

MMOC Meeting Minutes
July 10, 2024, ZOOM Meeting, 6:00-7:30pm
As Approved September 11, 2024
Minutes prepared by Matt Eddy, MMOC Administrator

Member Attendees:

- Elisabeth Cianciola, Elton Elperin, 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:

- Ethan Busch (CRWA), Caroline Reeves, JoAnn Robinson, Carroll Williamson.

Welcome:

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

Updates on Phase 1 and Phase 2:

- Tom Timmons briefly summarized the quarterly field meeting between the USACE and the non-federal sponsors, held earlier in July. The group walked Work Areas 2, 6, 10, and 11 and discussed various (unidentified) questions and concerns. Tom's overall impression was that most of those areas appear to be in good shape. The next meeting between the non-federal sponsors and USACE/Charter is scheduled for August, where the focus will be on Work Areas scheduled to be handed over to the non-federal sponsors in October 2024, including Work Areas 1, 2, 5, and 10.
 - The wetland shelf at Work Area 6 (Lower Riverway) has not thrived. Charter/USACE are considering alterations to the plan for that area.
- Matt Eddy presented slides from his most recent walk of the River.
 - Work Areas 10 and 11 – previously sites where sediment processing facilities were located – look especially healthy and green.
 - Cattail is growing in abundance in areas previously controlled by Phragmites. Although not designated as a noxious invasive by the Commonwealth, cattail serves a similar functional role in growing in mono-specific stands, blocking the view of the river, and potentially reducing water flow. The Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee will review and discuss recommendations.
 - Some work areas returned to Boston Parks management in October 2023 were accepted under condition that Charter continue to work to revitalize turf in areas where it was poorly established. Tom reported that despite Charter's efforts, turf has not grown in those areas, but the City will probably deem

these areas as “acceptable” anyway. This includes Work Area 8, across from the MFA parking lot.

- Residual habitat protection fence at Work Area 3 (upper Riverway Park) is expected to be removed by BPRD this fall.
- Concerns remain about failing filter socks in certain areas, especially along the Brookline side adjacent to the Carlton St Footbridge. Sean Lynn-Jones noted that multiple rounds of effort to establish groundcover along that slope have failed. Matt will bring this to Tom Brady’s attention again.
- Boston Parks has extended the watering contract for the fenced restoration areas at Brookline Ave. Regular watering will continue through August 2024. Matt noted that purslane predominates in this area, and that it will likely die back in the autumn. He will follow up with Tom Timmons as to possible next steps.
- Knotweed is growing profusely in some areas, most notably along Riverway Park. Jack Schleifer and ENC have produced a map of problematic areas. Occasional mechanical removal has not succeeded in having any long-term improvement. Boston Parks has inquired with a consulting company named [Water & Wetland](#) to develop a plan for invasive species management, with the hope of taking some action in early fall 2024 (when knotweed and other invasives are most susceptible to chemical treatment). The Town of Brookline (per communication between Matt and Alexandra Vecchio), the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, and the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance have all expressed a willingness to collaborate and coordinate their invasive species management efforts.
- Tom Timmons recently walked Riverway Park with BPRD’s maintenance staff. The in-house landscaping crew will begin maintaining the stretches between Work Areas (4, 5, and 6). Eventually, maintenance for both work areas and in-between areas will be bundled and contracted out, so as to ensure seamless management.
- DCR-owned outfalls along Riverway Park are scheduled for replacement or repair later this summer. In the meantime, they are overflowing during storms and causing significant erosion to the stone-dust path. Some MMOC members asked for a reminder as to DCR’s designs and any associated landscape restoration efforts; Matt will send this material to all.

Reflections on Conversation with USACE Chief James Newman:

- The full MMOC discussed their sentiments in response to last month’s meeting with USACE. The general sentiment was that the meeting did not adequately address our concerns and unfairly attributed low water levels to DCR’s management of the New Charles River Dam. Matt shared a draft of bullet points summarizing the MMOC’s collective concerns – drawn in large part from the contributions of members of the Water Quality Subcommittee. Matt and Kay will work together to convert those bullet points into a more formal letter to be delivered to USACE after review by the full MMOC.

- The MMOC would like additional information on the relationship between dam operation and the water levels of the Muddy River.
- USACE will provide as-built drawings for Phase 2 at some point later in the summer. Comparing these drawing with design drawings will provide the MMOC with additional insight as to what has happened with water levels in the lower Riverway section.
- Tom Timmons clarified that the USACE’s agreement in spring 2023 to cut the Flow Restriction Control Structure (FRCS) to 0.4 ft NAVD 88 (instead of removing the dam completely) was a compromise and considered a “win” by the non-federal sponsors at the time. Had the dam been cut lower, the water level may have dropped even further than it has.
- Caroline Reeves asked: Is the current water level able to support a herring run? Is the FRCS a barrier to herring? Is it reasonable to ask DCR to adjust dam operations at certain times of year to help the herring? The pipe at Netherlands Rd gage is a similar concern. Elisabeth Cianciola replied that the Commonwealth doesn't invest a lot of resources monitoring herring in the Muddy River because it is a relatively small run and the habitat the river provides is not high quality due to the extensive development of the watershed, permanent alteration of the river channel, etc.

Subcommittee Reports:

- The Water Quality Subcommittee spent much of its last meeting discussing feedback to USACE regarding their presentation. We also continue to review water quality data provided by CDM-Smith and to anticipate dredging of Willow Pond.
- The Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee will meet Monday, July 15. Topics of discussion include invasive species management, envisioning new management objectives for problematic sub-areas of Phase 1, and crafting further recommendations in response to USACE’s draft Phase 2 Operations and Maintenance Manual. They hope to plan a site visit to Phase 1 in the near future.
 - Freddie Veikley noted that Samuels recently hooked up a meter to the fire hydrant along Park Drive. Could that be a source of water for sustaining the turf and trees on the opposite side?
- The Historic Bridges Subcommittee has its next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, July 17. The focus of their discussion will be on encouraging the City of Boston to change its CPA funding rules to allow a shared Boston-Brookline structural assessment of bridges to move forward.
- Communications: Matt and Kay noted that they are interested in revitalizing the Communications Subcommittee. The subcommittee has lost some of its members and is looking for additional volunteers to promote stronger public messaging as related to MMOC and project activities. Please contact Matt or Kay if you’re interested.

Other Updates, Events:

- MassDOT is hosting its [public information meeting](#) regarding the Bowker Overpass redesign on July 11 at 6:00pm. All are encouraged to register and attend.
- Having received the endorsement of the BCDC, the plans for 2 Charlesgate West will now be presented to the BPDA board on July 18. Plans for the building have not significantly changed despite high volumes of public input. The Project requires an exemption from the Parkways Protection Ordinance, to be granted by the Boston City Council, although the date is unclear. Freddie Veikley intends to speak at the City Council meeting in defense of the Parkways Protection Ordinance.
- The Charlesgate Farmer's Market continues to be held every Sunday between now and November.
- The Muddy Water Initiative will celebrate the launch of the 2024 WaterGoat trash collection boom at Ipswich St on Sunday July 14 from 11am to 1pm.
- CRWA will host its [Sunset Social](#) Tuesday July 23 at Night Shift Brewing's beer garden on the Charles River Esplanade.
- "Swinging in the Fens" will be held at Ramler Park on Wednesday, July 17.

Public Comment:

- Carroll Williamson said that the Friends of the Muddy River would likely cease to exist before the end of 2024. It intends to donate its remaining funds to Brookline GreenSpace Alliance.
- Sean Lynn-Jones called attention to the Town of Brookline's Bill Smith, who was recently honored with the Paul & Vicky Tsongas Award (presented by Preservation Massachusetts) for his work on the Carlton Street Footbridge. This is just the latest of several awards presented to Bill and that project. Congratulations!

MMOC Member Business:

- Following motion by Parker James and second by Freddie Veikley, minutes for the MMOC meeting for June 12, 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.
- The next MMOC meeting will be held Wednesday, September 11, 6:00 PM. (As per tradition, the full MMOC will not meet in August).

Adjourned 7:30PM.