

MMOC Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2024, ZOOM Meeting, 6:00-7:40pm
As Approved November 13, 2024
Minutes prepared by Elton Elperin and Matt Eddy

Member Attendees:

- Kelly Brilliant, Elisabeth Cianciola, Elton Elperin, Kurt Gaertner, Parker James, Lisa Kumpf, Arleyn Levee, Sean Lynn-Jones, Kay Mathew, Jack Schleifer (ENC), Tom Timmons, 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. Elton Elperin agreed to serve as note-taker.
- Jan Henderson, who has represented MASCO/Longwood Collective on the MMOC for the past 19 years, has moved on to other pursuits. We thank her for her service and wish her well.
- Alex Mezzatesta has been hired as the Town of Brookline’s new Director of Parks and Open Space, succeeding Alexandra Vecchio. We look forward to collaborating with him.

Updates on Phase 2:

- The non-federal sponsors conducted a walk-through of the Project with USACE and Charter on September 5, 2024, with a focus on areas to be turned over to local management in November 2024 (including Work Areas 1, 2, 5, 10, 11, and 12). Tom Timmons reported that the sites have passed “preliminary acceptance,” although some shrubs and at least one tree will be replaced before November. [NOTE: after the MMOC meeting, Tom provided Charter’s [bullet-point summary](#) of this walk.]
 - Terraink/Kellie Connelly is developing the maintenance plan for the Boston sections of these Work Areas. A maintenance contract (or more than one, given the size of the area) is expected to be awarded in winter 2024-25.
- Although Tom Brady wasn’t present to confirm, Tom Timmons believes the Town of Brookline will remove the 4’ fencing that is currently in place at Leverett Pond. Boston and Brookline have different views on the usefulness of this fencing.
- Tom T. will provide rough-draft “as-built” documents for areas already handed over to the non-federal sponsors. These are construction drawings that reflect on-the-ground conditions at the time of hand-off, including landscaping and water depth data. Final

copies of as-built drawings will probably become available in late 2025 after the last hand-off.

- Jack Schleifer and others mentioned a Boston Parks plan to install a pedestrian walkway on the east side of the river at Work Area 2 (Jamaicaway @ Brookline Ave). He believes Liza Meyers has more information, and he will follow up. Funding for the project has already been secured.
- Leahy Landscaping continues to keep the Work Areas tidy and trash free – thank you for your hard work!
- Knotweed and other invasives continue to be a challenge along Riverway Park. Boston Parks conversations with SWCA to develop an invasive species management plan are ongoing.
 - There are signs identifying pesticide treatment along Riverway Park; these are most likely signs placed by Charter during a spraying of broadleaf herbicide on lawns.
 - Sean Lynn-Jones reported that the Town of Brookline had applied for CPA funding to address invasives management on the west side of the Park, although award of those funds is still at least a year away.
- Graffiti on bridges and other structures has been reported several times to Boston 311 with no response. Tom Timmons suspects this is due to the small size of the graffiti response team and a probable backlog of projects. He agreed to reach out to the graffiti response team to learn more.
 - Freddie Veikley asked whether the graffiti response team knew about extra precautions that are required when removing paint from historic structures. Tom replied that yes, they do understand those challenges.
- Large sections designed to be lawn are effectively barren – examples include the stretch just downstream of Avenue Louis Pasteur and across from the MFA. Matt observed that fenced-in areas tend to be significantly greener than unfenced areas. The site where USACE trailers used to be is an example of where grass appears to be growing well.
- A few large trees at the water's edge have been marked for removal between Avenue Louis Pasteur and Evans Way. These are in addition to trees removed last spring throughout the Back Bay Fens area. Replacement trees will not be planted until after the Back Bay Fens Pathways Project is completed.
- Work in anticipation of replacing the Evans Way Bridge is underway. Geotechnical boring equipment has been observed in the area.
- USACE and the non-federal sponsors have reached consensus that trees and large limbs that fall into the water will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. In most instances, the trees will be allowed to remain in the river. There is no consensus among MMOC members as to whether the benefits of these trees outweigh the problems.

Water Level in Riverway Park:

- Mudflats/islands in Riverway Park have been colonized by significant vegetation, thus making them semi-permanent features in the river. There was discussion of the likely pros and cons of this growth. Some MMOC members expressed interest in asking the USACE for assistance in further assessing these islands.
- Filter socks along Riverway Park, especially those near the Carlton St. Footbridge, are still overtopped with sediment. These – and the adjacent bare embankments intended to be turf – are Charter’s responsibility; reseeding and filter sock removal are on Charter’s [“punch list”](#) for completion prior to handoff.
- Matt Eddy reported that no post-construction water level monitoring data had been provided to the MMOC since September 2023. Tom T replied that the non-federal sponsors had scaled back the water level monitoring upon learning that USACE was undertaking the same project.
- Lisa reported that CRWA had taken water depth data from near the USGS gage at Netherlands Rd., but the data has not yet been analyzed.
- Kelly Brilliant will be meeting with the Cabinet on Thursday, September 12. The question of next steps apropos low water in Riverway Park will be discussed.

Updates on Phase 1 Area:

- Earlier today, the MMOC received a digital copy of the [“Phase 1 Inspection and Maintenance Report from Final Acceptance through 2023.”](#) It will be distributed electronically to all MMOC members and will be discussed in the Landscape Maintenance and Water Quality Subcommittees.
- Temporary fencing at Brookline Ave @ Park Drive and the Fenway is to be dismantled later this month – in the area where turf rehabilitation efforts have taken place this summer. There is a generally shared expectation that the desire paths will quickly return. Boston Parks opposes putting any more permanent fencing in the area; the general plan is to formalize the desire paths with stone-dust. This is a topic of ongoing discussion for the Landscape Maintenance Subcommittee.

Subcommittee Reports:

- Lisa Kumpf reported that the next Water Quality Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 18. The group is evaluating the second round of water quality data from CDM-Smith, although a first look suggests that there hasn’t been a significant improvement in water quality post-project.
 - Sean Lynn-Jones added that he’d met with Maria Rose and Jay Hersey (Brookline DPW) to discuss the Town’s ongoing efforts at Illicit Discharge

Detection and Elimination (IDDE). While the Town continues to invest substantial sums in this work, the scope of the problem (and the very slow rate of water flow in storm drains during dry weather) means we're unlikely to see significant improvement in water quality in the Muddy River for some time.

- There is no update on DCR storm outfall repair. Elisabeth pointed out that DCR's fiscal year began September 1, so that may explain some of the delay. Matt will contact DCR again in early October.

Other Updates, Events:

- Parker James shared the news that the MassDOT Bowker Overpass redesign project is out to bid. DCR has been a valuable ally in improving the quality of the design.
- Freddie announced a meeting of the Fenway Civic Association with Councilor Durkan and members of the Mayor's office to discuss the complex interplay between the Article 80 review process, the Mayor's development priorities, and overlapping zoning restrictions, including the Parkways Protection Ordinance. The meeting will take place at 6pm at the Fenway Community Center, 1282 Boylston St., on Monday, September 23. All are invited.
- Matt, on behalf of Sean Lynn-Jones, noted that the Brookline Greenspace Alliance is hosting educational walks of Riverway Park on Saturday September 14 and Saturday October 5. Check the BGSA website for more information.
- Lisa announced that CRWA is hosting a webinar on the condition of the Muddy River with a focus on water quality assessment. The event will take place at 12pm on Thursday, September 26. Check the CRWA website for more information.

Public Comment:

- Caroline Reeves reported that she was working with students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute to measure water depth and water movement at various locations along the river. Lisa replied that those students had also reached out to CRWA, and they were collaborating.
- Caroline also thanked MMOC members for collaborating with and supporting the work of TerraPhase, a consulting company that is exploring strategies for improving the suitability of the Muddy River for migratory fish. Representatives from TerraPhase will be visiting the Muddy River in person in October.
- Caroline stated that the Watergoat will remain in place at Ipswich Street until November. She noted that the patterns of distribution of floating trash in the Muddy River has changed significantly; this is an area of ongoing study.

MMOC Member Business:

- The Operations Subcommittee proposed that the MMOC office be relinquished and that all MMOC archival materials be moved to a storage facility. This will occur in winter 2024-25.
- Parker James presented a draft MMOC budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year. After discussion, the budget was approved unanimously.
- Following motion by Parker James and second by Freddie Veikley, minutes for the MMOC meeting for July 10, 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 7:40PM.