

MMOC Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2024, ZOOM Meeting, 6:00-7:35pm
As Approved May 8, 2024
Minutes prepared by Matt Eddy, MMOC Administrator

Member Attendees:

- Kelly Brilliant, Elisabeth Cianciola, Elton Elperin, Kurt Gaertner, Jan Henderson, Parker James, Lisa Kumpf, Arleyn Levee, Sean Lynn-Jones, Kay Mathew, Jack Schleifer (ENC), Marilyn Ray Smith, Tom Timmons, Freddie Veikley; Matt Eddy (MMOC Administrator).

Other Attendees:

- Arlene Mattison, Caroline Reeves, Carroll Williamson.

Welcome:

- MMOC Chair Kelly Brilliant welcomed everyone and initiated the meeting. This is Kelly's last meeting serving as chair. Kay Mathew will serve as interim chair beginning in May 2024. Kay received Kelly's enthusiastic endorsement.
- On behalf of the full MMOC, Kay thanked Kelly for her two years of service as chair. Kelly was presented with flowers and a plaque of thank-you messages.

Phase 2 Updates:

- Matt Eddy presented slides from his most recent walk of the river. Wildlife and flowering trees are abundant. Lawn areas and shrubs appear to have benefited from a rainy winter with mild temperatures.
- There was some concern about the condition of plantings along the wetland shelf in Work Area 11 (between the river and the south edge of the Victory Gardens). This area is still under guarantee by Charter. Matt will return to that spot to take additional photographs.
- Some metal gates are damaged. Matt reports those to Tom Timmons, who forwards repair requests on to either Charter or Boston Parks maintenance.
- Filter socks in some areas still under Charter responsibility appear to be in poor shape. Lisa Kumph emphasized that filter socks need to be removed before Charter leaves the Project permanently, as the plastic sleeves do not degrade. The possibility of using biodegradable alternatives for those sleeves was discussed. Tom Timmons will confer with Charter during a site walk scheduled for April 30.
 - One area of particular concern is near a stormwater outfall just downstream of Work Area 5 along the Riverway. That outfall is due for restoration by DCR. Matt will reach out to Tom Valton at DCR to learn more about the schedule for that work.

- Boston Parks contractor Great Horizons has completed its first cleaning of Phase 2, per contract (Work Areas 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9). They came with a four-person crew. Tom Timmons reported that they did a “not perfect – but decent – job.” Regular monitoring of that work is important. Tom will meet with Kellie Connelly (Terraink) next week to assess on-site conditions and make further maintenance recommendations.
 - Matt presented the monthly maintenance task schedule for Great Horizons (drawn from the contract with Boston Parks). This will serve as the basis of comparison with Great Horizons’ maintenance logs.
 - Tom clarified that Great Horizons will work only within the boundaries of the Project Work Areas. Park sections that fall between Work Areas are still the responsibility of Boston Parks, and responses to maintenance concerns in those areas are generally by work order rather than schedule.
- Vinyl fences remain around lawn areas that were not accepted by the City at final inspection in November 2023. They are in varying degrees of disrepair. The decision to keep those in place belongs to Charter, as they are responsible for caring for the lawn areas until establishment is deemed successful. Tom will speak with Charter representatives at their next site meeting on April 30.
- Yellow floats in the river identify locations where CDM Smith has installed data loggers (on loan from CRWA). Three loggers are taking temperature readings only; one at Netherlands Rd. is measuring stream depth in an effort to verify USGS gage readings. Stream depth data is expected to be available next month.
- Boston Parks’ annual egg addling program is in full swing. The island just upstream from Avenue Louis Pasteur is particularly difficult to get to, but the effort continues.
 - There was discussion of whether addling is effective in long-term reductions in goose populations. Caroline Reeves summarized conversations she’s had with Fish and Wildlife staffers, who believe that multiple years of region-wide efforts are necessary to achieve any long-term reduction. Some regional coordination already exists, but more is needed.
 - In the short-term, egg addling appears to reduce local goose populations for a season.

Willow Pond Restoration:

- Sam Downes (Brookline DPW) is the lead for the Town’s planned project to dredge and restore Willow Pond. He is happy to come to a future MMOC meeting and/or to meet MMOC members in the field to discuss the scope and design of the project. In the meantime, more information is available at the project website, <https://www.brooklinema.gov/3741/Willow-Pond-Dredging-and-Leverett-Pond-B>
- Lisa reported that CRWA had reviewed the Willow Pond project documentation and had made recommendations. Dredging will take place “in the wet,” as was CRWA’s request. The overall scope of the project is reduced from its original design.

Phase 1 Updates:

- Upland areas in Phase 1 appear to show more lawn growth than they did last year, probably due to a mild, wet winter.
- Next week, Boston Parks contractor A&M Home Services will begin restoration of the heavily compacted areas just downstream of Brookline Ave (the “moonscape”). This work includes:
 - “Verti-Drain” aeration of the top 6” of soil
 - Replacement of 2-3” of existing material with topsoil
 - New lawn seeding
 - Installation of protective fencing
 - Watering for a 90-day establishment period.

Discussion of 2 Charlesgate West Project:

- The Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee of the MMOC has prepared a draft comment letter to Boston Planning and Development Agency in response to Morro Development’s Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) for the property at 2 Charlesgate West. The MMOC commented on an earlier version of the plan in January 2022. The MMOC’s concerns focus on a variety of concerns, most notably the possibility that the Parkways Protection Ordinance could be weakened or made irrelevant by permitting Parkway-adjacent land-owners to subdivide their properties and build a single building across both subdivisions. Additionally, some MMOC members oppose approval of the project while the city’s “sunshine policy” is still in development.
- MMOC members with input/suggestions should send those to Matt as soon as possible.

Low Water Issue along Riverway:

- Lisa gave a summary of the Water Quality Subcommittee’s draft presentation regarding low water levels along the Riverway. The intended audience includes representatives of the US Army Corps of Engineers. The presentation will be shared with the full MMOC to solicit additional input and suggestions.
- Kelly recently met with James Newman, Chief of Civil Works for the New England District of USACE. He had been briefed about the water level issue by Wendy Gendron and Jennifer Flanagan, and he seemed receptive to learning more about the MMOC’s concerns. He and Jennifer will attend the MMOC meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 12. Kelly plans to share the MMOC’s slides with Chief Newman before that date.
- Sean Lynn-Jones noted that the Emerald Necklace represents “one of the top two of all of Olmsted’s projects.” He and Marilyn Ray Smith commented that that the aesthetics of an Olmsted Park are critical and should not be lost sight of in conversations with USACE.

Recognitions and Events:

- CRWA held its annual meeting on April 9. Brookline's Tom Brady was presented with the Rita Barron Public Official Award for his many years of work supporting the Muddy River Restoration Project.
- The Friends of the Public Garden presented Margaret Pokorny with its "Parks Champion Award" at their annual meeting on April 9.
- The 18th annual Colleges of the Fenway Muddy River Symposium took place at Simmons University on April 10. A special annual award has been named in honor of Fran Gershwin for research projects focused on direct impacts to the Muddy River parks.

Public Comment:

- Caroline Reeves announced the Muddy Water Initiative's plans to hire a hydrologist to study the Muddy River with a focus on its suitability for herring migration. The company is Terraphase Engineering, and their proposal will be received in the coming week. Caroline invited any interested parties to engage with Terraphase's representatives.

MMOC Member Business:

- Following motion by Freddie Veikley and second by Parker James, minutes for the MMOC meeting for March 13, 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 7:35PM.