

Town of Dedham
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

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WIGWAM POND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 16th, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Zoom and Dedham Town Hall

450 Washington Street

Dedham, MA 02026

- Present:** Jim Maher - Open Space & Recreation
Erik DeAvila - Conservation Commission (via Zoom)
Lisa Farnham - Parks & Recreation
Rebecca Bachand - At-Large
Gail Coughlin - At-Large
Anthony Morganelli - At-Large
Finbar Heaslip - Student
Susie Plunkett – Student (via Zoom)
Ex-Officio - Joe Flanagan, Department of Public Works
- Regrets:** Dennis Teehan – Select Board
Jay O'Brien - Planning Board
Ruth Helfeld - At-Large
- Staff:** Michelle Tinger - Senior Planner
Jayson Schultz - Economic Development Planner

The Town of Dedham's Wigwam Pond Advisory Committee met at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 16th, 2023, via remote participation and in person. Members of the public were advised that they could access the hybrid meeting:

1. Virtually through the Zoom software program, details of which were given on the agenda and the town website prior to the meeting. Secondly, members of the public can participate via conference call by dialing toll-free, **1-646-558-8656**. The meeting ID is **897 4594 1799** and the passcode was **149800**.
2. Town Hall, Room 302, 450 Washington Street, Dedham, MA 02026

Recordings of this meeting have been made public and are available on the Town website.

Ms. Tinger called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Wigwam Pond Advisory Committee.

Chair & Vice Chair—Potential Discussion and/or Vote

At the November 21st, 2022 meeting, the group discussed the possible election of a Committee Chair and Vice Chair. Ms. Tinger opened the floor for the discussion, noting that the Committee will meet two additional times before the end of the project.

Because the Committee will provide recommendations to the Planning Board, Mr. Maher feels the election of a Chair and Vice Chair are important. He is concerned the Board may challenge recommendations if there is not an elected Committee Chair or Vice Chair.

Mr. Maher requested that Ms. Tinger call for a vote on Committee Chair.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Heaslip and seconded by Mr. Morganelli, Mr. Maher was voted to serve as the Wigwam Pond Advisory Committee Chair. All members were in agreed, the motion passed unanimously.

As the newly elected Chair, Mr. Maher inquired about nominations or volunteers for Vice Chair. He clarified that services of the Vice Chair would only be needed in the absence of the Chair.

Mr. Morganelli volunteered for the role of the Vice Chair. Upon a motion made by Ms. Farnham and seconded by Ms. Plunkett, Mr. Morganelli was voted to serve as the Wigwam Advisory Committee Vice Chair. All members were in agreed, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Maher and Mr. Morganelli will work with Ms. Tinger to plan the next Committee meeting. The Committee was reminded to follow Open Meeting Laws in their correspondences.

Community Meeting 1 Recap (Town/VHB)

Ms. Tinger opened the floor for a discussion about the first hybrid Wigwam Pond Community Meeting. She requested feedback about the meeting format, participant engagement, and improvements for the next meeting.

Committee member comments included:

- The open meeting/breakout group format seemed well received by participants.
- There was strong participant turnout for the holiday season.
- There were great conversations in the breakout groups.

- The Consultants found discussions with residents informational and beneficial; they commended Ms. Tinger and her team for the work planning and organizing the meeting.

There were concerns/questions raised by the community:

- Neighborhood residents concern about potential points of access.
- A fair number of survey participants would like the Pond left alone.
- Parking.
- Clarification on the correct pronunciation of the Pond. Ms. Tinger would like to invite Ms. Elizabeth Solomon to the next Committee meeting to discuss this and start building relationships.

Watershed Report (TRC)

The Town hired TRC to conduct a survey of the Pond and develop a Watershed Management Plan. Matt Ladewig, a Certified Lake Manager with TRC, shared the survey findings.

TRC conducted mapping, water quality sampling, sediment sampling, and the characterization of other biological resources in the Pond.

Most of the pond is less than 6 feet deep and aquatic plants are present in dense beds in most of the pond. Shallow conditions and nutrient rich water can lead to significant plant growth. Invasive plants (including fanwort, Eurasian milfoil, and common reeds) are an issue; native water lilies grow at nuisance levels in some areas.

TRC conducted water quality assessments in two areas, including in-pond and in the watershed. Of particular concern in both areas is the high specific conductance. Specific conductance is the level of dissolved salts in a pond; most often levels are in the hundreds; however, Wigwam Pond has levels in the thousands. This indicates that there are a lot of dissolved salts that have accumulated in the system. The dissolved salts are pollutants and may be indicative that other harmful things are also getting into the pond.

The dissolved oxygen level in the pond is also of concern. The level was below 5 ml; if the dissolved oxygen levels fall too much lower it can cause a fish kill and stress to the system.

What can be done improve?

- Aquatic Plant Management-Herbicides (Soar and Clipper to target fanwort and milfoil), herbicide spot treatments for lilies, and diver harvesting for submerged plants;
- Emergent Plant Management-Herbicide spot treatments with Clearcast, cutting to enhance control;
- Water Quality-Nutrient inactivation, maintenance of existing stormwater infrastructure, new watershed controls;
- Excessive Algae-As needed algaecide treatment;
- Monitoring;
- Public Outreach.

The Committee discussed the findings of TRC's Watershed Report.

Presentation (VHB)

Mr. Ken Schwartz reported that VHB will return to the next Committee meeting. A second Community meeting will then be scheduled to share plans with residents, incorporate their feedback, and finalize the plans. Ms. Tinger commented she would like to provide all committee members with the opportunity to be involved with the next Community meeting.

Community Meeting 1 & Feedback Survey Results

Ms. Julia Mintz provided an overview of the survey. The online survey was open to the public in January 2023 and posed the same questions that were asked at the Community meeting. We received 142 responses and all data was collected anonymously.

Stakeholder Outreach

Stakeholder Outreach was completed to the Trustees of Reservations, Dedham Land Trust, Nordblom Company, and the Dedham Historical Society.

Site Visit Data and Analysis

Zone 1 is located on the west side of pond near the big box retail stores, Zone 2 is located on the south side of the pond near the ballfields and Legacy Place, and Zone 3 is located on the east side of the pond in a residential area. Challenges in all three Zones include existing development and property rights, traffic, wetlands, overdevelopment, connectivity, cost, invasive species, disruption of habitats, community support, safety, parking, maintenance, pollution, funding, lack of walkability, and lack of access.

Key Takeaways from the Community Survey:

- Half of respondents have never been to Wigwam Pond
- Zone 1: Emphasis on site access improvement
- Zone 2: Emphasis on walkability and connectivity
- Zone 3: Significant opposition to site improvements due to proximity of adjacent residential neighborhood
- Significant number of respondents who want the pond left as is (across all 3 zones)

Three Conceptual Designs

Mr. Schwartz presented three conceptual designs:

- 'Pond Walk' Loop Trail-Complete circuit path/boardwalk around pond and provide stopping points for viewing and fishing;
- Pond Access Points-Add direct access points at strategic locations;
- Trail Connections-Trail access to Wigwam Pond as part of larger town trail/pedestrian connectivity, access to pond off linear path/boardwalk on one side of pond, connections to parks and school to the north and parks and train station to the south.

The proposed concept improvements have three overarching themes including the improvement of water quality and implementation of pond/wetland vegetation

management, ecological improvements, and potential for public/private pond access/trail at new development sites on southern and western pond edge.

The Committee discussed the pros and cons of the three concepts. They also discussed the potential for federal grant funding and transportation/MBTA related funding through the state to aid in the improvement of pond water quality and conditions. There is also the possibility of private investors and/or developers working on the Stergis and Quabish providing funds to clean the pond and develop recreational outlets, which would increase the value of their properties.

Overall, the Watershed Management Plans include:

- Improving pond water quality;
- Vegetation management/control invasive plants-required to slow the pond from turning into a wetland;
- Nutrient inactivation-cost effective method to reduce excessive algae growth;
- Watershed controls;
- Stormwater controls-sustain water quality improvements in the pond.

Options can be implemented while maintaining the ecological safety of the pond.

The Committee agreed that Concept 3 is a prudent first step.

Mr. Maher requested that VHB provide Committee members with fuller scale concept plans drawing so it is more easily legible. Mr. Schwartz will send a full-size electronic file to Committee members, which will allow them to zoom in on specific areas. Ms. Tinger added the Planning Department has a plotter printer and can print a larger scale drawing if requested.

Ms. Farnham asked for data on the total mileage for the walking paths and details about what would be involved with the construction of a canoe/kayak/boat launch. Mr. Schwartz encouraged Committee members to visit the town landing behind the community house and look at the dock, which is similar to what would be at Wigwam.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the November 21st meeting were unanimously approved.

Next Steps (Town/VHB)

Ms. Tinger requested member feedback about next steps they would like to take as an Advisory Committee. If they feel comfortable doing so, Ms. Tinger would like to see Committee members take a leadership role at the next Community meeting. For example, guiding discussion in a breakout room or answering questions raised by participants.

The Committee discussed scheduling for the next Committee meeting. Members in attendance confirmed that March 20th is convenient; Ms. Tinger will contact members not in attendance to confirm this date works for them as well.

Ms. Coughlin will contact Ms. Solomon again to confirm her availability to attend the next Committee meeting. At this meeting Mr. Maher would like to look at the possibility of renaming the pond and any history or information we can learn from Ms. Soloman that could impact recommendations to the Planning Board.

Lastly, Ms. Tinger confirmed she is drafting a letter to Representative McMurtry thanking for him the funding he secured for Wigwam Pond. When the draft is complete she will share with the Committee for their feedback.