

Cranberry Bog Working Group
Meeting Minutes
August 21, 2023 via Zoom

Members Present: Luke Ascolillo, Brian Murphy, Alex Parra, Susan Provenzano,
Ariella Rebbi, Helen Young

Conservation Administrator: Sylvia Willard

Public: Iva Mooney, Rhonda Michaud, Chris Spinney, Daniel Carr, John Ballentine

Meeting began at 7:05 pm

Chair Murphy initiated the meeting by doing a roll call of all members, administrators, and public. He then recited the Massachusetts governor's order and rules for conducting public meetings remotely. This meeting will be covered by the minutes and not recorded. Murphy also explained public input will be taken when the Chair asks for public input and will call on persons and each will have 3 minutes.

Agenda Item:

1. July Minutes - one change requested by Parra and the change was made. The minutes were then approved unanimously.
2. The Bog NOI - the NOI has been posted and will be discussed by Cons Com on the August 31, 2023 meeting. MaryAnn DiPinto will be present.
3. Cranberry Bog Dam #1 - Murphy reviewed the various site visits and meetings with Dan Carr. Then he quickly described the three existing plan options. Carr still feels the 1.6' depth and 15' feet wide spillway was needed. Murphy reviewed that in the last meeting it was established that the contributing basin is 2.8 square miles. Carr had said that the two existing weirs could handle about the half of the water of a 100 year storm. Murphy suggested that adding two more weirs to handle the water. Dan said that two weirs could help handle the water. Murphy also asked whether a grassy overflow area would ensure that all the water was handled. Provenzano expressed that the overflow was only two inches below a water level taken on May 19th. This was single reading and more should be done before determining the best water level. Murphy explained that the previous cart path would be re-established and that would allow horses and be flat. Parra asked Dan about the height of the water in relation to the overflow and Dan replied that ideally the crest should be 3' above the water level for the health of the dam. Murphy replied that Donna Jeffers, the former president of the Cranberry Growers Association, from the south shore said the ponds should have 8" more of water. Murphy said that at current water

levels the water heats up and then loses oxygen and the pond will become barren. Willard asked about what's involved in laying two more pipes. Carr said there would need to open the dam to put in the weirs. So water would be lost and would need to set up some pumps to deal with the water. Carr mentioned directional drilling that could possibly work too. Murphy felt that with the two weir design we would have much more control over the water and safer overall. Provenzano asked about a peer review. Murphy said there was some other town approved engineers, but not sure that there is one that knows a lot about dams. Murphy would like two smaller peer reviews one on the design and one on the calculations because he's not sure the flow to other ponds has been taken into account. Parra feels a peer review that queries the free board is not possible. Ballentine wondered about a secondary objective that meets the regular use of the bog and hopes to design a dam that also meshes with public use and safety. Cons Com will meet on Thursday at the bog to do a site visit at 5 pm. Willard said that this CBWG would meet with Dan and then a site visit. Carr said that he would look into the two weir and overflow on the left and Murphy hoped that Carr have some idea by Thursday's site visit. Parra suggested we propose a recommendation to explore other options. Provenzano made a motion to have the two weir design examined by Cons Com. Rebbi seconded the motion. Provenzano, Young, Ascolillo, Rebbi, and Murphy voted aye, and Parra voted nay.

4. Bog House Maintenance Update - Willard reported nothing new because the meeting with Town Council hadn't been scheduled.
5. Open Discussion - Mooney reported that Chelmsford has a warrant article to expand the Chelmsford side of the cranberry bog. One abutter has offered a one acre parcel and the Chelmsford Cons Com will take it, so the Chelmsford side will expand by 1.3 acres and the water district was not interested. Also the Chelmsford side had some damage to the dike when a Bobcat got stuck and bigger machines had to pull it out. There are some serious ruts on that dike. She also agrees about the safety concerns expressed on the dam designs.

Next meeting: September 18, 2023 at 7 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm

Submitted by Susan Provenzano