

Bare Hill Pond Watershed Management Committee

MEETING NOTES

Date: July 23, 2012, 7:30pm
Place: Hildreth House

Present

Members: Tom Gormley, Bruce Leicher (chair), Bob Blanck, Megan Glew, Paul Wood

Associates:

Others: Jaye Waldron (Cons Comm), Bill Johnson (BoS), Tom Cotton (Rowing Assoc.)

Mr. Leicher opened the meeting at 7:30pm.

Secretary's Report – Mr. Gormley

The committee reviewed the meeting minutes from the prior two monthly meetings (May and June). The *Motion to approve* was unanimous in favor.

Treasurer's Report

The committee reviewed the written Treasurer's report from Mr. von Loesecke (absent). No comments.

Pond Monitoring – Mr. Leicher

1. Morey Krause (Assoc. member) has been looking at turtles in the pond and will write up his observations. Mr. Leicher has been looking too early in the morning and not seeing many – evening is better.
2. Annual pond observations were taken by Wendy Gendron and several others from the committee and Cons Comm. Ms. Gendron will send a report. Ms. Gendron used various methods including underwater camera and secchi disk. Generally, we saw a variety of weeds, more cattails near the dam and wetlands, little or no water chestnut in Clapps Brook, and improved clarity (7' with secchi disk). Also two native weeds, nyttella and bladder wort, were seen in abundance.
3. Mr. Gormley noted there were no weeds at all visible via underwater camera in the deep area (17 feet) in the middle of the pond. He has seen milfoil or fanwort in this area in past years.
4. Mr. Wood has noticed weeds at the bottom hitting his feet, in his area of the shoreline.

Outreach – Mr. Gormley

1. After our pond monitoring visit, the committee and Ms. Gendron set up a table at the beach with weed samples and information to share with residents and others. Several beachgoers came to speak with us. Mr. Gormley spoke with several others at the beach and received feedback that pond committee work is appreciated. Specifically, they said they noticed the improvement in the swimming area due to the excavation of the beach bottom this past winter.
2. Based on the above, positive feedback, Mr. Gormley will talk with the Harvard Press about writing an article and perhaps interviewing residents' about their reaction to the beach excavation.

Drawdown Planning – Mr. Leicher

1. Mr. Leicher raised the timing and depth of this fall's drawdown for discussion, suggesting we might not need to go to 7 feet this year. Mr. Johnson said historically we've always gone to a minimum of 4 feet, but 5.5 to 6 feet has been more effective in controlling invasive weeds at the shore. The tradeoff on depth is essentially invasive weed elimination on the one hand, vs. the electricity cost of running the pump and the refill risk next spring (the deeper the drawdown, the more rain and snowmelt we need to refill).
2. Mr. Johnson said one motive for changing / reducing the depth this year is simply to continue learning through experimentation about the impacts of drawdown depth and other factors on the control of invasive weeds and the health of the pond and ecosystem. Our theory is more depth kills more weeds and is not negatively affecting the ecosystem, but if we can control weeds just as effectively with less depth it might help the pond and reduce our cost.
3. Mr. Wood said he's seen studies still reporting that drawdowns don't work, and suggested we might consider taking a year off completely. The committee asked him to share any data he has on this. Mr. Leicher said he would prefer changing slowly (to 6' or 5.5') rather than going to zero drawdown. An advantage of reducing the drawdown depth he said is it allows us to go to only 3' (vs. 3.5') depth by Oct. 31, favored by the Rowing Assoc. Mr. Johnson asked whether we need more data to support this year's recommendation, and Mr. Leicher responded that we seem to have more data than other towns have.
4. Mr. Wood reported on the drawdown activities of a couple of other Massachusetts ponds and lakes:
 - a. Indian Lake (Worcester) allows up to 8' and is viewed as effective in controlling weeds.
 - b. Otis Reservoir (Otis)
 - c. Lake Garfield only goes to 2-3' and is viewed as not very effective.
5. Mr. Cotton (Rowing) asked if we could delay going deeper than 2' until at least Oct. 15.
6. *Motion to begin this year's drawdown no earlier than 9/24, go to maximum depths of 1' by 10/1, 2' by 10/15, 2.5' by 10/24, and finally to 6' by November 30 or the first hard freeze.* This motion carried unanimously.

Stormwater Treatment (BMP-8) – Mr. Johnson

The committee discussed feedback on the proposed design of the BMP at the beach, as we're approaching construction this fall. Horsley Witten has completed construction drawings, specifications, procedures. Only bid boilerplate is remaining. So we're on schedule. NOI is filed.

1. Parks & Rec is strongly in favor of the project, although the beach parking manager is strongly against it.
2. Residents and others have expressed concern over the impact of reduced access for senior citizens who use the current parking for pond viewing. Mr. Leicher said this is already addressed in the design.
3. Concern over reduced parking in general and especially for power boat owners who will have to park their trailers at the high school lot. Mr. Leicher said the potential parking shortage (upper lot) is only an issue on weekends when boats can't park below anyway.
4. The proposed new treatment swale will replace either boat trailer parking or boat rack storage, so we think moving the power boat trailer parking is the best choice.

Weed Pulls – Mr. Blanck

1. We won't need any more weed pulls this summer. Rick Dickson said maybe 8-10 more hours total of individual hand pulling is all that's needed. No more harvesting is required.
2. We can encourage residents using the pond to continue pulling weeds if they see any. We could add this information to signage (with photos) at the beach.

Other

1. Mr. Leicher mentioned there have been multiple reports recently of boats travelling the wrong direction in the south bay (safety issue). Harbormaster needs to reinforce the rules. Perhaps better communication of the rules with boaters will help.
2. Someone has suggested capping or reducing the number of boat moorings to limit boat volume on the pond. This and #1 above are Parks & Rec issues.
3. Rich Nota (DPW) has expressed interested in selling the weed harvester. We recommend against that since the water chestnuts could still come back. Mr. Johnson said we (Pond Comm) should assert ownership of the harvester and said he would do so on our behalf. We need to protect it with covering and start it occasionally. Mr. Blanck will ask Mr. Dickson about doing that. We agreed to determine the cost for a cover before approving the funds to purchase one.
4. Speaking of the harvester, we agreed to work on including it in next year's Memorial Day parade, for outreach and fun.

The meeting was adjourned by proper motion at 9:10 PM.

Tom Gormley
Secretary

Documents Reviewed at this meeting:

1. Meeting agenda
2. Prior months' meeting minutes – May and June, 2012.