

**MMOC Meeting Minutes**  
**May 8, 2024, ZOOM Meeting, 6:00-7:30pm**  
**As Approved June 12, 2024**  
Minutes prepared by Matt Eddy, MMOC Administrator

**Member Attendees:**

- Tom Brady, Kelly Brilliant, Elisabeth Cianciola, Elton Elperin, Arleyn Levee, Sean Lynn-Jones, Kay Mathew, Jack Schleifer (ENC), Freddie Veikley; Matt Eddy (MMOC Administrator).

**Other Attendees:**

- Caroline Reeves.

**Welcome:**

- MMOC interim chair Kay Mathew welcomed all attendees and brought the meeting to order.

**Phase 2 Updates:**

- By email, Tom Timmons reported that the Army Corps is expected to deliver the Phase 2 Operations and Maintenance Manual “soon.” The non-federal sponsors Annual Update for 2023 is in development and should also be available relatively soon.
- The non-federal sponsors walked the parts of Phase 2 still under warranty with Charter in late April to evaluate landscape conditions. Some shrubs have been marked for replacement; others are being watched. Charter recently completed core aeration and seeding of turf areas that were not accepted by the City of Boston back in October (Work Areas 7-9).
- Many sections of the river look to be trash-free after an Earth Day clean-up hosted by ENC. Although rainy weather reduced the number of participants, a large volume of trash was removed. Enthusiastic thanks for that effort!
- Great Horizons has completed a spring clean-up of those sections of Phase 2 that have been returned to Boston Parks’ management – Work Areas 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9. This has included removal of filter socks in areas where they’d been overtopped. Great Horizons has not submitted written records of their work despite firm requests from Tom Timmons.
- The Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee has been discussing possible recommendations for the mulched areas near the Fire Alarm Headquarters. These areas were cleared of Phragmites as a separate contract, but there are no plans (or budget) to install shrubs, turf, or other plants there. Tom Brady recommended that the area be mown regularly to keep weeds low, but that nothing be planted there; the existing mulch

is best for maintaining tree health. Perhaps this could be an experimental area for distributing a pollinator-friendly seed mix.

- Knotweed is growing aggressively and impacting the view of the river in stretches between the Project Work Areas. Boston Parks has a general agreement with SWCA to develop an invasives management plan, but that hasn't been established yet. Strategies for addressing knotweed were briefly discussed, but there was recognition that this would be a management effort, not an eradication effort.
- As expected, Phragmites is resprouting in the Back Bay Fens, particularly in areas that are still under management by Charter. ENC has drafted wording for signage to help communicate with the public about what can be expected in the coming months apropos Phragmites management. Jack Schleifer will distribute for comment.
- Unmaintained areas at the intersection of Brookline Ave and the Riverway will be addressed in the coming weeks by BPRD.
- DCR has all permits for repair/replacement of about seven outfalls into the Muddy. Due to scheduling constraints, this work will probably be undertaken in late summer. One clogged DCR storm drain at Netherlands Rd was recently cleaned out following communication from the MMOC.
- Matt Eddy reached out to CDM-Smith to ask about the availability of data from CDM-Smith's water quality monitoring as well as water level monitoring. He did not hear back before the MMOC meeting.
- An unusual piece of art – an etched plexiglass box apparently commenting (inaccurately) on water quality of the river – was observed near Evans Way. Kelly Brilliant volunteered to investigate.
  - Kay Mathew suggested that the Communications Subcommittee become active again and work to increase public messaging about the positive changes in river health that have resulted from the Project.

### **Phase 1 Updates:**

- BPRD/A&M Home Services has begun remediating high-traffic areas at the “moonscape” at Brookline Ave and Park Drive. Fences have been installed, some decompaction was attempted, topsoil was applied, and seed and straw have been distributed. The area is to be watered for the next 90 days to encourage turf growth.
  - The substrate contains a lot of gravel and rock that prevented decompaction at depth. The Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee will recommend removal of some of the gravel.
  - A number of trees planted in fall 2023 are inside the construction fence. They have ENC-supplied water bags. ENC will work with BPRD to ensure the bags are filled regularly.
  - There was continued discussion of what to do to prevent re-establishment of desire paths once the construction fence comes down. Elton suggested a

decorative fence right along the sidewalk at Brookline Ave. Some people might hop over it, but it would certainly reduce the overall rate of corner-cutting.

- BPRD's landscaping consultant Terraink (Kellie Connelly) reported by email that she is happy with Phase 1 conditions overall. Summer 2024 maintenance efforts may focus on under-maintained areas at the most upstream and downstream ends of the Phase 1 area.
- Freddie Veikley noted that a lot of trees along Park Drive are continuing to struggle, health-wise. The Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee will discuss recommendations.

#### **Upcoming events of note:**

- USACE Chief of General Engineering James Newman is currently scheduled to attend the MMOC monthly meeting on June 12, 2024, to begin a conversation about observed low water levels. Kelly Brilliant has communicated with him several times and briefed him on the MMOC's stance regarding low water in Riverway Park and elsewhere. The tenor of this first meeting is likely to be fairly general and polite, although there was also general agreement that we should be firm in communicating our dissatisfaction with current conditions.
- Brookline DPW Engineer Sam Downes is the project lead for the Town's plan to restore Willow Pond and parts of Leverett Pond. He and Tom Brady will host a tour of the site for interested MMOC members (date TBA).
- Brookline DPW is hosting public listening sessions in preparation for updating the Town's Open Space Plan. The sessions will be both in person and on Zoom. The next two are scheduled for Thursday, May 16 at 7PM and Thursday May 23 at 7PM.
- Brookline Greenspace Alliance hosts its annual meeting Thursday, May 9. All are welcome. BGSA will honor Brookline DPW Engineer Bill Smith for his years of service in completing the Carlton St. Footbridge Project.
- The annual Studio Without Walls art installation along Riverway Park will begin May 25.

#### **Public Comment:**

- Caroline Reeves updated the MMOC about the Muddy Water Initiative's efforts to hire Terraphase Engineering to conduct a hydrology study of the Muddy River with a focus on its suitability for herring migration. Terraphase's proposal has been received and will be distributed to the MMOC for comment. Any MMOC members who are willing/interested in participating in Terraphase's work are encouraged to do so. Fund-raising for the effort is ongoing.
- Caroline also noted that MWI is co-sponsoring a farmer's market at Charlesgate, every Sunday from June 23 through October 13, 11AM to 2PM, rain or shine.

**MMOC Member Business:**

- Charlesgate Alliance has asked that the MMOC write a letter of support to the Boston Conservation Commission for the Alliance's plans to plant additional trees in Charlesgate Park. Matt has drafted a letter modeled after a similar one from a few years ago. The MMOC voted unanimously to approve this effort.
- Following motion by Kelly Brilliant and second by Freddie Veikley, minutes for the MMOC meeting for April 17, 2024, 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.

Adjourned 7:30PM.