

Danvers River Committee
Thursday April 22, 2021
Meeting Minutes

The Danvers River Committee held a public meeting on Thursday April 22, 2021 via Microsoft Teams, at 6:00pm.

Member(s) present: Dan DeLorenzo, Chair
Joan George
Bob Moore
Matthew Byrne
Bill Fouhey
Louie George
Bill Nicholson
Robert Hemeon
Tom Perry

Member(s) absent: Joseph Marabito
Gardner Trask, Selectman Liaison

Staff Present: Christopher Sanborn, Director of Natural Resources
Carolann Powers, Secretary

Media Present: None

Dan DeLorenzo called meeting called to order at 6:01 pm.

Secretary's Report:

The committee was asked to accept the minutes of the January 21, 2021 meeting.

Motion: Made by Bill Fouhey, seconded by Louis George to accept the minutes of the, January 21, 2021; All in favor 9:0.

Chris Sanborn reminded committee that there is an upcoming May Town Meeting at which members of the River Committee will be reappointed. He noted that he did hear back from all members and regarding their reappointment and noted that Joan George has opted to step aside after 18 years of service on the River Committee. Chris personally thanked Joan for all the insight she was able to provide to the committee and the guidance she gave to him and the entire Harbormaster's Office Staff and thanked her for all the beautiful work she has done at the John George Park over the years. He thanked Joan for her years of dedication and service. The committee applauded her and echoed Chris' sentiment. Dan DeLorenzo thanked Chris for his kind words for Joan and agreed we will

miss her on the committee. She has been a valuable asset to the committee and the town, he thanked Joan for her dedication and wisdom will be missed.

Chris S. will forward the remaining 9 names of the current River Committee members to the Town Manager for reappointment to be approved at the May Town Meeting, unless any of them choose to opt out. In addition, he received a letter of interest from Michael McCarthy, who has attended recent River Committee meetings and has expressed interest in becoming a member, his name will also be put forward to Town Manager for appointment to the River Committee at the upcoming May Town Meeting, bringing the total membership to ten. He had heard some interest from other residents but to date none of them have submitted a formal letter of interest.

The Town Manager's office has asked Chris to refresh the committee members of the Code of Conduct for committee members throughout town. Chris had sent this out via email prior to the meeting along with the agenda and asked that all members review it. In addition, he said he is missing some signed acknowledgment forms for completion of the Conflict of Interest Laws training. If you have not yet completed it, he asked that it be done as soon as possible. He noted that if they serve on more than one board or committee, they only need to submit one form.

Bill N. noted that his has been completed and submitted to the Assistant Town Manager.

New Business:

Chris informed the group that this past week he heard that the MBTA will be performing repairs to the Beverly drawbridge/Mass Bay/MBTA Bridge. The MBTA is proposing emergency repairs to drawbridge pile supports. Chris had a recent zoom meeting with the contractor, the Beverly & Salem Harbor Masters re: this. Because considered emergency repairs it will be done over the summer and he has been assured that it should not impede navigation. Repairs are not to the main swing of the bridge but rather the support piles on either side and should not interfere with navigation which is good news as he anticipates a busy boating season like last year.

Chris informed the group about the Kernwood Bridge design/construction. He said the design consultant for Kernwood Bridge project reached out to him several months ago soliciting input on proposed plans to redesign the bridge to reduce the number of openings and the amount of strain on the bridge. They did receive a recommendation from the Beverly Harbormaster that they consider a swing bridge but increase the clearance of the bridge increasing the clearance of the bridge 8-21' higher that it is now to reduce the number of openings that would be required. Chris supported this proposal and noted that in addition he had received a letter from the Danversport Marina and Yacht Club with additional suggestions and recommendation. Dan Delorenzo said the yacht club performed a survey of boaters and the needs of their clearance and learned the 21' clearance at high tide would be very beneficial to most boater. Chris noted that all marine stakeholders who submitted input supported the increase of the height of the

bridge but supported only a swing bridge or opening drawbridge and not a stationary bridge. Chris invited the design engineers to attend a future River Committee meeting when they felt they were far enough along in their process to make a presentation to the group. He has yet to hear back from them but when he does, he will put them on a meeting agenda.

Louis George asked, in hopes of squelching any fears, if word has gone out or will regarding the Beverly drawbridge repairs so that all boaters will be aware that the project will not impede navigation. Chris said yes, a notice to mariners has been drafted and will be distributed to all boaters and marinas via our Online Mooring email system. Dan D. agreed with this idea.

Bill Nicholson mentioned the Liberty Street bridge will be renamed in honor of a Danvers family that had five members in WWII. It was stated that the family it will honor is the Soucy family brothers.

Old Business:

Chris S. updated the committee on the Waterfront Access/Division of Marine Fisheries Grant. He noted the waterfront access areas in town have been a hot topic for the last several months. The grant the town received was to resurvey, stake and post signage at these waterfront access areas in town. The town has contracted with Hancock Associates to begin the research of current deeds and survey work on those properties. What they have found so far is that although owned by the town most are continuation of ways within town that have not been formerly accepted by Town Meeting. Working with Town Engineer, Stephen King who annually puts forth at town meeting a list of ways within the town that need to be adopted and accepted by the town. In the meantime, we can begin the process of the survey work which will fulfill the \$15K grant the town received.

Chris updated the committee regarding budget/warrant articles. He said they plan to level fund the operating budget for the Harbor, the only changes would be to the warrant article end of things requesting an additional earmark appropriation of \$20k for the Waterways Improvement Revolving Fund to support future design, engineering and construction for future dredging of the river, which is an annual appropriation that we have added to for last five or six years.

Chris gave the group an update on the Crane Riverbank stabilization. The Town Engineer has asked for \$25K which is a 25% match for design work through the Municipal Vulnerability Program Grant. With \$100k to continue the design work that is needed to apply for future grants through this same MVP grant.

Matt Byrne asked if we are back at square one starting over planning wise regarding the Crane Riverbank stabilization project, or are we moving forward in some fashion. Chris Sanborn said the short answer is the town has exhausted the appropriations we received in previous fiscal years for design work to meet the requirements that Coastal Zone

Management was imposing on us town in order to move forward with the project. In order to get permits to do this project the town has to meet the requirements that they are imposing upon us, and in order to do that we needed to appropriate additional money to meet that goal. Matt said it seems like we need to get more money to spend more money, going around in circles, when town submit plans, they keep shutting us down and we resubmit the same plan. Chris S. said we have submitted different design plans based on what they have come back with and wanted changes to, it is constantly evolving, we are building off of initial design, which requires additional design work which involves additional cost. Matt B. asked if we are we still trying to convince them of stone revetment? Chris said we have been resigned to fact that stone is not an option for Coastal Zone Management, we will need to pursue a hybrid option or a plant solution.

Bill F. mentioned that at one time we talked of a project in Salem MA that was a hybrid solution that we hoped we may be able to do as well. Is that still an alternative we are looking at? Chris said that is a hybrid solution with dropped stone and planting which we proposed, but they did not accept that plan unfortunately. He noted that something is better than nothing so at this time we will need to design to their standards in hopes they will approve the plan so we can obtain grant money through Coastal Zone Management and MVP to move forward with project. Our hope is if we design to their standards, they will grant the money for the project.

Louis G. commented that it seems like ages ago when he represented the town at the initial MVP grant meeting and is curious if Town has a good chance of getting the grant and if we do get the grant through MVP doe that help pave the way for necessary approvals moving forward. Chris said ultimately there are no options around the way Coastal Zone Management wants it done. Once we get thru the permitting process, we can look to the construction piece and how to fund that. There are many hurdles to get over the first being Coastal Zone Management then DEP, Army Corp of Engineers and a number of agencies.

Bill N. asked what the appropriation is, is it a warrant article. Chris said it is warrant article for \$25K that represent 25% of the overall anticipated design costs for the project, the other 75% would be funded through the MVP grant.

Dan D. stated that Coastal Zone Management appears to have their guidelines and must have a specific way want to do this and we must go by their rules and not sway from them. Chris S. said yes. Dan D. asked if their guidelines are published anywhere? Chris said not to his knowledge. He noted this may not be the solution of choice for us, being a soft solution. We have experimented with this type of solution in the past without success. Now they are proposing we place the material in a different location to see if that will work. In addition, this soft solution will require a lot of maintenance. This may not be what we hoped for, but we will do what is required as a solution is needed.

Bill F. asked if Coastal Zone Management can point to any place in the state or country where their suggested solution has actually worked successful, as we have done it twice already without success. Chris S. said this question was brought up in their meeting with

them and it doesn't sound like they have a comparable community that they have done this in where it is tidal, with river currents and they type of silt we have in Danvers. He doesn't think they have a comparable community for this specific soft solution they are proposing.

Dan D. noted that this will be third time attempting this type of solution. Matt B. asked if we have any alternative options for permits, can the Army Corp of Engineers approve a permit that overrides the State, is there a way to get around or above Coastal Zone Management State can Legislature file special paperwork or can the Governor get involved so we can get solution we want. Chris said he's not sure, and not sure we want to go that route. Frustrated, Matt said at some point you have to stop throwing money in the water and watch it wash away, where do you draw the line as town and say enough with the state rules. This has got to stop some as it is costing the town money over and over again. Chris S. said he did not have an answer for him.

Chris S. updated the group on the speeding complaints on the river as a follow up to their last meeting. It has been decided that a social media blast will be going out over next few weeks to boaters regarding the speeding issue instead of going out with permit renewals. A lot of information goes out with permit renewals, so they opted to address this in a separate social media blast as they want to highlight this issue and not have it get lost in with the permit renewal information. He noted his department is currently addressing them as they get them and are doing their best to educate the boating public right now.

Chris noted the will be advertising for seasonal Pump Out Boat Operators. The program will be starting up on May 16th and he is hoping to staff it shortly. The jobs have been posted on the town website and will also go out on social media and Online Mooring.

Chris was excited to announce they are finalizing the preparation to launch the new marine 25' patrol boat, it replaced the 1987, 25' patrol boat, currently the oldest piece of equipment in town inventory. The old boat will be out of service completely once this boat is launched. The new boat is a 2006 Safe Boat, 25' a lot of work has been done on it to get it up to serviceable condition. It is a surplus Coast Guard boat that they were able to acquire. A brand new this boat would have cost \$225K to match the specifications of the old boat. Chris' office was appropriated \$100k last year toward this purchase and were told we could come back in future years for additional funding. In the meantime, we were able to acquire this surplus Coast Guard boat, which brand new would cost \$350K, but we got a good deal at only \$40k and should get 20+ years of service out of this boat. We were able to invest the remaining appropriated funds into the boat to update upgrade electronics, and outboard motors. Chris shared pictures of the new patrol boat to the committee. They are pleased with the boat.

Chris noted they have sent out permit renewals March 1st. They have received 669 renewals back already, the highest and earliest returns in all his years with the Town. Town Marina is full, waitlists exist for both Marina slips & Moorings. We will work on abandoned mooring owners and removing those allowing us to add new moorings. Looks to be a busy boating season.

Bob M. said the speeding issue a concern and is happy to help with managing it. He also noted he is pleased with the new boat.

Bill F. was wondering if there was an update on the Kayak Storage project. Chris S. doesn't have an official update. He has not yet heard back from any Eagle Scouts....if he doesn't hear back by next year he will pursue project through town funds.

Louis G. said with respect to new boat, it looks terrific and wanted to commend Chris for his efforts in getting a great boat at a great price. It will serve the town well. The boat looks great.

Bill N. said as a town meeting member he was proud to support Chris and Harbormaster Department with funds for the boat. He is proud of what has done.

Bob H. also commended Chris said that what he did in regard to acquiring the new boat is not easy to do and the money spent was well spent.

Dan D. echoed all the sentiment of all the comments directed to Chris S. for his hard work acquiring the boat and the updates and upgrades made to the boat. He said the boat looks great and welcoming.

Dan D. asked if there is any talk about the River Committee getting back to meeting in person. Chris S. said he will reach out to town administration to see where we are at.

Motion: Motion made by Joan George, seconded by Bill Fouhey, to adjourn the meeting of April 22, 2021. All in favor: 9:0

cc: Steve Bartha, Town Manager
David Mountain, Recreation Director