

**Danvers River Committee**  
**Thursday, April 19, 2018**  
**Meeting Minutes**

The Danvers River Committee held a public meeting on Thursday, April 19, 2018 Daniel J. Toomey Hearing Room, Danvers Town Hall, at 6:00pm.

**Member(s) present:** Aileen L'Abbe, Chairwoman  
Bill Fouhey  
Joan George  
Dan DeLorenzo  
Bob Moore  
Louie George  
Gardner Trask, Selectman Liaison

**Member(s) absent:** Matthew Byrne

**Staff Present:** Christopher Sanborn, Harbormaster  
Carolann Powers, Secretary

**Media Present:** None

**Other:** Steve King, Town Engineer  
Elsbeth Hearn, On-site Coordinator for EPA  
Chris Pyott, DEP

Aileen L'Abbe called meeting called to order at 6:00pm.

**Secretary's Report:**

The committee was asked to accept the minutes of the November 9, 2017 meeting.

**Motion:** Made by Bill Fouhey, seconded by Louie George to accept the minutes of the November 9, 2017; All in favor 6:0.

**New Business:**

The Browns Pond soil storage at Popes Landing was addressed by Steve King, Town Engineer, Elsbeth Hearn from EPA & Chris Pyott from DEP. Steve gave a background on the Browns Pond project. In 2014, DEP determined the area was contaminated with arsenic and needed to be cleaned up immediately. Work began to abate the arsenic at that time. The soil was being stored at Plains Park late summer time frame last year; however, this year the park usage at the time of year of the project does not allow for soil spoils to be stored there. They have surveyed the town for an optimal storage site in town

and Popes Landing was determined to be an optimal site. Whatever site is chosen will be well protected so that this material will not migrate to surrounding areas. It was noted that Popes Landing is under a land management agreement with state Office of Fishing & Boating Access and they have approved said request for use of the land through a general permit. There will be a public information meeting held on Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Riverside School to address neighborhood concerns.

Bill Fouhey asked why the soil has to be moved to a staging site, why not remove it altogether to its final destination. Steve King said the soil had to be tested prior to moving to a landfill. Bill F. said if you already know the soil is bad why you have to test it again. Elsbeth from EPA addressed this concern. She noted this is because of the logistics related of being unable to move large amounts of waste at one time, but rather moving it in small batches. There is no way to remove soil from this location in large volume with larger equipment because of wires, utilities, small lot sizes in a residential area etc.... Bill F. asked if it was essentially cheaper to move soil twice rather than removing from site in small batches. Rick Rodgers, Town Engineer, said they are literally working people's back yards, so it is a much slower than a typical bulk removal process. Gardner Trask mentioned that there may be misinformation out there, that the soil does not need to be dewatered, it is dry soil. The digging is not going deeper than 3 feet. The digging is in yards not in the pond, therefore soil is dry. Joan George asked if supervision will be onsite. Elsbeth said yes, she will be on site each day. Bob Moore ask where the spoils will ultimately go. Elsbeth said it will be removed to landfills who want the soil in NH & Maine for now. She noted this soil does not leach arsenic, so landfills want the soil as it is useful to them. Louie George asked about the feasibility of the Plains Park location for soil storage. He said the reasons not to store the soil at Park gives him concern, but noted that Popes Landing has similar activity to Plains Park so why is it acceptable at Popes Landing. He asked if they can reassure the public about the safety of storing the soil there and asked if they have explored other option. Steve King said yes, they have explored other options and explained that the Popes Landing back parking lot is a unique area that would work well for this purpose. Rick R. said it is more of a safety concern at the Plains Park location as opposed to a contamination concern. Louie George note on the non-safety front he felt the area of Popes landing has had a lot of interruption in recent years with the Liberty St. Bridge project and gas line project etc....he wanted to know how long this project would tie up the area. Steve King said would stop working by the end of the year but would likely continue next year as they will still be restoring peoples properties but may or may not need storage at Popes Landing next year during boating season, .could be possible but will not know that yet. Bill F asked if they found any other contaminants in the soil, Elsbeth said no, they only found arsenic. Bill F. asked about the possibility of renting a more appropriate space in town such as behind the old Hollywood Hits building, he noted it was a big empty property with a large asphalt are with no residences around etc.... He was told the cost associated with an option like that would be prohibitive, as they are trying to invest all resources in cleaning up the resident's properties. Bill F. said he understands, but the impact on the Popes Landing neighborhood may not be good. They stated that working out legal agreements with private property owners can complicate the process.

At the River Committee's request Gardner Trask facilitated the public question/input portion of the meeting; he asked who would like to comment, allotting 4 minutes of floor time to each person who wished to comment. He noted the need for this as the meeting agenda is tight and asked for cooperation as the River Committee still need to address the remaining business on the agenda.

Andrea Daly said she feels that not enough time was allowed for the EPA/DEP to explore the possibility of renting a private location that would not be bothered by the soil storage. She said the Port has paid its dues with the Liberty St. & Water St. Bridge projects. In addition, the upper parking lot at Popes landing was used during the Liberty St. Bridge project for equipment storage which had a large impact on and inconvenience to the residents and businesses of that area. She noted this area is the most densely populated area in town. Andrea stated the Port has been through a lot between the explosion, the Dunkin Donuts contaminated soils and multiple road construction projects. She asked how many properties done so far? Steve King said 15 properties to date and approximately 20 more properties to go.

Mr. Ross asked how the arsenic was found in the first place. He was told the old Crease & Cook Tannery property was identified as a problem with extensive contamination, they wanted to test areas that were not in that immediate area, but nearby and was discovered through that extensive testing. Mr. Ross asked how safe & secure the pile of soil would be. He was assured it would be both safe and secure. The risks from the soil is a long-term exposure risk, not an immediate risk. In addition to other precautions the area is monitored with air monitors etc....so there will not be long term risk.

Andrea Daly asked about the public meeting scheduled for Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>. She said no one from Danversport has received a notice of meeting. Steve King said he did hand deliver notices to immediate abutters and the meeting has been posted online on the Town's website and notices have been sent to Precinct 3 Town Meeting Members. She stated she does not think it is a good idea for Popes landing to be the site of this project. Homes are too closely abutting this area. She can't see why they can't close a field at Plains Park and continue to keep soil there as the Port area has been impacted far too much in the past.

Stan Svensson asked how much trucking is involved in the soil removing process on a daily basis. Elsbeth said they use a 6-wheeler truck & mini excavators, turnaround for the truck is every hours or so. Typically, they start at 7a.m. and end at 5 p.m. and will not work on Fridays. She said once the pile is large enough to move the pile be hauled off the landfill, the pile will be constantly changing and moving. Mr. Svensson asked how large the pile would be allowed to become. He was told it would be no bigger than what would be deemed a safe height that could be well maintained and covered with tarp. Stan S. also asked if they tested soil for any other contaminants. He was told yes, but they only found arsenic.

Peter Swift said thinks health is most important concern here. He was not comfortable with storing a toxic material to the Port Area. He stated this area has high rate of cancer

and he doesn't think that the health of people is more important than money. He felt money should be spent to possibly rent a different area for the project. He said the Port area has been disrupted for at least 7 years with several other projects. He feels there must be a better area in town that can accommodate the soil. Kathy Swift asked how long it took to clean up the 15 houses/properties that had already been done. They said those properties were completed from Aug. '17 – Dec '17. She asked if they can work through winter weather such as snow. They said they were done before the major snow storms, but can work thru some rain and snow. Elsbeth mentioned the soil amount expected to be moved this year is about the same as last year, she noted lot sizes are all different but expects to get more done in equal or less time this year. Kathy S. asked if they were to do more testing and find more contaminated soil areas where would that be stored. Elsbeth deferred that answer to the Monday night meeting, stating that would be covered in detail at that meeting she suggested they come on Mon and noted in addition a nurse would be there to address any public health concerns.

Pete Clement said he is trying to wrap his head around why they are no longer using Plains Park. He is curious as there is only a month or so left of school vs. using the Pope's Landing site where there will be a large volume of summer activity. DEP said it's a safety issue with trucks coming and going with a large volume of kids & pedestrians coming and going all day long at the park with a variety of activities. Mr. Clement cannot understand their rationale and would like to hear a better explanation of why the Port is considered a better option as opposed to Plains Park.

Louie George asked if the project would be permitted for just the back lot at Popes Landing. He was told yes, only permitted for the back lot.

**Motion:** Made By Bill Fouhey. Seconded by Louie George. The River Committee agrees they do not want to store any contaminated soil in the boat lot/back parking lot at Popes or have it used in any way other than what it was intended for, boating and trailer storage. All in Favor: 6:0.

*The River Committee members commented on their thought regarding the soil storage at Popes Landing:*

*Bob M. doesn't agree with storing contaminated soil at Popes Landing and realizes hard to find another location but feel they can find somewhere better.*

*Louie George supports the motion. He does not think Popes Landing is right site.*

*Aileen L'Abbe feels there are other areas that could be used for this purpose other than Popes Landing.*

*Dan D. said without knowing what the other possible site options may be available and why those options not viable it is hard to decide, but at this point does not think Popes is an appropriate site.*

*Joan George is in agreement with the motion. She stated it's too bad that they have to or want to use Popes landing. She suggested all River Committee members attend the public meeting on Monday and she prefers the soil not be stored at Popes Landing.*

**Old Business:**

Chris Sanborn said the Mass Bay Bridge has been out of commission again, but should be fully operational soon if not already. Our staff is doing their best to keep our boaters information of closures and repairs as we receive updates.

Chris S. said approximately 450 Waterways Permits have been issued and most of Crane River Marina is filled, only 16 openings at this point and he feels the Marina should be filled this season.

Bill F. asked for an update on the status of mooring wait list. Chris S. said they have a waiting list of approximately 30 people but many of whom are on the list but either sold the boat or are no longer interested in a mooring. Chris plans to clean up the list this summer.

Chris updated the committee in regard to the FY19 Budget. The Operating Budget has been increased by \$1200 and just needs May Town Meeting approval. He noted the budgeting for C – Dock that was deferred and used for a boat engine repair has been carried forward and will be supplemented with a \$6800 request.

Chris said the dredging warrant article is to set aside \$20k annually to plan for the next dredging project which is projected for 2027. That projected schedule will put the town on a 15-20 year dredging maintenance cycle. Dredging will be extended to Waters and Danvers Rivers.

The River Committee Annual Report is available in print for all River Committee members if they would like a copy. Some of the committee member are also town meeting members so in that case they should have a copy, if not Chris has copies for anyone in need.

Chris updated the committee regarding the Crane River bank stabilization project. He said the town has held meetings with CDM Smith/Design Engineer. The Town would have to ask them to include a pier in the project and then include this in their scope of service. CDM Smith recently completed a similar project in Salem that may be a viable solution for Danvers.

Bill F. asked if anything further had been learned about the possibility of using the Dunkin Donuts site as an option for a fishing property/pier. Chris S. has not yet learned who owns that property or if it is considered developable, but will follow up and get back to the committee.

Bill F. asked about the possibility of piggybacking the bank stabilization project on another existing project. Chris S. said at one point they thought that may be possible, but after further investigation learned that is not a possibility.

**New Business:**

Louie George asked how the Harbor Master boats are doing. Chris S. said the 25' boat is "tired", but all is good.

**Motion:** Motion made by Dan D., seconded by Joan G., to adjourn the meeting of April 19, 2018. All in favor: 6:0

cc: Steve Bartha, Town Manager  
Karen Nelson, Director of Planning and Human Services  
David Mountain, Recreation Director