



White Pond Advisory Committee
Remote Meeting
1/26/22

Meeting called to order at 7:02

In attendance: Beth Kelly, Josh Galper, Jim Ricker, Cheryl Baggen, Jeff Parker

Minutes for 12/1/21 and 1/5/22 approved.

Social Media Group

Lucas Irwin reported:

Website for Friends of White Pond is an overlap of Friends of White Pond and WPAC.

Katy Blair has been doing the administrative work for Friends of WP, but she intends to step down soon. There is a need for more people to work on the Social Media group.

No one is willing to take over Katy's role.

Ken Clarkson - need to get word out about the Facebook page. This will include a resource page, with reference to Town's info, but it is still evolving and building an email list.

It is not clear who is working on White Pond Google Group. One goal would be to have the Town page and White Pond page talk together so everyone would know about Pond closings, for example.

Discussion of whether WPAC should participate in the Social Media avenues. Susan Bates suggested that the neighborhood groups should be separate from the WPAC.

Ken will be the contact person for sending out info from WPAC to the general public.

Motion approved by WPAC to remove the Social Media Group from the category of a volunteer subgroup of WPAC. Instead, it will be an independent neighborhood group affiliated with Friends of White Pond.

Annual Summary - Beth states there is a need for input from the Sewer System Group. Jim will review and then pass the document to Jeff for review, at which point the document will be sent back to Beth. Susan Bates said she would be willing to look at the summary report but it was not required.

Beach Project Town/Community meeting held 1/5/22 - Lots of discussion, lots of concern about tree removal. WPAC's role at the 1/5 meeting was to share information between the Town and community. General consensus was that the meeting worked well for the intended purpose. Community members noted some differences between what the Town said previously and what

actually happened. Jim Ricker would be interested in having more parking below at the beach, as he feels that would be most beneficial for individuals unable to utilize the access paths as planned. Beth Kelly would like to have ongoing updates from Kate at each upcoming meeting of WPAC.

Visitor Management Proposal

Josh introduced the proposed plan, noting that because of all of the parties involved (multiple Towns, private owners and the State), it will be impossible to create a perfect plan. The goal is to balance the desire to encourage visitors, while requiring them to act responsibly.

Proposals:

- Parking - Improve "No Parking" signage,
- Ticketing and towing is necessary
- Beach area should be closed when there is no lifeguard.
- Rules must be enforced, and there needs to be permanent signs alerting visitors of the rules - such as no swimming.
- Wooden signs are favored over laminated or metal
- Signage needed for Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and trails from Sudbury
- More ranger patrols
- Fines for swimming outside beach area
- Rangers there for information - not fines
- Owners of Cummings Building should install no parking signs
- There needs to be communication between the towns regarding Cold Brook crossing
- Social media should reinforce rules that swimming is only allowed at the public beach, as well as the parking rules

Jane Prentice reported that:

- Will Holden (NRC) is working on wooden signs - adding "leave no trace" language
- Kiosk will be replaced
- Suggested that large housing projects should provide information to residents regarding swimming and boating rules for White Pond
- Priority is BFRT and signage by new development in Sudbury
- She believes the signage issues have been incorporated into Town plans

Jim Ricker suggested that visitors are using the Willard School parking area and this should be reviewed.

Discussion of whether the land purchased by the Town for "municipal purposes" should be repurposed as Conservation Land.

It was noted that Sudbury has an easement for access to the Pond but a further communication suggested that this did not include use of the water.

Lara Wilson - 67 White Ave

Has concern about communication - does not want Concord to wait to communicate with Sudbury only after there is an issue regarding people management. Signs are great - but visitors do not necessarily heed the signs.

White Pond brochure on line that needs updating and should be widely distributed.

Issues to consider:

Is Concord communicating with Sudbury regarding rule enforcement and concerns?

Do we want land to be conservation land?

Current signage - notice regarding algae blooms is just stakes in the water and is not sufficient to properly notify interested parties that the water is unhealthy.

Should there be a Town number that citizens call regarding algae blooms?

Unclear from the Town side who is responsible for signage and communication regarding blooms.

Action Item - Send email to Town setting out expectations regarding signage and communication relating to algae blooms and associated swimming restrictions.

Beth - Had communication with Delia, who stated that the Board of Health should be the office to which individuals provide information regarding blooms

Marsha Rasmussen stated that such information should be sent to

boardofhealth@concord.gov

Ken Clarkson suggested that signs regarding blooms should include a QR code to alert visitors as to where information should be sent.

BFRT fencing

Marcia Rasmussen - presentation about fencing associated with the trail.

Phase 2D update

New regulations put in place by Mass DOT apparently prevent the State from putting fencing on State land for the benefit of private property. Will only put in fencing for safety reasons.

This fencing (200ft by vernal pool and 300ft near a steep drop off) will be a 3-rail timber fence. Intended for the safety of those on the Trail.

Josh - The lack of fencing will result in unfettered access to the Pond by individuals using the BFRT and will result in cultural eutrophication of White Pond.

Has Town, and/or State evaluated the impact of DOT's decision on fencing on the ecology of the Pond? There appeared to be no response.

Has the fact that the Town, at great cost, paid for erosion control and stairs in this area, and that such efforts would be negated by access from those using the BFRT, been raised by the Town in its discussions with DOT? The answer appears to be no.

Who should we be talking to at DOT? Marcia will provide the name of the project manager. Are there ways for WPAC to communicate our concern? Marcia is not able to answer that at this time.

Beth - Is there a way to appeal the state's decision and/or has the Town tried that? In Marcia's opinion, the fact that the Town included the fencing in its proposal, despite State's opposition last year to such fencing, was an appeal of the DOT's previously stated position that fencing would not be approved regardless of who paid for the fencing.

Ken Clarkson - asked if the fencing near the pool is intended to protect the sensitive habitat. Marcia stated that the fencing is to protect trail riders, but not the vernal pool.

Marcia suggested that when the 100% design is proposed, the DOT may reconsider the need for fencing.

Town is responsible for preparing the design only - everything else is within the control of DOT. Plans have not been finalized for construction. 2023 is when construction will be again.

The Secretary of Natural Resources is concerned about maintaining the integrity of White Pond. Jim suggests that we have the two state agencies (Natural Resources and DOT) – engage in discussions on this matter.

Josh - proposed that one worst-case option would be to file for an injunction to stop further work until the fencing issue is resolved.

Katie Blair 20 Darton Street - Town and citizens work to mitigate people management relating to White Pond and perhaps the same actions can be taken in regard to the Rail Trail fencing issue.

Beth stated her desire to better understand whether there is a formal appeal process. Also wants to explore the possibility of putting in the fencing on Town land, rather than State land.

Steve Ferrey stated that 70% of the land surrounding the Pond is privately owned. The rest is owned by the Town. Asked whether the Town could control access either on the basis of health issues (actions intended to reduce algae blooms) and/or erosion control?

Action Item Inquire of the Rail Trail Committee whether it is possible for the Town to close the Trail for health and safety reasons.

Lara Wilson - Could the access points to the Pond be very limited? Funnel people to one opening and police that point?

Signs might also indicate sensitive areas and areas restricted due to erosion control. Jim suggested that position paper be written - setting out proposals.

WPAC decided it needed more information before voting on whether to suggest that further work on the Trail be halted until the fencing issue is resolved.

Steve - Suggested that the Town look at different possibilities such as designating parts of the Pond or all of the Pond as historical protected land.

WPAC Groups:

The Sewer Group will present at the February meeting.

Water Quality - Beth and Susan Bates and Kate will be meeting with Delia to establish what testing will be done by town and what testing will be done by volunteers.

Rainbow Trout stocking - Delia is not in favor of writing a letter to the State about the Trout - Beth has written a letter once again asking for the State to stop stocking Rainbow Trout, with attached science studies supporting on some level the negative effect of the Trout. She asked Nancy Leland to review the letter, but Nancy would rather do some necropsies on fish from the Pond before putting data before the State.

Delia thinks the science is not clear but suggested that the Select Board could send another letter anyhow.

Susan Bates stated that Selectperson Henry Dane mentioned that sports fishers do not like rainbow trout.

WPAC voted to support having the Select Board send another letter in response to the State with attached related science articles.

Action Item - See if local sportfish organization(s) would support the restriction of stocked fish to species other than Rainbow Trout

Motion to adjourn - 9:09