

MMOC Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2023 ZOOM Meeting, 6:00-7:50pm
As Approved September 13, 2023
Minutes prepared by Matt Eddy, MMOC Administrator

Member Attendees:

- Tom Brady, Kelly Brilliant, Elisabeth Cianciola, Elton Elperin, Parker James, Lisa Kumpf, Arleyn Levee, Kay Mathew, Karen Mauney-Brodek, Tom Timmons, Matt Eddy (MMOC Administrator).

Other Attendees:

- Joann Robinson, Jack Schleifer.

Welcome

- Kelly Brilliant acknowledged the hard work taking place at the subcommittee level and thanked all for their sustained contributions of time, effort, and expertise.

Phase 2 Update:

- Phase 2 landscape installation is complete. Charter's landscaping subcontractor, LBG, is actively engaged in watering and replacement of shrubs that died over the past 12 months.
- Work Areas 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9 will revert to control of the non-federal sponsors in fall 2023.
- Erosion issues at Work Area 5 (Bridle Path Bridge area) are related to the DCR storm drain in that area. DCR and Charter have coordinated to install straw bales and filter curtains to minimize sediment movement in that area.
- Phragmites regrowth in various Phase 2 work areas was discussed. [NOTE: In a separate communication, Tom Timmons stated that Boston Parks is engaged in meetings with SWCA Environmental Consultants to manage Phragmites project-wide. Tom will help craft a statement/plan for Phragmites management once an agreement is reached. The next treatment is scheduled for late July or early August.
 - Tom Brady emphasized that Phragmites treatment would proceed deliberately and no one should expect that every Phragmites sighting will be addressed immediately.
- Stroller access to Mother's Rest Playground was discussed. Paved access to the playground likely will not be available for at least six months.
- Tom Timmons reported that trees growing from the headwall at Agassiz Rd would be removed and treated in the next few weeks.

- DCR has submitted its Notice of Intent (NOI) to the Boston Conservation Commission for reconstruction of stormwater outfalls that discharge into the Muddy River. Tom Timmons will forward a copy of the NOI to the MMOC. The expectation is that the NOI will be reviewed and ConComm's meeting in early September 2023. Both Kelly Brilliant and Karen Mauney-Brodek stated that the MMOC and ENC (respectively) would be happy to write or speak in support of the NOI.

Carlton Street Footbridge:

- The bridge and nearby landscaping are complete. Landscape maintenance is being undertaken by Brookline Parks staff. The bridge will be made accessible to the public in late July, with a formal celebration scheduled for Sunday, September 17. The MMOC and several of its organizational members will support this celebration.

Lower Riverway/Flow Restriction Control Structure (Cofferdam) Area:

- The non-federal sponsors continue to monitor water elevation, bathymetry, and exposed features at identified locations from Back Bay Yard to Leverett Pond and will do so for the next two years.
- Tom Brady noted that two commissioners of Mass DEP had visited the site and concluded that their department was satisfied with existing conditions there. He emphasized that USACE's interest in the river is limited to flood risk reduction, and that goal has been achieved. All environmental and historic resource benefits of the Project have been the result of creative tweaking of the flood risk management work.
- An ad hoc subcommittee of the MMOC (including Kelly Brilliant, Elisabeth Cianciola, Elton Elperin, Lisa Kumpf, Arleyn Levee, Karen Mauney-Brodek, along with Jack Schliefer) is preparing a letter to be delivered to Mass DEP and EOEEA identifying the MMOC's concerns as to the potential impacts of a lowered water level as concerning the Muddy River Restoration Project's stated (original) goals. Tom Brady agreed to review the letter prior to submission.
- Tom Brady agreed to support the development of bullet points and/or a summary of considerations for use in responding to public inquiry.
- Discussions are underway with BWSC's John Sullivan regarding a possible experiment to change how water levels are managed in the lower Charles River Basin (by altering how the New Charles River Dam is regulated) to determine what effect the Basin's water level has on water in the Riverway. This experiment is not likely to occur anytime soon, however.

Phase 1 Update:

- Crown vetch has become a predominant species along the embankments of Phase 1; a recent field report from Terraink stated that crown vetch was being planted by A&M Home Services in bare areas where burdock had been removed – as a strategy for

maintaining bank stability. Crown vetch is considered an invasive species in many states, and it appears to be overtopping some of the native shrubs in the area. Tom Timmons expressed his openness to suggestions from the MMOC's Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee as to how to address this.

- Invasive morning glory has also been observed in the area and has been targeted for removal per Terraink's field report (June 7, 2023).
- There has been an apparent reduction in frequency of mowing of Phase 1 out of concern that some previous mowing efforts have occurred when there was nothing to mow. One result of infrequent mowing has been the colonization of upland areas by daisy species (these have since been mown). Tom Timmons repeated his willingness to hear suggestions from the MMOC as to how to manage upland areas.
- Questions were raised about closely situated areas under the management of different agencies, e.g. DCR-owned medians immediately adjacent to BPRD-owned Justine Mee Liff Park. The possibility of coordinating maintenance of these areas can be discussed at a future meeting.
- Matt Eddy is continuing to check in on turf conditions inside the temporary snow fence along Park Drive. So far, there is no significant difference in growth between areas inside and outside the fence.
- Arleyn Levee expressed her concern that management of Phase 1 areas has led to a significant departure from the original Olmsted-inspired vision for the area.
- Terraink will host a field meeting for the LMSC in late August.
- CDM Smith has completed the latest Phase 1 Inspection and Maintenance Report and made it available to the MMOC. Matt Eddy will prepare the document for sharing and send a link to all MMOC members.

Subcommittee Reports

- The Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee is developing a proposal for rethinking the "moonscape" areas along Brookline Ave. Marion Pressley is taking the lead on this. The proposal will likely include fencing (acknowledging the reality of several of the existing desire paths), soil amelioration, additional tree planting, and possibly an effort to establish meadow species (rather than turf) in upland areas.
- The Historic Bridges Subcommittee continues to gather and organize archival information regarding all of the bridges throughout the Project Area. Kelly Brilliant acknowledged Brookline DPW's Bill Smith for generously providing the MMOC with a large collection of historical documents.
- The Operations Subcommittee has been focused on finalizing the FY 2024 budget (see below).

Public Comment:

- No questions were asked by members of the public.

MMOC Member Business:

- Parker James, MMOC Treasurer, summarized MMOC finances for the 2023 fiscal year and presented the proposed FY 2024 budget. Following discussion, Karen Mauney-Brodek moved that the budget be approved, and Arleyn Levee seconded. The budget was approved unanimously.
- Approval of minutes from the MMOC meeting held Wednesday, June 14, 2013, was postponed to the September meeting.

Upcoming MMOC Meeting:

- No MMOC Meeting in August. Next meeting is Weds, September 13, 6:00 PM.

Adjourned 7:50PM