



## 53 RIVER STREET MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

### MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 1, 2020

7:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

**Present:** David Martin, Stephanie Krantz, Peter Hocknell, Lou York, Bill Alesbury, Bill Klauer, Don Boyle, Ilana Liebert, Matthew ‘Selby’ (Staff).

**Absent:** None.

### 1. Opening

David Martin called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM via a virtual meeting with no committee members in physical attendance and broadcasted via Zoom.us virtual meeting platform.

### 2. Regular Business

A. A quorum is present.

B. Citizens’ Concerns – none.

C. Approval of the minutes from the 03 November 2020 committee meeting: Motion to accept made by Bill Alesbury and seconded by Lou York. Voting took place via role call:

Peter Hocknell – Aye

Bill Alesbury – Aye

David Martin – Aye

Stephanie Krantz – Aye

Ilana Liebert – Aye

Lou York – Aye

Bill Klauer – Aye

Don Boyle – Aye

D. Review of the dam’s Emergency Action Plan (EAP): Jim Murac from Milone & MacBroom (MMI) joined the call to provide an update to abutters and other interested parties. Particular attention was given to the inundation maps and differences between these and FEMA flood plain maps. Jim focused on the water depths and time it would take to reach each property following a potential dam breach. Bill Klauer asked who would keep an eye on the dam itself, given its relative remote location. Selby indicated



that, based on his previous experience from another town, the State would alert the Town during severe weather events to open the flood gates. It was then noted that since the 53 River Street dam is already “fully open” at this time, Selby was not sure whether State or Federal authorities would alert the Town further. David asked whether Town employees could perform this function. Selby indicated it was likely that the Town Fire and/or Police Departments could be called upon to assist. Jim pointed out that DPW Director Corey York is responsible to monitor the dam. Ilana asked who to call first in the case of a potential dam failure. According to the EAP, the answer is to contact the Town Manager first and then Corey York. Lou York asked whether the use of inexpensive motion detectors was a possibility. Jim has not been part of such a deployment; instead he offered that gauge monitoring (river depth) might be an option. Bill Klauer suggested abutters be placed on a Reverse 911 call list. Selby to speak to Mark Hald regarding that. David asked whether there is any impact of the flood plain on the MBTA commuter rail tracks? Jim responded this was not likely. David then asked whether it was worth performing a partial breach ahead of removing the dam. The Office of Dam Safety (ODS) regulates the dam when 6 feet or more of water backs up behind the dam during a flood event. Again, the 30” pipe and 24” pipe are already both fully open. The EAP calculations were performed with the 2 pipes assumed to be closed; this is required by ODS (a more conservative approach). Stephanie pointed out that the EAP is in place due to the dam’s state as of today; once the dam is removed, the EAP will no longer be needed.

**Public Comments:** Kendra Wilson asked whether there may be resistance to the dam removal plan, rather than replace or repair? David indicated the assumption is to remove the dam. Charles Rogers asked whether there are any negatives to removing the dam. Jim indicated there are not. Eric Ranvig asked whether the upstream Erikson dam has an EAP? Selby pointed out that it does, and the phone communication tree is similar. A breach of the Erikson dam was not mapped as part of this committee’s work, so the committee cannot speculate regarding that dam. Rob Hamilton suggested that if it was stated that the dam was never intended as a flood control device (as it was built for mill use), this may help allay fears of abutters. Bill Alesbury asked that once the dam is removed, what becomes of the EAP. Jim indicated it is essentially revoked; once the dam is gone, the “emergency” no longer exists.

- E. Archeology Study update: Gray & Pape Heritage Consultants submitted an application for a state archaeology permit from Massachusetts Historical Commission approximately 2 weeks ago. Selby indicated it typically takes 1 month to review the application. The firm should have the State permit then in the next 2 weeks. Weather permitting, work will commence at the site at that point. The archaeology study estimates roughly one month for field work. The office work portion of the project is underway.
- F. Draft CPA application review: This committee’s request for funding has been increased from \$75K to \$100K in order to provide some additional funding should questions and additional work be requested from the Historic District or Acton Historical Commissions.



We have \$120K of funding already designated for dam removal design and engineering; 1/3 of that has been used for archeological and historic preservation purposes. Bill Alesbury asked for a more definitive conclusion statement in the application.

- G. This committee's next meeting will take place virtually on January 5 at 7 pm.
- H. Motion to adjourn was made at 7:58 by Bill Klauer and seconded by Lou York. Voting took place via role call:
- Peter Hocknell – Aye
  - Bill Alesbury – Aye
  - David Martin – Aye
  - Stephanie Krantz – Aye
  - Ilana Liebert – Aye
  - Lou York – Aye
  - Bill Klauer – Aye
  - Don Boyle – Aye

**Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting:**

- Meeting Agenda for December 1, 2020
- Draft minutes from the November 3, 2020 committee meeting
- Draft 2021 CPA PROJECT APPLICATION 53 RIVER ST DAM REMOVAL
- Dam Emergency Action Plan
  - <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/Get/Document-70609/2019-12-30%20fnl%20rpt%20River%20St%20Dam%20EAP.pdf>