

Approved 4/3/13

**City of Boston Conservation Commission
Public Hearing Meeting Minutes**
Boston City Hall, Hearing Room 801
Boston, Massachusetts, 02201

February 20, 2013

Commissioners Present: Charles Button- Chairman, Vivien Li, Jeanne McHallam, Antonia Pollak

Commissioners Not Present: Stephen Kunian, John Lewis, John Sullivan

Staff Present: Stephanie Krueel, Executive Secretary

6:05 PM

Notice of Intent for **DEP File No. 006-1333** from the Boston Redevelopment Authority for Fender Pile Repairs at 500 Chelsea St, Charlestown Navy Yard Pier 4, Boston Inner Harbor

Representatives: John O'Brien, BRA; Andrew Nilson, Childs Engineering

V. Li noted that BRA and Childs Engineering are dues-paying members of her employer, The Boston Harbor Association.

A. Nilson described the proposed project. Mr. O'Brien described the nature and cause of the damage to the fender pile system.

C. Button confirmed that pile removal would be accomplished by pulling only. Ms. Li confirmed that there would be no changes made to the building on the site.

The proponents explained that demolition would take a few days, and the project would take approximately three weeks total. The pier would be ready by summer. The project cost is \$118,000, the total amount of which the BRA has made available for the project.

Mr. Button noted that signed and stamped drawings must be submitted.

Mr. O'Brien noted that construction vehicle parking and construction staging would take place outside of the buffer zone.

- **Motion made by A. Pollak and seconded by J. McHallam to issue the Order of Conditions as written (4/0/0 6:12 PM)**
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6:15 PM

Notice of Intent from the Massachusetts Port Authority for geotechnical borings in the Reserved Channel, South Boston (Land Under Ocean, Fish Run)

Ms. Krueel stated that the applicant requested that the hearing be postponed to give more time to comply with notification requirements not related to Conservation Commission proceedings.

6:25 PM

Update on **DEP File No. 006-1327** USPS Loading Dock Paving at 25 Dorchester Ave.

S. Krueel read into the record a letter from Michael Bezner, USPS Architect/Engineer dated February 15, 2013 regarding special conditions 32, 33, and 34. C. Button discussed a recent site visit with the applicant. V. Li noted that the applicant was not contesting the condition of the walkway adjacent to the Fort Point Channel. Ms. Pollak requested an update on the status of the sale of the property. Ms. Krueel reported that the proponent did not have anything to report. Ms. Li stated that she was not satisfied with the attached maintenance plan for the A Street employee parking lot. The bureaucratic nature of the process allows trash

and debris to be blown into the Channel. Mr. Button suggested that Ms. Li put her suggestions in writing to be forwarded to the proponent. Ms. Pollak suggested that the lot should be cleared of trash and debris on a daily basis.

6:30 PM

Notice of Intent for DEP File No. 006-1334 from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation for Rehabilitation and Accessibility Improvements to the John W. Weeks Footbridge, Soldiers Field Rd, Allston, Charles River (Bank, Land Under Waterways, Bordering Land Subject to Flooding, Riverfront Area, Fish Run)

Representatives: Alyssa Jacobs, Epsilon Associates; Greg Imbaro, SGH; David Lenhardt & James Potvin, DCR

S. Krueel read into the record a letter from the Charles River Watershed Association dated February 20, 2013.

A. Jacobs explained that the bridge is not currently ADA accessible. She described the proposed project, which has been reviewed and given a variance by the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (the variance is for the existing bridge, not the proposed new approach, which will be ADA compliant). Ms. Jacobs also described the proposed erosion and sediment control measures and the landscape plan. One of the main purposes of the project is to restore the native shoreline-emergent area proximate to the bridge.

A. Pollak asked of the historic preservation agencies had been consulted. The Cambridge Landmarks & Preservation Commission and the Boston Historical Commission have been consulted. The proponent is working toward approval from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and replication of historic light poles is part of that process.

Ms. Jacobs described the bridge restoration work and noted that spud pile barges would be used for water-based work.

Ms. Pollak confirmed that there would be no excavation. Mr. Lenhardt clarified that existing land-side lights would be replaced and new lights would be added on the bridge.

Mr. Button asserted that vegetation within the rip rap above mean low water seems to be an appropriate treatment at the bridge abutments due to the currents. Mr. Imbaro noted that up to one foot of rip rap is occasionally exposed. He also noted that the existing clogged drywells also contribute to erosion at the bridge abutments.

Ms. Pollak noted the soil compaction around the base of the bridge and requested that the soil be aerated prior to filling and planting to allow roots to take hold.

Ms. Li believes that the rip rap boulders seem too large and that there is too much hardscape. She wondered if the proposed work provides good enough wildlife habitat. Ms. Jacobs noted that historically rip rap has been present at this location. Work here would be similar to that at the Anderson Bridge, but with less rip rap.

Ms. Li wondered if the grading on the sides of the approaches could be more gradual. Mr. Imbaro explained that many alternatives were considered. All grades on the approach are less than 5 degrees as per ADA regulations. The slopes at the sides of the approach are graded at a 1:4 ratio, which allows the slopes to be mowed while minimizing the amount of fill and level of impact on the surroundings.

Ms. Jacobs noted that the team would be presenting at the next hearing of the Cambridge Conservation Commission to gain final approval after taking their suggested changes into consideration.

J. McHallam asked about the timing of the work. The project will commence in late Spring/early Summer, and funds are available.

Ms. Li reiterated her desire to see more of a bioengineering approach taken for shoreline stabilization. Mr. Lenhardt again noted that the rip rap above the water is to be vegetated, and the approach needs to balance environmental factors with the plan to restore the historical bridges along the Charles River.

Mr. Button referenced Attachment A, page 9, 5th paragraph, and asked if sod matts could be used rather than see mix. Ms. Pollak reiterated the need to aerate the soil in these areas.

Mr. Imbaro further explained that the rip rap will be entirely below the normal summer waterline. It will extend 10-15 feet to the mudline below the water. Ms. Jacobs recalled that DCR tried a bioengineered solution at Magazine Beach, which did not perform well due to wave action. Mr. Imbaro noted that in addition to natural wave action, the project site also experienced man-made wave action from boats as well as ice action.

Ms. Li noted that Attachment G stated that the dry wells would be inspected annually. She believed that bi-annual inspection was necessary. Mr. Imbaro mentioned that the dry wells only service the bridge and not the parkland, so clogging would not be a large issue.

Ms. Pollak confirmed that salt rather than sand is used on the bridge.

Ms. Li asked about turbidity monitoring. The proponent explained that in-water work would only be occurring for approximately one month, and turbidity monitoring is a practice usually used for longer-term projects.

Ms. Li suggested using porous pavement for the approach pathway. Mr. Lenhardt noted that DCR is still evaluating porous pavement at other locations and is not prepared to use it in this project. Mr. Button explained that the amount of pavement used in the project would be so small that it using porous pavement would not provide much of a benefit.

- **Motion made by A. Pollak and seconded by J. McHallam to issue the Order of Conditions with the following amendments: Compacted soils must be aerated prior to planting to help ensure that vegetation thrives, and all dry well maintenance should occur on, at a minimum, a semi-annual basis. (3/0/1, Li 7:10 PM)**
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- **Motion made by V. Li and seconded by J. McHallam to accept the minutes of the February 6, 2013 meeting as written (4/0/0 7:10)**
 - **Motion made by V. Li and seconded by A. Pollak to adjourn the meeting (4/0/0 7:10 PM)**

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Krueel

Executive Secretary