

Mystic River Watershed Steering Committee
Draft Meeting Notes
January 20, 2010

Ground Rules:

- Everyone is encouraged to speak
- Please raise your hand to speak
- All ideas should be treated with respect
- One person should speak at a time
- Try not to use acronyms or abbreviations
- Ideas should be written as the speaker intends
- Audience member should state their name and affiliation before they speak

Agreement Points:

- Meeting minutes from November 18, 2009 were approved and posted online
- Meeting dates for 2010 are finalized. Please contact Caitlyn Whittle to volunteer to host a meeting in your community for one of the following dates:
 - March 31 – to be held at Century Bank in Medford
 - May 19 – to be held in Stoneham
 - July 21 – possible location at the Schrafft's Center in Charlestown
 - September 15
 - November 17
- Friends of Alewife Reservation and Groundwork Somerville were nominated and approved for membership on the Steering Committee.
- The Draft Mission & Joint Priorities (with noted revisions) will be finalized and serve as guidance for the Steering Committee this year.

Subcommittee Reviews and Updates:

Science (Todd Borci, EPA):

- The Science Committee held it's annual meeting on January 7th. Presentations included information on three superfund sites, cyanobacteria, and EPA's enforcement data. EPA's presentations are currently posted on the Mystic River Website. All others (including EPA) will be posted to the MyRWA website with a link from EPA's site.
- There was discussion after the presentations that focused on forming a smaller group of agencies and organizations that have resources to bring to bear on solving problems in the watershed. This group will be meeting soon to discuss the upcoming field season. This year we'd like to focus on identifying dry and wet weather bacteria.

Municipal:

- EPA New England has collected an appointee list for all 21 municipalities in the watershed. The first Municipal Subcommittee meeting was convened January 14th.
- The municipal appointees are interested in meeting once every other month, starting in April (meeting to be held in Woburn), on the off month of the Steering Committee

meetings. They are getting more direction and clarity about what the Steering Committee wants from them.

- There is interest in a presentation on EPA's new MS4 stormwater permit, as well as having representation from EPA and MassDEP on monitoring and compliance efforts at their next meeting.
- EPA New England organized a session at the Mass Municipal Association conference on January 22nd which was not well attended. Discussions with Winchester's Mel Kleckner suggest that EPA and Steering Committee members may try to schedule private meetings with each elected official in the watershed towns.
- It may be wise to start the conversation with municipal appointees by presenting them the matrix and asking for their assistance in filling it out. At the next meeting, it can be printed out sorted by community so they can see how their town fits into this Initiative. We can work to highlight local projects, such as parks and land acquisitions so that they can envision their community as part of something larger.
- There might be value to examining why some of the matrix projects aren't moving. Perhaps there is a way that the Steering Committee can help move those along. Are there budgetary issues? Joan Blaustein has a lot of connections with the municipal appointees and will assist with planning an agenda or help clarify for the April meeting.
- It might be wise to work with the towns who received the MET \$5k awards: Somerville, Medford, and Everett. These communities might want to show off their projects and it could raise awareness about projects in the watershed.
- The matrix might highlight projects relating to public access that the Steering Committee is currently unaware of. It would also give the committee a sense of work that is going on beyond the scope of DCR.
- We could also ask the municipalities to examine what they have going on with regard to open space. There may be plans acquire parcels for open space. It would fit with the open space agenda. Also, it might be useful for them to look at the 15 hot spot places presented by Patrick Herron at the science meeting, which are spread across the entire watershed.
- There are two upcoming MAPC regional meetings. Joan Blaustein will work to get the matrix on their upcoming agendas. The Inner Core group is meeting in March to discuss an open space forum. If the matrix is ready, it could be worked into the meeting.
- Winchester wonders if flooding is enough of a regional issue to make the municipal meeting agenda. FEMA recently published new flood insurance maps, and there are some active appeals. This topic was not part of a big discussion at the municipal meeting, but it could be added to a future agenda.

Business:

- Ivey St. John has been meeting with business groups in the watershed and bringing copies of the science subcommittee presentations. She is working to making connections and contacts in the watershed. So far she has had little success with Raytheon in Woburn. Please continue to send contacts in the watershed.
- There is a January meeting planned with the Chelsea Chamber of Commerce. Ivey will be attending and making a presentation about the MyRW Business Subcommittee.

- The goal of this work is to build a list of contacts and host a business stakeholder subcommittee meeting. The organizations that have been involved from the early meetings remain engaged.
- In November, Dan Driscoll (DCR) appealed to the Steering Committee regarding a Belmont Uplands development. As of this meeting, that development is fully permitted and therefore it would not be feasible to purchase the property.
- There has been discussion regarding environmental compliance of business stakeholders and how to include those currently in non-compliance into this effort.
- CLF has taken a position that the business subcommittee requires broad participation to effectively rehabilitate the Mystic River. This effort will not be possible without a coordinated effort that involves all invested stakeholders. Initially, there was concern and potential discomfort by the business community to sit on a committee with CLF. Businesses felt there was a risk of exposure and that any shared information could be used against them. CLF's position is that by participating on the committee, a business will not raise any heightened interest in that business, but at the same time, it will not insulate that business from future scrutiny by CLF. This subcommittee will use its time to encourage businesses to explore options and possibilities of becoming more environmentally compliant. For more information, or to discuss CLF's position, please contact Melissa Hoffer.
- CLF's position on businesses resonates strongly with EPA. In the one-page draft business subcommittee guidance, many legal caveats are included stating clearly that participation on the subcommittee will not give any entity advantage or shielding from ongoing or future enforcement actions. But, there are benefits from participating: we heard in the municipal meeting that communities see the benefit of having increased knowledge and shared information.
- EPA's enforcement branch has an active Assistance and Pollution Prevention (AP2) group that does offer a lot of compliance assistance. AP2 has been doing work in NH in preparation for the publication of the new municipal stormwater (MS4) permit. If the businesses have issues, they can be connected with AP2 staff.
- Neither EPA nor CLF see any differences between these legal terms for the business subcommittee and the municipal subcommittee.
- Steering Committee members feel that the business group should be moving forward, so when a sticky issue comes up, it can be dealt with at that time.
- The Steering Committee needs to be careful not to overstep the charter. The intention of the business subcommittee is to discuss restoration and rehabilitation of river resources. As stakeholders move toward greater environmental compliance, it can be celebrated, but until those changes are observed, we should continue to put pressure on those not doing it.
- Ivey St. John will continue to recruit for interest in the business subcommittee. Depending on the size of the list, at the next meeting, the committee will determine whether or not to plan the first subcommittee meeting.
- EPA New England has compiled a list of NPDES permittees in the watershed and plans to draft a letter inviting them to attend the first subcommittee meeting, once that has been planned.

Membership

- There has been interest by community groups to join the Steering Committee membership and the last couple meetings have been struggling to maintain a quorum.
- The following groups were nominated and approved for membership on the Steering Committee:
 - Friends of Alewife Reservation (Ellen Mass) is a nonprofit organization that is concerned with 130 acres of urban wild that includes 15 acres of silver maple forest. Most of the property is owned by MA DCR. They work on introducing people to the Reservation, not so much on advocating or litigating, but have been involved in many of the recent Alewife issues. The Reservation has been assessed and last week a motion was passed by the City of Cambridge to preserve the woodlands. The Friends has been involved in a lot of the politics, but would like to be more involved in the on the ground watershed issues. There are a lot of big corporations in the area, and Ellen is looking forward to talking with EK and Ivey about area businesses. For more information visit www.Friendsofalewifereservation.org
 - Groundwork Somerville (Jennifer Lawrence) is a 10-year old group. For the first 7 years, it focused only on Somerville with interest in gardening, infrastructure, youth jobs, etc. The past three years, GS has been looking into Mystic River watershed and making effort to be part of the work. In the past year, GS hired a coordinator for their Mystic River work. Since then, they have received some contracts in Everett and in Medford. They are interested in revolving a lot of their work around the Mystic by being part of public education, invasive species removal, etc. Right now GW has a staff of 7 full-time and 7 part-time employees. There is enough staff to get to events and do education and outreach and help other organizations do the work they are doing. GS is a big partnership organization and is looking forward to being part of the Steering Committee.
- No current community groups have dropped off the Steering Committee with these additions. There have been staffing shifts at Roots & Shoots and WREN. A letter was sent to WREN leadership about a substitute for Ed Quinn. The Steering Committee needs to have a standard protocol that outlines grounds for removal/disengaging an organization, perhaps based on meeting attendance since maintaining the quorum has been an issue. Ivey, EK, Caitlyn and Lynne will look to other models and propose a formal process to add and subtract organizations from the Steering Committee.
- Perhaps there is opportunity for ex-officio membership that would receive communication, but will be readmitted to the Committee when they can return to steady attendance.

Draft Mission and 2010 Joint Priorities:

Draft Handout for comment:

The Mystic River Watershed Steering Committee's intention is to work collaboratively to promote actions that will improve environmental conditions throughout the watershed. In total, the goal of this collaborative effort is to help restore and protect water quality and wildlife habitat, increase open space and public access to and sustainable recreational use of the river and its tributaries.

All organizations participating in this collaborative effort will maintain base program work in support of water quality, to the best of their ability, with additional targeted involvement that supports the initiative including the actions stated below. The group will work together to identify resources including funding for needed activities/projects in the watershed.¹

- Increase production of open space and access to the river and its tributaries through safe public pathways and access points (walkways, bikeways, trails) as well as increase public awareness, understanding and access to information about the Mystic River Watershed.

Activities that support the production of open space and access:

- Analyze existing watershed plans to identify and close gaps and coordinate activities that support the production of open space and access to the river.
- Support the development of designs and specifications to implement the MA DCR Master Plan.
- Continue discussions with developers to ensure that development and redevelopment projects are consistent with watershed goals while encouraging redevelopment and management of existing watershed resources – specifically brownfields.
- Focus production of public access in areas with environmental justice concerns.
- Increase signage at parks and other open areas to make citizens aware of the watershed.

Activities that support increased public awareness, understanding, and access to information about the Mystic River Watershed:

- Create opportunities for youth participation and educational activities.
- Create a newsletter/web newsletter that captures the work of the Steering Committee and communicates the priorities in a highly visible way.
- Increase media attention on the Mystic.
- Create a clearinghouse/central location for past and present research and projects throughout the watershed.
- Create opportunities to listen to community needs and concerns (e.g. listening sessions).

The following actions and priorities were voted upon and have high importance to the Steering Committee. They will remain listed here as they are ongoing and will be maintained for future action.

- Increase level of environmental compliance in the Mystic River watershed with measurable results
 - Establish TMDLs for nutrients and other pollutants of concern (e.g. phosphorus)
 - Reduce frequency of SSO and CSO events
 - Increase level of EPA and state enforcement activity in the Mystic River watershed
 - Provide outreach and technical assistance to municipalities to foster compliance (e.g. stormwater management)
- Establish and select priorities for next three years to improve water quality and environmental conditions in the Mystic River, lakes, and streams in the watershed. Create metrics and measurements to track progress and determine success.
 - Improve coordination of planning and development activities in the Mystic River watershed and look at cumulative impact of development decisions.
 - Create a comprehensive plan for the Mystic River watershed by analyzing existing watershed plans and identifying gaps and coordinating activities.

¹ **Caveats**

Note, however, that any transaction involving reimbursement or contribution of funds between the parties to this initiative will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures under separate written agreements.

Nothing in this statement, in and of itself, obligates EPA to expend appropriations or to enter into any contract, assistance agreement, interagency agreement, or incur other financial obligations that would be inconsistent with the Agency's statutory authority, its budget priorities, or the availability of appropriated funds.

Discussion:

- The above draft represents the fact that the time is ripe to work on open space and access in 2010. This is not to say that next year, it might appropriate to shift the focus to water quality. This should be viewed as a workload and focus rather than prioritization of these issues over one another.
- The mission, as it is drafted, really captures what the Committee is trying to delineate. There is a great opportunity to engage the groups with this agenda at this time. The committee needs to start breaking into workgroups to see how this agenda can be supported. A first step would be to review the DCR master plan and look where there are opportunities for development, funding, and open space acquisition.
- A line needs to be added that states the Committee's support of DCR's Master Plan over the coming years (edit notated above). The Committee needs to set two objectives for the next three years and put its weight into those objectives. Objectives for completion thru 2012 should put up front and other items can be maintained in smaller bullets under a "parking lot."
- Some of the "parking lot" items are currently ongoing and will remain ongoing. The language should be changed to reflect that. Stephen Perkins will work with Caitlyn to develop appropriate language.
- MassDEP has lost a lot of staff and therefore they cannot commit to what level of resources they will have for bacteria source tracking in the coming season. This work should remain on the agenda so that it is clear that the capabilities are important and should be reinstated when possible. Groups should feel free to draft letters to the secretary (on behalf of their own organizations) detailing why this work is important and should be reinstated.
- Motion agreed that the document above (with noted revisions) will serve as guidance in terms of the mission and joint priorities this year. EPA will make the edits and circulate for final review and thru email.

Identification of next steps & assignments:

- The best place to start working on this is thru DCR's Master Plan.
- The Steering Committee will come together in March to identify assignments for activities listed in the Priorities and develop an action plan. Members will identify what will be done as a committee and what organizations will do to support the goals set forward.
- For March, MyRWA will summarize the 2006 Mystic River assessment. They will identify the parcels were identified as part of that assessment.
- EPA will work with MA DCR to distribute Master Plans to Steering Committee members.
- There is valuable information in the Alewife Master Plan as well. Members might be interested in reviewing that for the March meeting. It is posted at the Friends' website as well as on DCR's website.

Announcements:

- On January 27, 2010 from 4-7 MAPC is hosting an open house to showcase their new space, highlight major ongoing projects, and offer an opportunity to network. Go to www.mapc.org for more info.
- There is a national Urban River Restoration Conference coming up in March in Boston. Chelsea will be making some presentations on the Chelsea Creek.
- EPA will soon be issuing the draft MS4 stormwater permit. Be on the lookout for the draft and information for the public comment period and public hearing. All are encouraged to look at the draft and give comments on the permit. EPA will send a message to the Mystic lists once it is issued.
- EPA is working with MET and USFWS on another NAWCA funding workshop. The date right now is for Feb 4th. Please come to the meeting with information about potential projects, plans, land title owners, etc. This will be a working meeting designed to give input on the feasibility of potential projects.
- There was recently a meeting to look at Sullivan Square and Rutherford Avenue in Somerville/Charlestown. There is a plan to remove the tunnel from Rutherford Avenue which would reduce the traffic from 8 lanes to 4. On the Charlestown side, there will be a major open greenspace that will go all the way to the Mystic River. Currently, there is a bike path at the Schrafft's property down to Medford St.

Follow up Actions:

- Joan Blaustein will assist with planning an agenda or help clarify for the April meeting.
- EPA will work with Steering Committee members to schedule private meetings with each elected official in the watershed towns.
- EPA New England will circulate the matrix to municipalities and ask them to fill it out. EPA will also send the latest version of the matrix to Steering Committee members.
- There are two upcoming MAPC regional meetings. Joan Blaustein will work to get the matrix on their upcoming agendas. The Inner Core group is meeting in March to discuss an open space forum. If the matrix is ready, it could be worked into the meeting.
- Ivey St. John will continue to compile a list of interested businesses. At the next meeting, the committee can determine if the list is big enough to warrant planning the first subcommittee meeting.
- EPA New England has compiled a list of NPDES permittees in the watershed and plans to draft a letter inviting them to attend the first subcommittee meeting, once it has been planned.
- Ivey, EK, Caitlyn and Lynne will work on making language for adding and disengaging groups from the Steering Committee.
- EPA will make the edits to the Draft Mission & Joint 2010 Priorities. The document will be circulated via email for final review.
- In the March meeting, MyRWA will report on the recommendations in the 2006 Assessment & Action Plan as well as details of water quality and environmental impairments in the watershed.
- EPA will work with DCR to provide printed copies of the Master Plan to all Steering Committee members.

- Members should review the Alewife Master Plan for the March meeting. It is posted at the Friends' website as well as on DCR's website.
- EPA NE will draft a one-page handout that succinctly outlines the Initiative and relevant information (phone numbers, website, members).
- The Steering Committee will continue to have briefings and/or distribute materials on state and federal water quality standards and regulations (CWA, TMDLs, etc.)
- EPA will continue to gather and distribute existing Mystic River Watershed plans from DCR, MyRWA, MAPC, and Chelsea Creek and look at how they relate to the list above.
- The next Meeting will be on March 31, 2010 at the Century Bank in Medford.

**Mystic River Watershed Steering Committee Sign-in Sheet
January 20, 2010**

Name	Organization	E-mail address
Ivey St. John	Charlestown Waterfront Coalition (CWC)	gran.nie@comcast.net
Andrew DeSantis	Chelsea Department of Public Works (DPW)/Revere ConCom	adesantis@chelseama.gov
Bob Conway	Town of Winchester/Stoneham ConCom	bconway@winchester.us
Ekongkar Singh Khalsa	Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA)	ek@mysticriver.org
Melissa Hoffer	Conservation Law Foundation	mhoffer@clf.org
Melinda Alvarado-Vega	Neighborhood of Affordable Housing (NOAH)	mvega@noahcdc.org
Jan Dolan	Friends of Upper Mystic Lake	dolanjanice@aol.com
Roseann Bongiovanni	Chelsea Green Space	roseannb@chelseacollab.org
Ellen Mass	Friends of Alewife Reservation	elnmass@verizon.net
Jennifer Lawrence	Groundwork Somerville	jllawrence@groundworksomerville.org
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