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## Conservation Commission Minutes 09/17/2009

Arlington Conservation Commission  
Minutes  
September 17, 2009

Mr. White called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. in the second floor conference room of the Town Hall Annex. Present were Charles Tirone, William O'Rourke, David White, Ellen Reed of the Commission and Brian Thomas, associate member. Nathaniel Stevens, Ezra Benjamin and Catherine Garnett and of the Commission were not in attendance. Also present were Gerry Smith, Steve Ricci, Vic Carpenter, Catherine Carpenter, Joey Glushko, Jack Hurd, Dale Hurd, Luana Preson, Jacob Friis, John McKenna, Dan Purcels, Brad Barber, Elizabeth Karpati, Bill Eykamp and Margo Cooper.

7:45 pm – Commission Business

8pm – **Notice of Intent** –Spy Pond Phragmites removal

The DEP issued a file number, #91-208 for this work and it is still under review by Gary Bogue.

Mr. Ricci of the Spy Pond Committee of Vision 2020 gave an overview of the proposal. There are many locations of the plant colonies with the two largest patches at Elizabeth Island and Kelwyn Manor Park. The proponents held a large meeting of abutters to the pond and garnered much public support for this work. They have also set up a donation fund and financial support is coming in.

Mr. Barber described the hunt for an appropriate treatment method and consideration of other means, like mechanical removal only keeps the plants short while the bulk of the plant mass is in the root system. The European phenotype of this plant is characterized by being taller than the native one. In many locations the Phragmites at Spy Pond is 12-14 feet tall and in some locations it is taller.

This permit application is asking for only water-based plants to be treated this coming October.

A future step in removing all Phragmites would involve the abutting homeowners applying for treating the land-based plants and that work would include replanting these areas with native plant species.

The spray treatment is 85-90% effective at removing the currently growing Phragmites. The same plants would be mowed during the winter to remove the plant materials and give better access to the roots for a spray treatment next season. The winter-time gives access to the plants over the ice.

The Natural Heritage program was notified of this work and their reviewer will provide conditions to restrict spraying in areas near the endangered sedge. There might be only 4-5 locations that are within 10 meters of the sedge. It may also be required to have a botanist on site during the spray operation.

Mr. Smith described the methods of spray that are used by land or water via boat. From shore, a ladder is used from a truck and a third person views the operation from the side in order to look for drift. This might be the method used at Kelwyn Manor. From a boat, a backpack sprayer is used for closer work of 1-3 feet.

Glyphosate is the herbicide used on Phragmites, and Mr. Smith uses specifically Aquapro by Cepro. A surfactant (detergent) is added to allow the herbicide to stick to the plant and penetrate the cells. The plants can be sprayed up to the first frost. If the plants are dying back, the treatment cannot be done. There can be no rain within 6 hours of treatment and no wind. There is 95% efficacy with this herbicide. A replanting plan should be designed later since plants will regrow on their own.

Ms. Reed asked how the plant material will be disposed of. Mr. Smith answered that the stalks can be cut with hedge trimmers. The DPW could possibly be involved with this work along with volunteers.

Mr. Tirone asked how it would be defined what plants are in the water and how the boundary is determined. He also asked how the overspray is controlled.

Mr. Ricci clarified that only the water-based plants would be treated this fall with permission from the Commission and the Natural Heritage Program. The extensive notes and photos taken on individual plant colonies will help determine how much Phragmites is growing on the shore of properties.

Ms. Reed asked for a planting plan to be in place before this work is permitted. There seemed to be agreement from the Commission that the removal of only the water-based Phragmites did not require a replanting plan. The spring high water mark will be the limit of work.

Mr. Barber explained that the Natural Heritage program will issue a permit for all the treatments together.

Mr. Smith responded to the overspray questions by explaining that a third person watches during use of the spray boom and the backpack application is just a few feet away from the applicator. Alternatively, very tall flags/poles could be utilized to mark the edge of water but this would be very labor intensive and was not recommended.

Someone asked if future outbreaks would be treated. The standard permit is valid for three years.

The Commission would have a condition of approval that a map of the Phragmites colonies be produced each season for that year's next treatment.

Mr. Eykamp stated that it is obvious where the land boundary is when you are in the stands. The plants become denser and drier. The plant stand at Elizabeth Island is also much thicker and denser. The Commission would look to having cattails replanted in these areas in the future.

Ms. Reed and Mr. Tirone want a winter cutting disposal plan. The Spy Pond Committee would organize the volunteer effort and coordination with Arlington DPW. The plant materials could be picked up by Arlington DPW and then transported to the Lexington composting facility.

Mr. Smith suggested that the method of determining the boundary of the land from the water-based plants could be shown on an enlarged ortho-photo of the Kelwyn Manor Park plant stand showing a line demarking the treatment boundary. Mr. O'Rourke asked if this would be field checked, but Mr. Smith didn't think this would be necessary. The Commission would ask for this photo as a condition of the permit.

The Commission would also condition the plant disposal plan to provide for an environmentally responsible method, either via composting or incineration and to report this back to the Commission.

Mr. Friis asked if the cut Phragmites could just be placed on shore to decompose. The problem is that piles of plant matter do not readily decompose before the next growing season. The plants removed in the winter-time from both Kelwyn Manor and Elizabeth Island could be stored at Kelwyn Manor Park until the DPW could pick them up for removal. This should be done by April 1.

The Commission will condition the permit to include all restrictions imposed by the Natural Heritage program.

Ms. Beckwith asked if any of the attendees of the hearing had any negative comments for the proposal. There was no response to this inquiry.

O'Rourke/Reed motioned to close the hearing; motion passed unanimously.

O'Rourke/Tirone motioned to approve the plan for three years with the above-stated conditions; motion passed unanimously.

Commission Business (cont.)

White/Reed motioned to issue the Certificate of Compliance to **46 Pond Lane** (DEP File No. 91-199); motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 10pm.  
Respectfully submitted,  
Corinna Beckwith  
Administrator