

MINUTES
Puffer's Pond 2020 Committee
May 6, 2010

Members Present: D. Webber, E. Jones, M. Sharma, E. Shopper, M. Gage, E. Hamin, J. Pistrang, B. Angus, J. Patulak, P. Muska, A. Hayden

Staff: N. Malloy, D. Ziomek

Minutes

The Committee reviewed the meeting minutes from the April 15, 2010 meeting. Regarding parking on State Street, the recommendations should state that accessible parking needs to either stay in its current location or be as close to the Pond as possible based on design requirements. The recommendations should also state that any revenue generated from the parking passes should go into a dedicated account for Puffer's Pond, not just a Conservation Department fund. Nine members voted to approve the meeting minutes; two members abstained.

Staff Update

D. Ziomek stated that he has been using the Puffer's Pond 2020 Committee as a model for efficient and effective work by Committee.

Funding

N. Malloy provided an update on Department of Conservation Services (DCS) grants due in July, and noted that this deadline is too soon to seek any funding for Puffer's Pond recommendations. The grants require a municipal match, so the Conservation Department would need a fall Town Meeting vote to set aside funds for a match for the following round. CPA funds cannot be used at Puffer's Pond because the Pond and associated conservation area was not purchased using CPA money. The Committee also noted that funding could be raised privately.

E. Hamin stated that although the 2020 Committee will disband shortly, members could reconstitute themselves as a Steering Committee. It would be helpful to have political force in Town to help advocate for implementation of recommendations. D. Ziomek stated that it would be good to have representatives from the Friends of Puffer's Pond come talk to the Committee to keep the energy up and encourage synergy between the two groups' interests. The Committee will address life after the Committee once it gets to the end of the current process and makes its recommendations to the Conservation Commission.

Recommendations

The Committee continued its discussion of recommendations, using the table of options as a guide.

- **Dam Safety:** The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the orange safety buoys be installed seasonally in front of the dam.
- **Mill Street Bridge:** The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that we understand that the Mill Street Bridge may be rebuilt in the future, and that at this time, a pedestrian path should be added.
- **Trash:** A. Hayden recommended that the Committee consider not having trash receptacles at the Pond so that users would need to pack-in/pack-out. This measure would help users to understand that they are coming to a conservation area. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that trash receptacles be removed from the Pond, and that educational signage be installed about carrying trash out.
- **Restrooms:** The Committee discussed the feasibility of installing composting toilets. The Committee likes the idea of composting toilets, but needs more information on cost and maintenance. The Committee voted to recommend that seasonal sanitary facilities be provided at the north and south beaches. Composting toilets should be installed if technically and economically feasible. The location of the restrooms should take into consideration aesthetics but also convenience. Eleven Committee members voted in favor of this recommendation, one member was opposed.
- **Picnicking:** The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that no formal picnicking, BBQs, or fires be allowed at the Pond.
- **Commercial Enterprises:** The Committee had a long discussion regarding commercial and retail enterprises at the Pond. Committee members voiced concern about private parties making profits from uses on conservation land. The Committee voted unanimously to make the following recommendations:
 - No commercial activities should be allowed without a permit and/or approval from the Commission.
 - Organized activities in excess of 25 people and/or regularly scheduled activities also require a permit and/or approval from the Commission.
- **Invasive Species:** The Committee voted unanimously to recommend a strong effort to manage invasive species at the Pond.
- **Enforcement of Regulations:** The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that existing regulations must be enforced. The Committee notes that this cannot be accomplished without a staff.
- **Staffing:** The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that a dedicated staff be present at the Pond between 8 am and 7 pm, seven days a week during June, July, and August and as needed during April and May. The role of the staff is to enforce regulations, maintain the area, and conduct some outreach and education. Organized education or outreach about the conservation area is a separate function.

- **Dogs:** The Committed voted unanimously to recommend that the existing dog policy be maintained. The regulations need to be better enforced. The Committee noted that the existing policy was developed through a long neighborhood process. The Committee agreed that when the North Beach gets improved, the dog policy may require revisiting.

Next Steps

E. Hamin will draft a summary report of the Committee's recommendations using meeting minutes as a guide. M. Gage recommended that the report needs to address the following issues:

- Ways to promote public outreach and education about Puffer's Pond.
- Fundraising efforts
- Other Town policies that affect use of the Pond, i.e. closure of swimming pools

The Friends of Puffer's Pond Breakfast is scheduled for June 5th. M. Sharma will coordinate the Committee's presence at the Pond.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Thursday, May 27, 2010.

Submitted by B. Angus.