

Burlington Conservation Board

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*Matt Moore, Chair
Will Flender, Vice Chair
Scott Mapes
Don Meals
Jeff Severson
Miles Waite
Damon Lane
Doug Morin*



Conservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 1, 2012 – 5:30 pm
Planning & Zoning Conference Room – City Hall Lower Level
149 Church Street

Attendance

- **Board Members:** Matt Moore (MM), Will Flender (WF), Miles Waite (MW), Doug Morin (DFM), Damon Lane (DL)
- **Absent:** Don Meals (DM), Jeff Severson (JS), Scott Mapes (SM)
- **Public:** Dylan, Chris, Susan (UVM students) Ian Jewkes, Derek Reid (8 College St)
- **Staff:** Norm Baldwin (Public Works)

MM, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Minutes

Minutes of September 10, 2012

SM and JS noted several changes via email comment.

A MOTION was made by MM and SECONDED by MW:

Accept the minutes of September 10, 2012 as corrected.

Vote: 3-0-2

Board Comment

SG noted the Barge Canal trails project with UVM Rubenstein student is underway and will last through the semester.

MW said that he was asked to participate in a soils class. He suggested the section of bike path to be reconstructed through the Urban Reserve as a study site. The data collected by students would be used as screening data to fill in some of the gaps. Nick Warner at CEDO has okayed the student sampling activity.

Public Comment

None.

Open Space Subcommittee

MM said the group just met earlier today. They discussed transfer of agricultural restrictions (LWCF) from the McKenzie property to the Arms Grant property. Doing so makes the McKenzie parcel viable for agricultural use, likely by the Intervale Center. There may be a request to use BLCF monies to cover the appraisal costs associated with the transfer (conversion).

They also discussed the Burlington College property and planning for the North 40. There hasn't been much activity on the college's end for dealing with the pedestrian path. It makes sense to discuss this during their master planning process that is getting under way. In the mean time, MM would like to move forward with some interim planning efforts for the North 40. He'd like to convene a group to discuss ideas for this planning effort and to consider restrictions, maps, data gap analysis.

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SG noted Open Space Protection Plan update is underway. City staff have met with Amy Sheldon (consultant) several times and have outlined a work plan for the effort. We'll work to establish the webpage prior to the November Conservation Board meeting and before beginning outreach to the NPAs and other stakeholders. The Board requested that Ms. Sheldon be on next meeting agenda and then maybe quarterly after that.

MM asked about the status of the Ellis & Alles project on Ethan Allen Parkway. SG stated that the preliminary plat approval had expired since more than 1 year has passed but that the applicants appealed that determination to the DRB. He also noted that the applicants have also submitted a sketch plan application to start the review process over again.

Consent

1. 13-0261CA/CU: 11 Driftwood Ln (WRL, Ward 4) Brian Cotton

Construct new boulder seawall in front of existing concrete seawall

A MOTION was made by WF and SECONDED by MM

Recommend approval of the project as submitted.

Vote: 5-0-0

Project Review

1. 13-0282CA/MA: 8 College Street (RCO-RG, Ward 4) City of Burlington

Repairs and reinforcement of the existing recreation path north of Starr Farm Beach Road

Norm Baldwin, Ian Jewkes, and Derek Reid appeared on behalf of this item.

Norm Baldwin said that DPW is managing the city's lakeshore recovery projects along the bike path. The lake flooding of 2011 caused the shoring under the Northshore section of the bike path to fail. The bike path and the infrastructure under it are unstable as a result. The work is tied to FEMA funding.

Ian Jewkes overviewed the project plans. The undercutting caused by the flooding has resulted in slumping of the slope. The proposed solution is to armor the toe of the slope. Very large stone will be placed at the bottom with heavy rip rap above it. Some soil will be removed and replaced with fill stone for stability and drainage. Ian noted the presence of some endangered plant species on the beach (marsh horsetail). Some of the endangered plants will be transplanted nearby. A haul road will be installed for beach access. He noted the presence of wetlands. An endangered species permit is needed and a fee needs to be paid. A state wetlands permit is needed, as is an Army Corps permit.

WF, what's being done about the seepage situation along the bank? Mr. Jewkes replied that some soils will be removed and replaced with gravel for greater stability and permeability. WF, what will the work do to the path? Mr. Jewkes replied that a section of path will be used for construction access. When the work is done the path will be repaved. WF, why not improve this section of path as part of the project? Mr. Baldwin said it's due to limitations associated with the FEMA funds. It needs to be a replacement but not an upgrade.

MM asked about the haul road. Will it be temporary? Mr. Jewkes replied that it will remain in place but with gate-restricted access. Leaving it in place will provide maintenance access by authorized vehicles.

DFM asked if the endangered plants are growing amongst the rocks. Mr. Jewkes replied that they are. He questioned the appropriateness for public access to this spot. Mr. Jewkes noted that the rocks will remain in place. The rough, jagged surface will likely not receive much foot traffic.

MM asked about the EPSC plan. SG noted that Steve Roy approved it.

A MOTION was made by WF and SECONDED by MW.

Recommend approval of the project as proposed.

Discussion:

MM expressed concern about enabling public access to the area with the endangered plants. WF said that there's not much that can be done about avoiding this project; it needs to be done. The casual visitor is not going to spend much time on the rocky surface. Mr. Jewkes noted that it's much easier to walk around the rocks on the sandy beach when the water is low. He noted that Bob Popp at VT DEC has reviewed and okayed this project. He did not recommend any signage or other restrictions.

Vote: 5-0-0

2. 13-0289CA/CU: 60 Lake Street (UR, Ward 3) City of Burlington

Use area for temporary construction staging and access to Texaco beach during bike path repair project west of Lakeview Cemetery

Norm Baldwin appeared on behalf of this item.

Norm Baldwin noted that this project is associated with the bike path repair project along Lakeview Cemetery. The only viable access to the site is from the south. The proposed staging area has a hardened surface and will enable a relatively quick clean up at project's end. MM mentioned that Burlington College may own Texaco Beach. Norm replied that he's aware of that and has discussed it with the College. They are ok with allowing the access so long as the site is restored upon project completion.

DL, what's going to be stored onsite? Mr. Baldwin replied sand and large boulders.

MM, what's the project duration? Mr. Baldwin replied about 6 weeks. MM, what are the plans for safety? Mr. Baldwin replied that there would be an orange construction fence, signage, and a traffic control person for access across the bike path.

MM mentioned the need for planning for use of the urban reserve. It's currently viewed as a vacant site. He'd like to move forward with some serious planning for the North 40. This proposal is just another ad hoc temporary use.

Mr. Baldwin said that this is about enabling the repair and stabilization of the bike path – a significant recreational use for the city.

A MOTION was made by WF and SECONDED by DL:

Recommend approval of the project as proposed.

Vote: 5-0-0

Update & Discussion

1. University of Vermont PLACE program

Discussion of the Burlington Geographic Project with Walt Poleman

Professor Walt Poleman appeared on behalf of this item.

Prof. Poleman said he's here to provide an update of what's been happening since he initially met with the Board about a year ago. He'd like to get the Board's support as well for the ongoing initiatives. The project is called "Burlington Geographic." It is about helping students learn how to analyze landscapes and make recommendations. The goal is to interpret the unfolding story of a place over time. There is an effort to integrate the project with area schools as well. He noted the Burlington Geographic website.

Student websites associated with the project are integrated with the site. There is an emphasis on the human history, natural history, and ecology of the area. The spatial analysis lab is integral to this effort. Continuation of the effort is tied to the CCRPC's ECOS grant. The effort is looking to: gather oral histories (especially within the Intervale), continue research on the Burlington waterfront, conduct ecosystem services valuation mapping, and assess management of UVM natural areas within Burlington. He wants to build on the work done by students last semester on the Burlington landscape.

MM mentioned the North 40. He's looking to initiate a work group to start discussion of interim planning efforts for this area. Is this something that could work within the Place program? Prof. Poleman said the schedule is tied to the academic semester. MM noted the recreational and ecological components of the urban reserve.

MW suggested thinking about removal of the pilings and the naturalization of the shoreline. Is it even possible? The city has this area designated as deep water access. This could engage students in a real city project. What is the scope of work? How far could it go? What are the next steps? WF suggested that students could be engaged in developing baseline data for the area. What exactly is out there? This info would be hugely helpful in moving forward for future uses.

Prof. Poleman suggested checking out the Burlington Geographic website. He expressed interest in a North 40 grad student project for the spring semester. He'd like to get a letter of support from the Board for the ECOS grant application. The Board agreed.

Motion by MW, Seconded by DFM

For Board letter of support for ECOS grant application.

Vote: 5-0-0

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 PM.