt deposition and decreasing water depth in that area. Tom Timmons replied that he is still working with CDM to secure a contractor to remove both the geocells and the adjacent chain-link fencing, but that CDM is largely busy finalizing specifications for Phragmites removal in the Mothers Rest area.

Phase 1 Health Inventory:

- Matt Eddy summarized the process by which the Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee drafted the Phase 1 Health Inventory Tool. This is to be a MMOC-internal document for use in benchmarking conditions in the Phase 1 area. The current draft version of the tool will be distributed to MMOC members in the days following this meeting; feedback should be sent to Matt and will be forwarded to the LMSC for consideration. Anyone interested in helping field-test the Health Inventory Tool should contact Matt directly.

Subcommittee Reports:

- Kelly Brilliant stated that the Communications Subcommittee will be reviewing a comprehensive draft of the updated website on Thursday, September 15 with consultant Carol Lasky. The subcommittee will then turn its attention to planning the MMOC's annual meeting for the public.
- Lisa Kumpf reported on a productive conversation between the Water Quality Subcommittee and Sam Downes, Civil Engineer for the Town of Brookline, who oversees stormwater programs for the Town. He will be providing the Subcommittee with the latest data from Brookline's dry weather stormwater monitoring program. A Town Green Infrastructure Report is also expected to be released in the coming weeks. The subcommittee continues to follow through on items identified in Environmental Monitor updates.
- Matt Eddy noted that the Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee was preparing comments for Tom Timmons regarding revisions to the Phase 1 Maintenance Contract specifications. The new contract will go out to bid this fall, with a start date of January 1, 2023.

Of Note:

- Kelly and Matt will serve as facilitators and represent the MMOC at an upcoming Water Quality Leadership and Technical Summit of the non-federal sponsors, scheduled for Wednesday, September 28, 2022. They will provide a complete report to the MMOC membership following that meeting.
- MMOC members expressed a desire for further education on what constitutes "water quality" beyond its chemical dimensions. How should we (or the public) interpret changes in the appearance of the water in the river? It was suggested that the Water Quality Subcommittee and the Communications Subcommittee could discuss this further.

Public Comment:

- Pam Jorgensen, representing the Fenway Victory Garden, expressed concern regarding the placement of poison-based rat traps near the Victory Garden and elsewhere. Rats that eat poison represent a threat to local raptors. She has not received satisfactory explanations from John Rudd at USACE. Matt Eddy agreed to do additional research.
 - [Following the meeting, Karen Mauney-Brodek provided a link to news articles noting that California had initiated a ban on poison-based rat traps. [LA Times: California tightens rules on rat poisons that kill wildlife and pets](#)]
- Pam also pointed out that parasitic dodder had invaded a number of plots at the Victory Garden. Plot stewards have been asked to remove and bag all dodder prior to disposal.
- Caroline Reeves summarized the summer activities of the Muddy Water Initiative. The Watergoat was not deployed in summer 2022 because upstream turbidity curtains maintained by Charter were performing an equivalent trash-collecting function. Sixty

MWI volunteers did collect 120 lbs. of litter at a recent clean-up event. The phosphorus control boom was deployed and appears to be operating successfully.

Adjourned 7:30PM

Upcoming MMOC Meetings: Wednesday, October 12 and Wednesday, November 9, 6:00PM.