



53 RIVER STREET MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 10, 2021

7:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Present: David Martin, Peter Hocknell, Lou York, Bill Klauer, Bill Alesbury, Ilana Liebert, Stephanie Krantz, Bettina Abe (Staff).

Absent: Don Boyle.

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. 26 JUL 2021 sidewalk discussion: preliminary layout ideas were discussed, along with how best to tie into a potential park design. Next steps include having the town engineer continue to investigate options while also welcoming residents' feedback. Regarding the idea of changing River Street to a one-way traffic flow, the appropriate committee to contact is the town's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC).

C. Citizens' Concerns – David Honn suggests the town hire a professional project manager here, given the complexity of this project. Also inquired regarding that status of the Historic District Commission (HDC) building demolition permit.

D. Recent flooding concerns. Feedback from the committee and attendees:

- a. (Stephanie) why was the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) not activated, when water was flowing over top of dam? There was a ~12 hour delay between police at the dam and alerting of the neighbors. Why was a "Reverse 911 call" not utilized?
- b. (Lou) the EAP has 2 phases, watch phase & critical phase. Watch phase is what we're in if police are called to inspect the dam every hour or so. It was reported that the town notified the MBTA that "the dam is failing and could collapse today". The downstream portion of Fort Pond Brook ends at Lawsbrook Road. Suggests plan not being followed. Acton EMA knew nothing about this, thus



representing a failure on the part of town manager. David Martin suggested that it is unlikely the dam failure mode would occur in the middle of the dam. However, Lou rebutted with the fact we don't know the standards to which the dam was designed, given its age. Uplift pressure is a significant concern. Abutter Dan Stouch was out of state and reported that he was never notified of the threat. Lou also was not informed either.

- c. (Peter) This here is an example for the need to improve the town's response to future threats.
 - d. (Attendee Diana Hoganson) – recommended the need for continuous monitoring versus hourly. David Martin indicated the town's retained engineer stated that the dam was not at risk of collapse upon inspection.
 - e. (Lou) spoke with the management at the Parker Street apartments who indicated nothing regarding the dam situation was communicated to them.
 - f. (Abutter Dan Stouch) pointed out that an EAP isn't really tested until put in practice. Recommended that instead of the town reacting when a flood watch is posted, the town should instead monitor NOAA webpages covering the Assabet River watershed levels.
 - g. (Attendee Heather Sheehan) asked what is the plan moving forward. She was out of town during the incident and only found out via a home camera that police were at her house. The only advice the police could provide was to contact the fire marshal.
 - h. (Stephanie) asked whether we can decouple park design and dam removal to expedite the process. Peter seconded this sentiment.
- E. Grant process – \$75K dam seawall grant was received, from an original application amount of \$250K. The second application for up to \$1M in dam removal construction funding is still in process. Bill Dickinson (AHC) pointed out that the dam removal design is at 60% design stage. He has concerns with this design, such as with the raceway, etc. David Martin pointed out that he attended an AHC meeting earlier in the year and brought drawings to discuss this and that the AHC did not want to engage at that time re: dam removal.
- F. The Massachusetts Historic Commission (MHC) has asked for monitoring during dam removal. It is estimated this will cost approximately \$50K. Attendees were reminded the dam is under consent decree for removal, and that the state Office of Dam Safety (ODS) is pushing for this to be remedied.
- G. Ilana brought up the point that the 60% design keeps certain stone abutment aspects, even with the dam removed. During the site walk, Lou pointed out that the archeologists stated that adverse effects “can be mitigated by signage”. Bill Dickinson stated that “safety is #1” and invited David Martin to attend the AHC meeting tomorrow night to discuss this further.



- H. Abutter Dan Stouch asked that given the dam has been deemed a high hazard, is there legal recourse should it fail? David Martin reports that he does not know.
- I. Approval of the minutes from the 18 May 2021 committee meeting: Motion to accept made by Lou York and seconded by Bill Klauer. Voting took place via role call:
Peter Hocknell – Aye
David Martin – Aye
Lou York – Aye
Bill Klauer – Aye
Bill Alesbury – Aye
Ilana Liebert – Aye
Stephanie Krantz – Aye
- J. The committee agreed that the “virtual meeting” format via Zoom (or other) will continue for now, given the prevalence of the SARS-CoV-2 delta variant.
- K. Bettina Abe will help guide the committee in Selby’s absence for now.
- L. This committee’s next meeting will take place virtually on 21 SEP 2021 at 7 pm.
- M. Motion to adjourn was made at 8:45 by Lou York and seconded by Bill Alesbury. Voting took place via role call:
Peter Hocknell – Aye
Lou York – Aye
Bill Klauer – Aye
Bill Alesbury – Aye
David Martin – Aye
Ilana Liebert – Aye
Stephanie Krantz – Aye

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting:

- Meeting Agenda for August 10, 2021
- Draft minutes from the May 18, 2021 committee meeting
- MHC letter 7.6.2021
- 20-87501.001 Acton River Street Report V1