

Stockbridge Bowl Stewardship Commission

Friday March 31, 2023

Present: Roxanne McCaffrey (RM), Michael Nathan via ZOOM (MN), Patrick White via ZOOM (PW), John Loiodice (JL), Gary Kleinerman (GK), Mike Buffoni (MB) and Sally Underwood-Miller (SUM).

Present via ZOOM: Pat Kennelly (President of Stockbridge Bowl Association-PK), Beth Goodman (SBA attorney-BG)

The meeting was called to order by Roxanne McCaffrey at 8:02 a.m.

- Approval of January 13, 2023, and February 24, 2023, minutes. Motion to approve- SUM, second JL, RM-AYE, SUM-AYE, JL-AYE, MB-AYE, PW-AYE, MN – abstain; did not get a chance to read. Minutes approved.
- Discussion of public awareness and education plans

RM asked SUM if the Conservation Commission has an update since they are working on a brochure. No update yet.

GK – Zebra Mussel Committee update – Gary said they can distribute information at the boat ramp and also at Bullard Woods since there is a new kiosk coming in. RM asked if there were any updates on public awareness/education – no other updates.

- Discussion of potential expansion of weed harvesting.

RM stated this was placed on the agenda at the request of Pat Kennelly, she and Beth Goodman could lead off the discussion. RM added that currently an extension of the existing NOI is being worked on for harvesting ten acres.

PK started by saying that first, there is no desire to jeopardize the existing ten acreage harvesting but the SBA believes it would be possible to file under a different section of the Wetlands Protection Act and be able to harvest additional acreage. She continued, saying that although the Town would be submitting this proposed NOI, the SBA was offering to “do the legwork” and prepare the NOI turning it over upon completion to the Town for approval and possibly some modifications. Under a “limited project” it is necessary to demonstrate that there would be no significant negative impact to species. PK said that the SBA rationale as included in the meeting packet lays out the logic. It requires that a no adverse impact letter be received from NHESP (Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program). They would then ask that the Stockbridge Conservation Commission waive the wildlife habitat evaluation (assuming NHESP gave approval). If the Conservation Commission did not waive the habitat evaluation, the SBA would pay for that effort. PK stated that Beth Goodman was invited to answer any questions the SBSC might have.

RM asked if there were any questions:

SUM said the DEP is usually not happy about having two filings for the same work. DEP wants one order of conditions closed out before another one is filed.

BG said the process for an alternative plan will take time; she feels that with the current NOI in place, we could explain the circumstance to the state agencies.

PK stated that moving forward with the current NOI, the alternative can be worked on. RM agreed that it is a timing issue; this is the final year of the current order of conditions, after which we will be applying for an extension. She continued that the timing of the dredging project will play a role in the harvesting plans.

PK noted that the Lake Management Plan states we would not be doing harvesting during the dredging property so neither ten nor twenty acres would be harvested during dredging.

RM asked for the benefit of the general public the definition of a water dependent limited project. BG responded there are many “limited projects” in the Wetlands Protection Act such as building a driveway through a wetland so by definition a water dependent special limited project is in water, i.e., weed harvesting.

PW asked if there is a map extension of where additional harvesting areas lie? PK responded that would be a work project to be completed if this proposal is pursued.

RM said she assumes that additional harvesting areas would be for convenience of navigation and access in residential areas and near docks around the perimeter of the lake.

MN made a suggestion to map out with a GPS system where problem areas appear in late spring and using Google Earth you can calculate the acreage.

RM thought it would be interesting to see what the percentage of total habitat needs actually to be harvested – the harvest area may be a small percentage of the total habitat.

MN asked how is the harvesting threshold defined? PK said the threshold is ten acres or five thousand square feet, whichever is less. BG clarified that PK's stated threshold is under the current order of conditions, filed under "beneficial use". The proposal is under a different section of the Wetlands Protection Act. There is no acreage limitation if you apply under a water dependent limited project as the SBA is proposing.

PW thanked PK for bringing this forward. RM thanked PAT and the SBA for their generous offer to do the work and bear the cost to prepare an alternative NOI stating that Town personnel resources are limited and lifting the task burden is very much appreciated.

RM asked the members if they would like to approve moving forward with this proposal. JL questioned if we could move forward in 2023. RM responded, no, that summer 2023 is the final year of the current order of conditions.

JL then asked if there is a current herbicide project; RM replied, no. PK confirmed but said the SBA would continue to monitor conditions; perhaps herbicide might be appropriate at some point. She mentioned a newer herbicide called ProcellaCOR. SUM said ProcellaCOR was just denied in Lake George.

MN asked if we run two harvesters, will we have enough people to run them? RM interjected that staffing is the responsibility of the Town Administrator and anyone wanting to volunteer to harvest needs to do so formally with him. We do not know how the workforce will be now that we are post COVID.

PW suggested going to the school district for potential student summer employees.

RM stated that the Town Administrator is currently ironing out the order of conditions to harvest ten acres. She suggested that BG talk to Michael Canales directly.

SUM strongly suggested that an extension for the current NOI be filed in case there are issues with the new proposal. The old NOI can be closed out if need be.

RM called for public comments or questions – none.

- Stakeholder updates

Water Dept. – Mike Buffoni – The sonde used for testing is being calibrated.

early spring.

Water and Sewer Commission – John Liodice – They are in Phase IV [sic] of the I&I study. It is almost done and after that repair costs will be determined.

Conservation Commission – Sally Underwood-Miller – Expressed concern about the number of docks on the lake and the impact of harvesting. GK suggested that the owners have the responsibility of pulling their docks in. She is concerned about swim float docks and their impact. PW stated that GK is the only regulating authority.

Stockbridge Bowl Association – Michael Nathan – no updates

Select Board – Patrick White – no updates.

Stockbridge Harbormaster – Gary Kleinerman – The Zebra Mussel station lost two inspectors at the boat ramp this year; he and Moose Foran will pick up the openings this summer.

Stockbridge Sportsman's Club - Roxanne McCaffrey – no updates

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne McCaffrey