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Conservation Commission Minutes, May 5, 2005

ARLINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

MAY 5, 2005

Mr. Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the second floor conference room of the Town Hall Annex. Present were Nathaniel Stevens, David White, Catherine Garnett, Ellen Reed, and William O'Rourke of the Commission. Timothy Sullivan and Judith Hodges of the Commission were absent. Anne and Philip Thompson of 14 Cottage Ave were present, as were Richard and Laura Kelly and another neighbor on Henderson St.

7:30 p.m. - COMMISSION BUSINESS

Tom Reilly has completed the section of stairs at Window on the Mystic and sent a photo of his work to the Commission. The Commission discussed the need for a permit that includes design details if he wants to do shoreline stabilization in front of the bench.

O'Rourke/Reed motioned to approve the 4/7 and 4/28 minutes as drafted; motion passed unanimously.

7:45pm 14 COTTAGE AVE - NOTICE OF INTENT for demolition and construction of a single family house adjacent to Alewife Brook

Mr. Stevens read the public notice and asked the Thompsons to present their proposed house design project to tear down and rebuild their house. Mr. Thompson explained that the existing house has been condemned for any new work due to structural deficiencies, and must be totally rebuilt per the engineer's inspection report included in the application materials.

The Commission held a site visit on April 27 to view the lot and the proposed building outline was staked out at that time. The visit brought up some questions for the Commission; what were the actual elevations of the lot, were the setbacks consistent with zoning bylaws (to see if a variance had to be applied for), would the large silver maple to the rear of the lot survive the construction work, could the garage be converted to a carport.

Mrs. Thompson discussed that they got an estimate for having the lot surveyed for elevation and found the cost prohibitive since finding a benchmark was going to be difficult, maybe having to go to Mass Ave. The setbacks are all consistent with those for a rear lot, as they do not have any street frontage.

Ms. Beckwith asked Ms. Garnett if the large silver maple would be jeopardized by the construction of the house within the root zone. Ms. Garnett explained that this is going to be an additional stress on the tree but that most of its roots are probably going towards Alewife Brook since this is a thirsty species. Trees can survive with up to 50% of their root zones paved over or cut through.

The Commission discussed the need for accurate survey and the imminent change of the FEMA 100-year flood levels, rumored to be up to 2.4 feet higher further upstream at the former Arthur D. Little site. If the garage (which is the most of the increasing footprint of the house) were redesigned to accept flood flows, by containing flood openings and not having the slab any higher than the existing ground surface, then the applicants would not need to survey the lot.

The Thompsons seemed amenable/agreed to consider to this design change. Mr. Stevens asked that they also supplement their Notice of Intent with prepare a written alternatives analysis since the building project is getting closer in the Riverfront Area to Alewife Brook. The Thompsons explained that the location of the garage was designed to line up with the driveway. Mrs. Thompson said she would prepare this narrative for the Commission with some guidance from the administrator.

OTHER COMMISSION BUSINESS-

22 Nourse Street – Commission members have observed from the Minuteman Bikepath that the erosion control fencing has not been maintained and has lots of material behind it and more than likely will fail, resulting in sediment being deposited in Geri's Brook. The Commission decided to contact the Applicant to remind them of their responsibility under their permit to maintain the erosion control at all times.

110-120 Lowell Street – Within the past two weeks, site work began with the clearing of the site of all buildings and vegetation, however, siltation fencing was not installed prior to work commencing, in violation of the permit. The Commission decided to contact the Applicant to remind them of their responsibility under their permit to establish the erosion control measures.

Enforcements:

335 Mystic St -

Enforcement issued 4/1/05.

Response 4/4/05 to submit plans by 4/25/05

Enforcement reissued 4/7/05 with revised planting deadline of 5/19/05

Planting plan received 4/25/05, presented to Commission on 4/28/05. The Commission discussed the use of Nishiki Willow and Sparkle Berry tree, and the need for the genus species of these plants.

Dudley St –site visit required

17 Mill St – the property is also sweeping sand down the embankment next to Mill Brook. Mr. Stevens and Ms. Garnett will coordinate to communicate with the property manager.

The Commission voted to convene at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Corinna Beckwith