

**Town of Dedham**  
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

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**WIGWAM POND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES (DRAFT)**  
**March 20th, 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  
Lisa Farnham - Parks & Recreation  
Rebecca Bachand - At-Large  
Gail Coughlin - At-Large (Zoom)  
Anthony Morganelli - At-Large  
Finbar Heaslip - Student  
Susie Plunkett - Student  
Dennis Teehan - Select Board (Zoom)  
Jay O'Brien - Planning Board  
Ruth Helfeld - At-Large
- Regrets:** Ex-Officio - Joe Flanagan, Department of Public Works
- Staff:** Michelle Tinger - Senior Planner

The Town of Dedham's Wigwam Pond Advisory Committee met at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 20th, 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 **826 8005 7400** and the passcode was **887662**.
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.

Mr. Maher called the meeting to order and conducted roll call.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Tinger welcomed the group to the third Advisory Committee meeting. She opened the floor to public comment, and there was none.

### **Consultant Presentation/Conceptual Designs**

Mr. Shwartz from VHB shared the agenda for the evening's presentation and provided the Committee with an updated schedule on the project's timeline. VHB is approximately three quarters of the way through the project. Next steps include the refinement of the preferred concept plan; the next Advisory Committee meeting will be held on June 13<sup>th</sup> to review the preferred plan. VHB will then prepare cost estimates and a full report with recommendations that will be completed this summer.

Mr. Shwartz shared key takeaways from the Watershed Management Plan. All options can be implemented while maintaining the safety of the Pond ecology.

- Improvement of water quality for use and enjoyment of the Pond.
- Primary recommendations are vegetation management/control of invasive plants, nutrient inactivation, and watershed controls.
- The implementation of stormwater controls to improve stormwater runoff quality.

The Committee discussed these takeaways and next steps. Mr. Maher commented it will take the collaborative efforts of several Town Boards to create an impact to Wigwam Pond. As a first step, he would like this Committee to make a strong recommendation and proposal to the Planning Board.

Mr. Shwartz reviewed the project objectives such as providing safe and enjoyable recreational opportunities, allowing the community to engage with the natural environment, protecting wildlife habitats, minimizing ecological impacts, establishing maintenance requirements, creating accessible trails, highlighting the scenic and ecological features of Wigwam Pond, and grant funding.

Mr. Heaslip noted that the overflow with plants makes the Pond good for good fishing. He expressed concerns about dredging, specifically that it will disrupt fish habitats.

Ms. Mintz provided a brief overview of key takeaways from the community surveys:

- Zone 1: Emphasis on site access improvements
- Zone 2: Emphasis on walkability and connectivity
- Zone 3: Opposition to site improvements due to proximity to adjacent residential neighborhood
- Half of the respondents have never been to Wigwam Pond
- There were a number of residents across all three districts that would like to see the Pond left as is.

Mr. Kluchman reviewed the three concept improvements that were discussed at the last Committee meeting.

- 'Pond Walk' Loop Trail-Complete circuit path/boardwalk around the Pond and provide stopping points for viewing and fishing.
- Pond Access Points-Add direct access points at strategic locations, boat launches, fishing platform.
- Trail Connections-Trail access to Wigwam Pond as part of larger town trail/pedestrian connectivity, access to the 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 concept improvements share 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.

Mr. Kluchman presented the Compiled Concept Plan, which is similar to Concept 3. It was noted that public parking is sparse; much of the potential parking areas are privately owned, which opens the possibility for partnerships. Improvements in the Compiled Concept Plan include:

- Improve water quality and vegetation management
- Ecological improvements
- Potential for public/private pond access/trail at new development sites on southern and western pond edge
- Trail access as part of larger town train/pedestrian connectivity
- Access to pond off linear path/boardwalk on one side
- Connections to parks and school to the north and parks to the south
- Add direct access points at strategic locations
- Boat launches and fishing/viewing platforms
- Complete circuit path/boardwalk around the pond
- Stopping points for viewing/fishing

The Committee discussed the proposed development on Stergis Way and how it could impact plans for the Pond. Ms. Tinger noted the road on Stergis Way is in disrepair and there is discussion among the developers about how to fix. Mr. O'Brien added that road repairs and development on Stergis Way will increase runoff into the Pond. Dedham residents (in particular the abutters) need to be notified that the plans for Wigwam Pond is a long-term project with the goal of returning the Pond to a more natural state.

VHB facilitated a group discussion to identify a preferred design concept for presentation at the next Community Meeting. The Committee discussed all of the plans, including pros, cons, cost, conservation impacts, and other topics. There are projects considered 'low hanging fruit' that can be completed quickly to help gain resident support. For example, restoration of the existing boat launch, cutting back of the phragmites, and addition of on-site signage to educate the public about the long-term restoration plans for the Pond.

Mr. Teehan thanked the Committee for meeting tonight. He stated there are two factors that could result create a challenge when making decisions: the potential cost and the response from the residential abutters. Mr. Teehan noted it is important to him to improve the environmental health of the Pond, ecosystem, and overall environment. He added that an emphasis on the environment will be advantageous when applying for grant funding.

Mr. Shwartz can develop a conceptual phasing plan for items in the Compiled Concept Plan.

- Near term is 3-5 years
- Mid-term is 5-10 years
- Long term-beyond 10 years

On a motion made by Mr. DeAvila and seconded by Ms. Farnham, the Committee voted to present the Compiled Concept Plan at the next Community Meeting. A roll call vote was conducted, and motion passed unanimously.

### **Community Meeting #2**

Ms. Tinger confirmed that the next hybrid Community Meeting is scheduled for April 29<sup>th</sup> from 10-12. The meeting will be held at one of Dedham's schools; the location is subject to space availability and technology capabilities. Ms. Tinger will notify the Committee when a space has been identified.

Ms. Tinger added that she would like to have Advisory Committee members take an active role in this meeting. For example, facilitating group discussions, taking notes, and/or listening to feedback from participants. Ms. Tinger and VHB will draft 'job descriptions' and talking points for members to ensure they feel comfortable participating. Mr. Maher requested a call with Mr. Morganelli and Ms. Tinger to discuss these roles.

### **Meeting Minutes**

On a motion from Mr. Morganelli and seconded by Mr. DeAvila, the minutes from the February 16, 2023 meeting be approved. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Next Steps**

VHB shared case studies and asked that Committee members visit some of the locations presented before the Community Meeting. On these visits, members are encouraged to focus on items covered in the conceptual designs and take photos.

Ms. Tinger will provide Committee members with another copy of the list.

It was noted that the next Committee Meeting is scheduled for June 13<sup>th</sup> and will be hybrid meeting.