

# Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee

## Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2014

Minutes of the meeting held by the Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee on Thursday February 6, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. at the Foxborough Public Safety Building, 8 Chestnut Street, Foxborough, MA 02035.

Members Present: Wayne P. Southworth, Easton; Janice Fowler, Easton; John Fresh, Jr., Easton; Joan F. Sozio, Foxborough; Robert Worthley, Foxborough; John Shannon, Mansfield; Ed Tartufo, Mansfield; Jenn Carlino, Norton; Jon Rowe, Norton; Frances Shirley, Norton; Dave Masciarelli, Sharon;

Others Present: Jane Sears Pierce; Kathy Ebert-Zawasky, Bill Napolitano

**I. Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Wayne Southworth.

**II. Review Minutes of December 5, 2013** – After a minor change was made to Item #9, Jon Rowe motioned to accept the minutes of December 5, 2013 as amended. Frances Shirley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. Jane Sears Pierce, Foxborough Conservation Manager – Update on Current Activities**

Jane Sears Pierce updated the CRAAC on activities in Foxborough near the Canoe River. She said that there have been some issues with the use of ATV's. Hunting is allowed in the area off of Willow Street, and is heavily used by hunters. The hunters keep her informed of anything that might be going on in the Conservation area. After they reported issues with ATV usage, she visited the property and found that areas near the power lines had been cleared out, and that half-pipe ramps and trampolines had also been brought into the area. Signs were put up, but were found burnt. One of the Commissioners on the Conservation Commission lives nearby, and spoke to the people using ATV's. The Department of Fisheries and Wildlife has letters that can be sent to abutters to inform them of what is and is not allowed there. A handout that showed some of the damage was distributed.

Scott Barbato, a developer near the Canoe River, has been surveying the Browning property and wants to meet with the owner. The owner of the Browning property wants to preserve his land and he may speak with the Trustees of Reservation or the Audubon Society about this.

Beaumont's Pond has issues with invasive aquatic weeds and they wanted to put herbicides in the water. This is not allowed in an ACEC. Some homeowners at Beaumont's Pond have lawns all the way to the water. They were supposed to maintain a 50' buffer strip as part of the original approval. They are going to find a way to re-educate the lakefront homeowners, making them aware of the repercussions in the aquifer.

The Conservation Commission had an Open Space and Recreation Plan approved by the State over a year ago. The plan mentions that the Canoe River is an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Several vernal pools have also been documented. The Commission is reviewing and revising their regulations. They are also finding endangered species, including the Blanding's Turtle, the Wood Turtle, a Browning Box Turtle and marbled salamanders. Indigo buntings have been spotted on power lines off of Willow Street.

#### **IV. Kathy Ebert-Zawasky, Land Preservation Society of Norton (LPS) Regarding Red Mill Road Dam Removal Project**

Kathy Zawasky of the Land Preservation Society of Norton discussed the Red Mill Road dam removal project. On October 25, 2013, Beth Lambert from the State, along with representatives from the Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy and the Land Preservation Society made a visit to the site. Nominations were opened in November, and those accepted were given a December 19, 2013 deadline. This included the Red Mill Road Dam Removal Project. A proposal was then swiftly submitted to the Department of Fish and Game, Division of Ecological Restoration and Riverways Program for a 2014 Aquatic Habitat Restoration and Revitalization Priority Project.

Bill Napolitano of the Southeast Regional Planning and Economic Development District mentioned that the dams on the Taunton River were in this program in the past. The property lies along the Easton/Norton border. An excerpt from the petition and a handout with pictures of the two bridges on Red Mill Road in Norton were both distributed. K. Ebert-Zawasky explained that she is seeking the support of the CRAAC for this project. It is important that the CRAAC understand that the intent of the LPS is to preserve and share enjoyment of the land, and that the goals of the LPS and the CRAAC are similar. She explained that this project is a smaller restoration project than those that have occurred downriver, and it can bring progress to the quality of life near the river. It is her hope that the two committees will partner on this in the future. A lot of people use this area. It has easy access and parking. W. Southworth noted that a Canoe River Awareness Day was held there in the past. He said that the concept sounds good, but noted that any change in the elevation of the water may be of concern to the local Water Departments. The CRAAC would need to meet with the Norton and Easton Water Departments, and their engineers, to see if this would have an impact. K. Ebert-Zawasky said that the study would certainly look into this.

Bill Napolitano noted that the work that has been done under the Division of Ecological Restoration and Riverways Program since 2005 has freed up 27 river miles to spawning grounds. Herring has been found in the Mill River for the first time in 210 years. Sea lamprey, white herring, bass and trout are now appearing in good supply. The project will move forward in a very public manner, and there will be public advisory groups involved. He underscored that this would be an amazing opportunity to restore the river. This type of restoration project brings nature back into balance. Minimum flow standards recommended by the State will have to be met. The dam in question appears to be more of an obstruction than a dam; once removed, a deep, historic, natural channel will be restored. The river will fill up the river banks and a freer flow and passageway will be restored. W. Southworth said that the proposal needs to be evaluated to determine if there is an effect on the amount of water, and he would not be in favor of the proposal if it were to negatively affect the amount of water. K. Ebert-Zawasky stated that there will be a lot of communication throughout the entire proposal. Bill Napolitano said that the Feasibility Study will look at all attributes of the area, and that the State is profoundly aware of the location. More information will be available in March.

#### **V. Open Space Map and Greenbelt Update**

Jenn Carlino said that two land grants have been obtained for land along the Three Mile River; one for the Erickson property and one for Crane Farm.

#### **VI. 2014 Awareness Day Discussion**

The Foxborough Water Department recently completed a new treatment plant on Oak Street. The Department will be having an Open House, and it was suggested that it also host the Canoe River Awareness Day in conjunction with the Open House. R. Worthley will get more details about which weekend in May will work best. Tables will be set up with maps and literature for the

event. J. Sozio motioned to partner with the Town of Foxborough to host the 2014 Canoe River Awareness Day at the new Oak Street Treatment Plant. F. Shirley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**VII. Discuss Committee Goals**

Members were encouraged to join the Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee's Facebook page.

**VIII. New Business -**

The next meeting of the CRAAC will take place on Thursday April 3, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. in the Norton Town Hall.

**IX. Meeting Adjourned** – J. Fresh motioned to adjourn the meeting. J. Fowler seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn its meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.