

MMOC Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2023 ZOOM Meeting, 6:00-8:00pm
As Approved June 14, 2023
Minutes prepared by Matt Eddy, MMOC Administrator

Member Attendees:

- Kelly Brilliant, Elisabeth Cianciola, Elton Elperin, Jan Henderson, Lisa Kumpf, Jan Henderson, Arleyn Levee, Karen Mauney-Brodek, Margaret Pokorny (representing Charlesgate Alliance), Marilyn Ray Smith, Tom Timmons, Freddie Veikley, Matt Eddy (MMOC Administrator).

Other Attendees:

- Alyx Britton, Jun Lee, Arlene Mattison, Caroline Reeves, JoAnn Robinson, Carroll Williamson.

Phase 2 Update:

- Matt Eddy presented photos as part of his monthly field report. Tom Timmons gave a robust report.
- Landscape installation is underway at Work Area 11 (Agassiz Rd) and Work Area 6 (Back Bay Yard). In other areas previously landscaped (such as Work Area 4 at Netherlands Rd), shrubs that have died have been flagged for replacement by Charter's landscaping subcontractor. Replacement of shrubs will not affect anticipated hand-off dates for Work Areas.
- ENC and a large crew of volunteers conducted extensive litter removal and invasive species management along the length of the Muddy River on Earth Day, April 22. Kudos to ENC's Alyx Britton for coordinating a successful event, and thanks to all the volunteers. The river looks much cleaner as a result.
- Tom Timmons will provide a document identifying the dates for removal of various fences throughout Phase 2. Some lower fences will remain in place to protect ecologically sensitive zones.
- Jan Henderson asked for an update on the status of efforts to dredge near the MWRA pipes at Back Bay Yard. Tom Timmons will provide an update.

Carlton St Footbridge:

- Bridge construction is drawing to a close with work focused on the finishing touches to the ADA ramps and pathway. Landscape work is anticipated in the coming two months. A summer opening ceremony is being planned, but no official date of opening has been announced, but any update will be communicated to MMOC members well in advance.

Phase 1 Update:

- Matt Eddy presented photos of the Phase 1 area as part of his monthly field report, and Tom Timmons gave a report on recent maintenance work.
- Earlier this week, nine new trees were planted throughout the Phase 1 area, and mulch rings and protective fencing was installed around each. These were in part to replace Project trees that died in the past few years. Matt Eddy summarized the collaborative process by which the Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee worked with Boston Parks to reach agreement on species selection and site identification.
- A&M Home Services recently conducted aeration of the upland areas of Phase 1, with apparently successful results. Overseeding of turf areas is likely to happen soon, and Tom Timmons hopes to install protective fencing around a test area to see if limiting pedestrian traffic can improve turf establishment. A&M has not provided weekly maintenance logs for the past two months, but Tom Timmons will remind them again. He did report that thus far A&M's work has been quite competent.
- Terraink's field report and proposal for 2023 Phase 1 maintenance priorities is expected shortly. Tom Timmons will provide these documents to the Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee upon receipt.
- Invasive species are a significant concern to LMSC members. Burdock is widespread along the embankments, and Phragmites is now growing along the north bank of Justine Mee Liff Park. Tom clarified that burdock is not undergoing management at this time, but that he was in active discussion with Terraink about how to address the Phragmites issue.
 - Lisa Kumpf asked whether there was any effort to coordinate invasive species management with the Charles River Basin Vegetative Management Plan that DCR has prepared (<https://thecharles.org/hells-half-acre-restoration/>). Tom answered that no coordination is happening to date.
- The highly compacted "moonscape" area along the east side of Brookline Ave remains a shared concern. Tom is open to suggestions from MMOC members or subcommittees as to how to address the problem.
 - Jan Henderson pointed out that bioswales and fencing have been deployed with some effectiveness in the Longwood area.
- Karen Mauney-Brodek stated that ENC continues to have an interest in understanding maintenance obligations and the execution of maintenance tasks and the needs for possibly more funding around this in hopes of supporting citizen advocacy at city council meetings to ensure that park maintenance is appropriately funded. Matt Eddy replied that he'd discussed this with Jack Schleifer and suggested that Karen be in touch to review the 2005 Maintenance and Management Plan. This is an area for future whole MMOC discussion.

Flow Restriction Control Structure Issue

- A subset of MMOC member including Kelly Brilliant, Matt Eddy, Arleyn Levee, Lisa Kumpf, Elisabeth Cianciola, Jack Schleifer, and Elton Elperin met with Tom Brady and Tom Timmons last month to discuss further the status of the FRCS and low water levels along the Riverway. The US Army Corps received the approval from MA Department of Environmental Protection to conclude its work. However, there are still significant concerns from MMOC and nonfederal sponsors regarding the effectiveness of Army Corps' solution to the issue of lower water levels created by the Project. Boston and Brookline and the MMOC are monitoring river conditions to inform further action and advocacy steps and meeting with various stakeholders to develop effective strategy (ies). Much more discussion to come.
- Kelly Brilliant opened the discussion iterating a few points: The US Army Corps was given approval by DEP to conclude project. This leaves non-federal sponsors "less room" to negotiate. However this is the very point of the MMOC. It will be important for us to take the appropriate time to develop effective strategies. Developing them now through discussion and proper consultant expertise is exactly where we are and should be. It is a unique opportunity/challenge in that the MMOC and non-federal sponsors are in alignment with concerns and next step is collecting some data and developing an effective strategy or more likely, strategies.
- Karen Mauney-Brodek queried what she could talk about in an upcoming meeting with Senator Ed Markey regarding this issue. ". Marilyn Ray Smith recommended that Karen describe the circumstance while recognizing that no clear path forward has been agreed upon yet. "To start the conversation" is significant and important.
- Many underscored Marilyn's suggestion. It may be effective to start the conversations with a wide variety of stakeholders. We need not have all "the answers." It is a developing story/resolution.
- Lisa Kumpf recommended additional hydrological/hydraulic modeling by an engineer, so that various alternative solutions could be compared.
- Just a sampling of open questions:
 - Will anticipated daylighting at Charlesgate will have an effect on upstream water levels?
 - How will the non-federal sponsors manage invasives, mosquitoes, erosion, and sedimentation in the immediate future?
 - What role should be played by the Division of Marine Fisheries or the Department of Fish and Game?
- Kelly will be scheduling a meeting with Kurt Gaertner (EOEEA) in the coming weeks for discussion re this. Marilyn Ray Smith kindly offered to assist in discussions with state officials, many of whom are newly appointed.
 - The FRCS will also be an important agenda item at the next Cabinet meeting, scheduled for Thursday, June 8.

- Karen Mauney-Brodek suggested the idea of a tour of the FRCS area with elected officials at some effective time period.

MEPA Annual Update and USACE Inspection

- Tom Timmons reported that the revised and updated Annual Update is expected from CDM Smith but that it has not yet been released.
- The USACE annual inspection of Phase 1 took place April 19, 2023. Tom Timmons expects that the Project will receive a grade of “Acceptable,” but USACE has not yet provided the inspection report.

Subcommittee Reports:

- Kelly Brilliant, on behalf of the Communications Subcommittee, reported that the MMOC Annual Meeting, held Wednesday, April 26, was productive and welcoming. Attendance was estimated at about 150 people. In addition to informative presentations by the USACE and the non-federal sponsors, keynote speaker Byron Rushing gave a moving speech about the meaning of the term “public” parks.
 - The MMOC honored four key individuals with tributes: Jack Martin, Fran Gershwin, Betsy Shure Gross, and Michael Dukakis.
 - Direct public participation in the Annual Meeting focused on submission of written questions on provided postcards. Postcards have not yet been reviewed, but there were relatively few submitted. Karen advocated for more public participation at future Annual Meetings. Kelly replied that this suggestion will be discussed at the next Communications Subcommittee meeting, scheduled for Thursday, May 18, and most likely will occur as the meetings henceforth will not be a jam-packed w information and aspects. we had a three-year hiatus for this one.
- The Historic Bridges Subcommittee continues to assemble archival and present-day information on each of the Muddy River bridges, summarized the group’s recent efforts to gather and organize historical data for each of the bridges along the Muddy River. Kudos to this group! Much progress being made.
 - Meeting guest JoAnn Robinson reported in the Zoom chat that [Ivan Myjer](#) could be a useful contact for the subcommittee.
- The Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee is preparing recommendations for Boston Parks in regards to maintenance priorities for the Phase 1 area. Other key topics under discussion are invasives management, moonscape planning, Phase 2 maintenance specifications, and education of the public as to what is required for long-term maintenance to be effective.

Member Organization Updates:

- Jan Henderson (Longwood Collective): Longwood Collective continues to look forward to the re-surfacing and striping of the Longwood Ave. Bridge. This is the missing portion that will connect the existing bike lanes in Brookline to those in Boston.
- Marilyn Ray Smith (Brookline GreenSpace Alliance) gave a beautiful tribute to Arlene Mattison: Arlene Mattison is stepping down as president of the Alliance after many years of volunteering in service to park protection. Current BGSA vice president Sean Lynn-Jones will be Arlene's successor.
 - The MMOC membership expressed their thanks for Arlene's many contributions.
 - Arlene added that a major concern is the increased usage of the parks and the likely need for more intensive park maintenance work in the future.
- Lisa Kumpf (CRWA): CRWA is actively engaged in counting of migrating herring in the Charles.
- Margaret Pokorny (Charlesgate Alliance): CA is continuing to partner with MassDOT and waiting for the announcement of a date for the 25% Design public meeting for the overhaul of Storrow Drive.
 - Now that the appeals deadline has passed, the stone wall removal project (underneath the Bowker) will move forward and is expected to be complete by the end of 2023.
 - DCR recently used a grassy area between Beacon and Storrow as a staging area for equipment involved in the resurfacing of Storrow Drive, which they did without notification or permission. The equipment has since been removed (with assistance from Patrice Kish), but CA is now seeking mitigation funds from DCR for damage done to that site.

MMOC Member Business:

- Following motion by Jan Henderson and second by Lisa Kumpf, minutes for the MMOC meeting for April 12, 2023 were approved by unanimous vote (with abstentions from those who were not present for that meeting). Final copies of the minutes will be distributed to MMOC members and will be available on the MMOC website.

Public Comment:

- Caroline Reeves expressed her view that preservation of migrating herring populations and maintenance of public safety should be the major priorities in any solution to the FRCS issue.

Upcoming MMOC Meetings:

- Weds, June 14 and Weds, July 12, 6:00 PM

Adjourned 8:00PM.