

Puffer's Pond 2020 Committee
MINUTES
Thursday, April 1, 2010
Town Room, Town Hall
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: E. Hamin, J. Pistrang, J. Patulak, A. Hayden, B. Angus, E. Jones, P. Muska, M. Sharma, E. Shopper, M. Gage

Staff: N. Malloy, D. Ziomek

Public: Sam Bell (Amherst College), Cianna Wyshnytzky (Amherst College), Alex Coburn (Amherst College), Will Ouimet (Amherst College)

Minutes

A. Hayden moved to accept the meeting minutes from March 3, 2010. E. Jones seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted unanimously. All minutes should note who submitted them.

March 11th UMASS Student Presentations

The PowerPoint presentations from the March 11, 2010 studio presentation meeting need to be compressed. N. Malloy will distribute the presentations to the Committee.

The Committee wants to highlight things we like from the student presentations. It was also interesting to note the problems for which the students did not have solutions. The next Committee meeting scheduled for April 15th will start at 6:30 pm with an optional look at the student presentations. The regular meeting will start at 7 pm.

Future Meetings

The following meeting dates are set: 4/15, 5/6, 5/20. The Committee will make a presentation to the Conservation Commission at the end of April.

Amherst College Student Presentations

Students Sam Bell, Cianna Wyshnytsky, and Alex Coburn and Professor Will Ouimet from Amherst College presented the results of research regarding Puffer's Pond sediment analysis and bathymetry. The Committee had a discussion about a layer of mulch that was encountered during the sediment plug analyses. Based on the results of the bathymetry analysis, it will take approximately 24 years for the pond to fill to 1985 levels at current sedimentation rates. This is a comparatively high rate of sedimentation. More intense weather events related to climate change will likely increase the rate and volume of sediment deposition. It appears that the sediment trap installed when the pond was last dredged functioned as built for approximately 9 years.

Next Steps for Committee

The Committee discussed next steps related to developing recommendations and a report to the Conservation Commission.

E. Hamin suggested that someone or a small group draft the report, which will outline alternatives for major decision points based on discussions to date, and then the Committee will take a final vote on recommendations. There was discussion that the report might just outline alternatives and discuss impacts/results of various measures without actually identifying recommendations. The group agreed however that the Conservation Commission requested specific recommendations from the Committee. The report should provide supporting narrative and justification for the recommendations that are presented. If the Committee's vote on a particular recommendation is not unanimous, the report will present alternative recommendations.

The Committee then used the "scenarios" table to highlight major decision points that have not yet been resolved. The summary of this discussion and outstanding decisions (noted with a ★) are presented below.

Beavers

The Committee agrees that trees should be wrapped, deterrent vegetation should be planted, and that the beaver population should be managed. There is general consensus that excessive beaver activity degrades the pond, and that the effectiveness of management techniques should be continuously evaluated.

Dredging

The Committee agrees that the pond should be dredged and the silt trap maintained. It will be good to use the information from the Amherst College student presentations to justify the dredging. The Committee would like an executive summary of the student presentations for insertion into the report.

Perimeter Trail/Lester Trail

★ The Committee needs to decide whether the Perimeter Trail should be relocated. There is general consensus that the trail should be redirected in the most critical areas, but should the trail stay on the pond's edge or should it be moved higher? Could the trail just be repaired?

Shoreline

The Committee agrees that the pond shoreline should be re-vegetated, and that good signage should be installed directing users to appropriate areas and designating non-access areas.

Parking

The Committee agrees that 60 to 80 parking spaces are needed; 30 at State Street and 50 at the North Beach. We need safe pedestrian access from the parking areas to the pond. The Committee agrees that the actual placement and design of parking requires much more study, design, and permitting. The Committee will make suggestions about parking, but it is outside the scope of the Committee to actually make design recommendations. The Committee wants impermeable pavement. The parking needs to be located in an area that is permissible.

State Street

★ The Committee agrees that State Street should be one-way or closed, but this warrants more discussion before specific recommendations are made.

Fees

★ Specific recommendations regarding fees require further discussion.

Bicycle/Bus Access

The Committee will make recommendations to maintain the bus routes to the pond. There was also discussion about recommending increasing the frequency of service or the proximity of routes.

The Committee will recommend that nicer bike racks get installed.

Lifeguards

The Committee will not recommend that lifeguards be present at the pond.

South Beach

The Committee agrees that the South Beach should remain as the primary beach. The Committee agrees that the durability of the beach should be improved and maintained.

North Beach

★ Further discussion is required regarding how much development the Committee wants to recommend at the North Beach. The Committee agrees that the North Beach should be made more attractive but there is not yet consensus on the amount of use.

Dam Safety

★ Further discussion is required regarding installation of observation points at the dam. There is consensus that buoys should be installed to improve safety for swimmers in proximity to the dam. The buoys could be installed seasonally.

Mill Street Bridge

★ Further discussion is required regarding a pedestrian path or bridge at the Mill Street bridge.

Restrooms/Trash

The Committee agrees that bathroom and trash facilities are needed, and that the report should just list types of facilities that could be installed. There is consensus that bathrooms and trash should be near formal parking areas.

Picnicking

The Committee agrees that no formal picnicking, BBQs, or fires should be allowed at the site.

Commercial Enterprises

The Committee agrees that any proposed commercial enterprises require permission from the Conservation Commission.

Invasive Species

The Committee agrees that there should be strong efforts to remove invasive species from the pond and Conservation area.

Enforcement of Regulations

The Committee agrees that existing regulations should be enforced.

General Maintenance

The Committee agrees that general maintenance should be funded and supported.

Dog Policy

★ This is not on the “scenarios” table, but the Committee agreed that the existing dog policy needs to be discussed.

Report

Using the minutes from this meeting, E. Hamin agreed to draft an outline of the report. The remaining decisions will be voted upon at the next meeting. The sub-committees can begin to draft supporting documentation/narrative that will be inserted into the report.

M. Gage is going to document ideas about Puffer’s Pond that aren’t physical issues, i.e. attitudes, educational opportunities, messaging and communication. This will become part of the Committee’s report.

The Committee discussed various items to be appended to the report, including the LARP Studio presentations, the Amherst College bathymetry/sedimentation presentations, and Town Counsel's letter regarding liability.

Submitted by B. Angus.