

Danvers River Committee
Thursday June 24, 2021
Meeting Minutes

The Danvers River Committee held a public meeting on Thursday June 24, 2021 at the Endicott Park Visitors Center (Conference Room), at 6:00pm.

Member(s) present: Dan DeLorenzo, Chair
Matthew Byrne
Bill Fouhey
Louis George
Tom Perry
Mike McCarthy
Robert Hemeon
Bill Nicholson, Vice Chair
Gardner Trask, Selectman Liaison
Matt Duggan, Selectman Liaison

Member(s) absent: Joseph Marabito
Bob Moore

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

Media Present: None

Others: Jim & Janet Morose

Dan DeLorenzo called meeting called to order at 6:04 pm.

Secretary's Report:

No business to report.

Minutes from the May meeting will be available to committee at end of this week.

New Business:

Gardner Trask introduced Matt Duggan, member of the Board of Selectmen, he along with Gardner Trask will be representing the Selectboard as liaisons.

Regarding waterfront updates Chris informed the committee that the pumpout boat is up and running. Due to the Harbormaster's Office being short staffed, the boat is running on a reduced schedule and boaters won't be able to pre-register online for their pump out but rather will need to flag down the boat operator as needed while in operation. Chris Sanborn noted that the pumpout boat operator jobs were posted with a pay increase from previous season, unfortunately they had only one applicant. If we are able to get back to the pre-registration program we will, as it has worked well in the past and in addition that process which is done via Online mooring requires them to complete a waiver of liability etc...

Chris S. noted there have been 760 Waterways Permits issued to date and his office is still chasing approximately 40 people for outstanding permits. He stated this is one of the busiest seasons in the past ten years.

Louie George asked where are with permits as compared to last year. Chris S. said regarding returns, we are ahead and overall will probably be issuing more permits than we have in past ten years.

Old Business:

Work/repairs have been completed on the Mass Bay bridge. Chris does not anticipate further interruptions in service this season.

The Kernwood Bridge repairs seem to be a slow process, project may be approximately 5-10 years due to all permitting processes etc.... required for the project.

Chris updated the group on the status of marking waterfront access locations in town. He noted Mead St., Bradstreet Ave. and Jacobs Landing have been bound and staked via survey (Hancock Associates) as public access ways. They are still working on other areas, staking, and surveying. The Department of Land Use and Community Services has decided the town will pause the project at this point and get back to the Board of Selectmen with answers to their inquiries regarding this project and will also reach out to the public for further public comment.

Bill N. asked about the status of Jacobs Landing and what the concerns were regarding encroachment in that area.

Matt Duggan reminded committee that he and Andrea Daly attended the November 2020 River Committee meeting and presented their concerns regarding encroachment in that area. He is not in favor of coming to a compromise with private landowner/s and feels it is clear, that this is public space. He would like to see it clawed back. Chris said his concern is that the DEP and Conservation Commission may feel it is more detrimental to the environment to pull out what had encroached rather than leave it. This issue will be addressed in the public comment phase of process. Louis G. asked is any residents have expressed concerns or inquired since the survey markings have been posted. Chris said yes, some residents on Jacobs Landing have expressed concern. It was noted that there

are a lot of legal questions that need to be addressed regarding what “legal access” is. The town has asked for an extension on the grant for this project and is meeting again with the state as they did not expect this process to take this long.

Jim Morose asked about public access on Hardy Street. Chris said that the Hardy St. location has been added to the plan and the Bates Street location has been removed from the project.

Janet Morose asked how the public and abutters can stay informed regarding this process moving forward. He said abutters will be notified directly from the town.

Chris noted the FY21 budget is closing out. Chris informed the committee that all articles for FY22 were approved. Bill N. asked about the \$34k that was mentioned at Town Meeting. Chris said they were referring to income from Slip Fees; that income is rolled into the Revolving Fund and accepted at annual Town Meeting.

The town will be applying for and MVP grant for the Crane River bank stabilization project.

Chris S. updated the group on their concerns regarding the speeding boat issue on the river. He noted the staff is doing a diligent job and is aggressively patrolling and educating boaters on the rules and importance of being safe. Gardner T. asked at what point do we issue fines in addition to issuing warnings. He asked is we can we put signs out that measure and say what a boater’s speed is and if speeding address it or fine them. Chris S. said it is hard to judge speed by wake of a boat, speed isn’t always connected to size of the wake, does agree there are some boaters who are speeding. He noted if it is an egregious act appropriate action is taken. With the increase in Waterways Fee Permits there are more boaters, and with that increase there is potentially a lot of new boaters who are being educated. Dan DeLorenzo asked if boat stops are tracked? Chris S. said yes, they are all tracked. Chris said they don’t have terminals on their boats but they can call it in and can research on their own and also noted they can stop a vessel, take no action at the time of the stop, research the situation and issue a violation after that stop. Also, they can review video camera footage and if the findings warrant it, they can issue fines based on the coverage. Chris said they are on top of the speeding boat issues . He noted staff runs 7 days a week 7/8 am – 8/9pm, not 24/7. He stated the fortunate thing is we have cameras now to help identify boats and related issues.

The new 25’ boat 100% in service. Fire pump installed and functioning. Boat has far exceeded expectations. DD asked if boat will be staffed by one staff member or more. CS said for training purpose they are going out in pairs, but after that phase there will be one staff on it at a time.

Bill Nicholson asked if Liberty Street Bridge has been dedicated yet? It was stated that is has not yet been dedicated but will be once plaque is completed.

Chris noted that there have been some concerns regarding parking at Popes Landing, particularly on the weekends. He said due to the land use agreement with the State, the parking lot is supposed to be used solely for boaters, but they are willing to work with those visiting the location for the picnic area.

Louis G. asked about the status of marinas/mechanics testing boats on the river. Chris S. said his department is regulating where and when this happens and requires the larger boats to go out past the bridges (Beverly/Salem) to perform testing. Dan DeLorenzo stated the protocol is to check in with the Harbormaster's Office (w/ Dave Arathuzik) prior to testing. Local marinas and mechanics are aware of this protocol.

Bob H. asked the status of the town's interaction with the abutters regarding their encroachment of their property on the public access. He noted that some of these public access areas have been taken over by landowners. Gardner T. said this is called adverse possession and legally abutters cannot take over this land.

Dan DeLorenzo reminded the group that the River Committee is always looking for new agenda items and encouraged members to bring items that they are made aware of to him to add to the agenda to be addressed at meetings.

Matt Byrne asked about status of potential kayak storage project at Sandy Beach. Chris said nothing has moved forward with it at this point. At one point we had hopes a Boy Scout would want to do this project as an Eagle Scout project but to date they have had no interest. Louie G. said he will reach out to Kevin Gibbons (a Danvers Resident involved in scouting) regarding the possibility of this and other potential projects as Eagle Scout projects. Chris said if it is not possible for this to be done as an Eagle Scout project, they will pursue it through the town.

A question was asked about the possibility of reaching out to local Corporation/Businesses to see if they may be interested in a service project for the community. The committee liked this idea.

Gardner T. also mentioned another project that needs to be done is refurbishing or replacing the "Welcome to Danvers" signs in the port area. The committee agreed that this is something that needs to be done.

Matt B. mentioned the Water Department is working on a sewer main that is sinking, that crosses the Crane river near route 128. He was told by the Town Engineer that they are correcting this issue. It was noted that this is near a dilapidated train bridge and were wondering what the status of that bridge is as it is in disrepair. Chris S. believes this is MBTA property. Matt B. felt it was a hazard and is curious if this is something the town can get involved with. Chris S. said it is on radar.

Gardner T. asked the committee to consider if they want to release a statement regarding the city of Peabody's plan to build a third Capacity Plant (producing electricity for 14 communities) on Pulaski Street as this may impact the Waters River and nearby

neighborhoods. He stated there is not a lot of information coming forth regarding this project and Gardner felt there could potentially be many concerns with this project that could affect the town of Danvers. He wants to be sure what they are proposing is safe. His recommendation suggests the River Committee issue a statement asking to them to keep the River committee informed of the plans throughout this process.

Dan D. asked if the committee should be addressing this or if it should be the Selectboard. Gardner T. said he will reach out to the Town Manager regarding this. Gardner said it is something to put on the committee's radar. The committee agreed they would like to be kept informed regarding this project. This item will be added to the agenda for discussion at next month's meeting.

Motion: Motion made by Louie George , seconded by Matt Byrne, to adjourn the meeting of June 24 , 2021. All in favor: 8:0

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