

Conservation Commission Meeting
Virtual Meeting
April 18, 2024

This open meeting of the Sharon Conservation Commission was conducted remotely consistent with An Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted during the State of Emergency, signed into law on June 16th, 2021, and as amended and extended through March of 2025. These provisions allow public bodies to meet remotely if reasonable public access is afforded so the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. For this meeting, the Conservation Commission convened by video/teleconferencing via Zoom, and members of the public were provided with access information so that they could follow the meeting remotely. All votes were conducted via roll call.

The remote meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by the Chair, Peg Arguimbau.

Roll call was taken of members and staff present and included: Chair, Peg Arguimbau, Vice Chair, Jon Wasserman, Keevin Geller, Susan Drisko, Stephen Cremer, and Alan Westman. Staff present: Josh Philibert, Conservation Administrator.

7:30 PM	New Public Hearing	RCOC – DEP# SE280-0602 25 Tiot Street/194 Edge Hill Road, Cape Club Cape Club Builders, LLC, Attorney Bob Shelmerdine
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Attorney Bob Shelmerdine to ask for a three-year extension to DEP# SE280-0602. The orders were last extended in May of 2021. The order was amended in May of 2022. Members voted to issue an extension for DEP# SE280-0602 to Cape Club Builders, for project located at 25 Tio St. for three years.

Motion to issue an extension for DEP# SE280-0602 for three years to May 4, 2027.

Keevin moved. Drisko seconded.

Cremer – aye, Drisko - aye, Geller - aye, Westman - aye, Peg – aye 5-0-0 Motion Passed

7:40 PM	Discussion/Action Item	Lake Update
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The lake level is quickly dropping, approximately 5-6” recently to a level of 10.4.

7:42 PM	Other Business	Signatures at Town Hall
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Members were reminded of Town Hall hours and to sign the signature pages there.

7:45 PM	Continued Hearing	RDA – 82 Gunhouse St.; Lake Massapoag Town of Sharon Department of Recreation Sand replenishment
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Gary Bluestein of the Recreation Advisory and Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee, continued the discussion about the RDA submitted by the Department of Recreation on behalf of the Town of Sharon for a sand replenishment project at Memorial Park Beach. Since the last meeting, Arguimbau, Wasserman, Drisko, Westman, and Geller had visited the beach. Philibert had also inspected the shoreline.

Philibert reported back to members on the current status of the land under the water as well as how the proposed project would affect the beach. Sand will end up in the water instead of the beach due to a lack of wind and waves pulling and pushing the sand. The prevailing southwest wind moves the sand down the shore where it piles up by the jetty separating the boat launch from the swimming area.

Recounting the efforts Philibert has already put in addressing the buildup of sand that circumnavigated the jetty, he said he believes it was something the previous Conservation Administrator must have dealt with regularly. He said it was unlikely the sand would flow into Massapoag Brook. Beginning at the swimming docks, at least two-thirds of the beach heading eastward maintained its longtime rocky bottom.

Arguimbau proposed designating the areas furthest from the boat launch as where to deposit the sand. The conversation identified three lifeguard chairs as informal separations between parcels totaling the main beach area. She also proposed exploring removing the buildup of sand in certain locations underwater and utilizing it on the beach front beyond the high-water mark.

Members discussed the potential for new sand to increase phosphorous levels in the water. John Tucci, from EverBlue Lakes, explained in a presentation to the Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee, the importance of replenishing the beach with “washed sand” if introducing new sand. Otherwise, there is potential for bringing impurities into the lake.

Bluestein informed members that Linda Berger, the Department of Recreation Director has been in contact with a local sand supply house. The cost for purchasing “washed sand” is greater than “brick sand,” a commonly used type of sand in surrounding towns. Although more costly, Bluestein noted the increased price was not prohibitive. Bluestein also noted that the town used to dredge the shoreline mechanically and no longer has access to necessary equipment.

Geller and Wasserman summarized their experiences walking the lake with resident, Richard Kramer, who was also in attendance. In describing the amount of erosion from the parking lot and stone dust making its way to the beach, they expressed concern about adding more sand without preventing the current erosion problem. Geller suggested utilizing landscape timbers flush with the ground to minimize the erosion. He welcomed the idea of exploring dredging projects instead of sand replenishment at this time. Wasserman identified the land near where the sailboats are stored as a point of great concern and cause. Arguimbau noted that the far side of the parking lot drains into wetlands along Beach Street.

Beach Street resident, Richard Kramer addressed members with six talking points.

1. “Brick sand” is of sub-par quality.
2. Dredging would not require equipment as the area near the jetty had been manually dredged every few years after the jetty was installed.

3. Restoring the jetty to its original condition would facilitate its function of preventing sand from reaching the flume house.
4. Kramer called for placing landscaping timbers flush with the ground to prevent erosion instead of proposed reconfiguration.
5. The erosion near the sailboats path is relatively new as they were not stored in their current location until a few years ago.

Members voted to continue the hearing until May 2nd at Bluestein's request. Sand costs and the shoreline will be the focus. Instead of discussing the current state of erosion, members will focus on reviewing the plans in the RDA regarding sand replenishment.

Motion to continue the hearing for the Request for Determination for sand replenishment at Veterans Memorial Park Beach (82 Gunhouse St) at the applicant's request.

Cremer moved.
Geller seconded.

Cremer – aye, Drisko - aye, Geller - aye, Westman - aye, Wasserman – aye, Peg – aye
6-0-0 Motion Passed

8:25 PM Discussion/Action Item Debbie Tatro, Vice Chair
Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee
EverBlue Lakes aquatic management RDA

In presenting the background for an upcoming filing for a Request for Determination, Debbie Tatro, on behalf of the Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee, recounted the recent history of treating aquatic nuisances in Lake Massapoag. The LMAC seeks to use a multifaceted approach to mitigate the presence of invasive weeds and cyanobacteria blooms.

In October of 2023, the LMAC was before the Conservation Commission obtaining permission to conduct Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH) along with hand pulling of the dense fanwort in the South Cove. The National Heritage and Endangered Species program limits treatment options because there are endangered species present in the lake's ecosystem. With last year considered the worst observed so far, the LMAC seeks to neutralize these threats to the cove's health, and recreation opportunities. Herbicidal treatment is not an option. The LMAC also sees the vegetative growth as a threat to endangered species, specifically the Asian mussels' habitat.

For \$9,000 in 2023, the LMAC organized seven days of hand-pulling and eight days of DASH costing \$20,000. At least 3.75 cubic yards were removed. The LMAC has since been consulting with EverBlue Lakes who provide chemical-free treatment options.

In July of 2023, after hand-pulling efforts, TRC created weed density maps. The LMAC and John Tucci of EverBlue Lakes, evaluated a density map showing fanwort in the South Cove and all around the lagoon. In addition to fanwort, the committee observed a fair (though less populous) amount of variable milfoil in the lake. Regarding the lagoon, Tucci linked the growth

with the nutrient build up. Fletcher's Cove, although not included in the RDA, was named as another hotspot for invasive growth.

Sediment in a healthy lake system should be comprised of less than 10% organic matter. The percentage in two spots in the lagoon and two spots in the South Cove averaged at: 30%. Tucci's sampling showed organic material and high phosphorous levels in the lagoon and the location named, "South Cove 1." The second sampling location, South Cove showed by far the lowest organic matter at .77%.

Tucci believes the fanwort was introduced to the lake and now thrives on the ammonia nitrogen produced by fish respiration. Tucci's recommendations include installing aeration equipment, and beneficial bacteria to reduce the amount of nutrients in the sediment. The bacteria will not limit activity in the water. Aeration involves installing a compressor on the shore and plastic tubing with silicate ballast to weigh it down to the sediment. The system has a life expectancy of 25 years.

The proposal also involved introducing pre-activated and incubated bacteria delivered by automated tech. This plan involves minimal labor costs and freeze-dried pellets at \$.10-\$.16/gal. The RDA asks for permission to utilize both treatments. They will need to obtain permission from DCR's lakes and ponds department. The bacteria would be considered Class 1 microorganisms which identifies it as never being identified as a causative agent of disease in humans. The RDA proposal is simply asking for permission as they will have to wait for approval from DCR before treating the lake with bacteria.

A separate method is also in the proposal: installing an aquatic barrier. A geotextile fabric, a bottom sealing curtain, would trap suspended solids while finely filtering water. With an integrated flotation boom, the curtain can accommodate water level changes. LMAC or volunteers would need to periodically collect weed fragments and other debris.

Mimicking sea grass, filter grass is another component of the RDA's proposal. The bacteria would grow in the biofilm formed under the floating wetland, providing habitat for beneficial bacteria to grow. The bacteria would consume nutrients like ammonia nitrate that are promoting fanwort growth.

Last year's mitigation attempts included placing Eutrosorb socks but they did not result in detectibly lower phosphorous levels downstream. The current plan integrates the use of aquatic barriers in two locations in the lagoon, and introducing enzymes. The electrical component of the aeration system would necessitate installing a source on land.

The commission will hold a public hearing to review the RDA at the May 16th meeting.

8:53 PM	Discussion/Action Item	Conservation Administrator Update
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Philibert shared his screen showing a bog access entryway and compared it to a ponded area from March. Philibert observed a live crayfish. He is pleased to see the bog areas return to a natural area. He has also seen a great blue heron. The plan is coming together as

anticipated. If Ardent does not begin planting on the property, Philibert will seed the site in FY25 with requested funding.

Great Cedar Sump water levels are still rising. No part of the proposals that involve raising groundwater levels should affect the developed part. There are discussions about putting a control structure that would raise the channel's level. Raising the level by 3 ft at the low end.

Philibert also updated members on the restoration projects in town. Gavins Pond Grassland was mowed. There is a Frosted Elfin Butterfly population that feeds on Yellow Wild Indigo will benefit from the mowing. Cleared trees and other planting plans are a part of a grant application the department applied for this year and will apply for next year.

Also, many interested buyers and realtors have been contacting the office as 61 Eisenhower is back on the market.

9:00 PM	Adjourn	Adjourn
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Motion: to go into an Executive Session regarding land negotiations and adjourn at the end of the Executive Session.

Cremer moved
Drisko seconded

Cremer – Aye, Drisko – Aye, Geller – Aye, Westman – aye, Arguimbau – Aye, Wasserman- aye
6-0-0 Motion Passed