

Mystic River Watershed Steering Committee

NOTES – April 16, 2015

9:00-10:30 am

Location: Teleconference

Action Items:

- Email Liz Glivinski (Glivinski.Elizabeth@epa.gov) to approve or request removal of your contact information from the contact list.
- Ivey to add Rosanne and Anamarija to the Rutherford Avenue Advocacy Group listserv.
- Patrick Herron to provide Ivey St. John, Anamarija and Chris Mancini's email address to the Friends of Malden River group
- Ivey St. John to draft thank you letter to the MWRA on behalf of the Steering Committee.
- Ivey St. John, EK Singh Khalsa, and John Walkey to help plan the June 4 Federal Partnerships meeting.
- EK Singh Khalsa and Alicia Hunt to consider how to engage the MAPC in conversation about the development of a watershed-wide open space plan.
- Update the open spaces priorities in the Mission and Priorities document in the fall.

Decisions and Actions:

The Steering Committee made the following decisions and actions:

- Approved the December 2014 meeting summary.
- Approved the revisions to the Mission and Priorities document.
- Separate meetings will be held on June 4 and June 18.
- A thank you letter will be written to MWRA for approving the USGS/MWRA funding agreement.
- Members will discuss opportunities with MAPC to develop a master open space plan.

Welcome, Introductions, and December 2014 Meeting Summary

EPA's Caitlyn Whittle welcomed the committee members, led introductions, and reviewed the agenda. The committee approved the December 2014 meeting minutes without any revisions.

Member Updates and Announcements

Members provided the following updates and announcements:

- The EPA announced the updated contact list is nearly complete; but due to legal requirements stipulated in the Privacy Act of 1974 EPA must obtain permission from all committee members before distributing the contact list. The list will contain name, organization, business address, phone numbers, and email addresses of steering committee member and alternates. Please contact Liz Glivinski (Glivinski.Elizabeth@epa.gov) to approve or request removal of your contact information. If the EPA does not hear from a member or alternate, the assumption will be that that person opted-out of including their contact information in the list. The final list will be sent to members and alternates only.
- The MWRA Board of Directors approved a joint funding agreement with the United States Geological Survey for stream gauge monitoring through 2017 at three locations. This effort will help build knowledge about the hydrology of the watershed and enable development of a phosphorous TMDL. EPA is supporting the effort with lab support, autosamplers, and a real-time buoy monitor. The group decided to write a thank you letter to MWRA for approving the funding agreement between MWRA and USGS.
- Casino developer Steve Wynn hired Larry Feldman, Principal at GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc., to serve as the Licensed Site Professional (LSP) and oversee the environmental remediation at the proposed casino site/old Monsanto property in Everett. The Remediation Action Management Plan is expected to be submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) by May 1. A request for proposals (RFP) and selection of a contractor to implement the plan is expected by mid-summer. Another community meeting is anticipated after the contractor is on board. The plan would remove arsenic from two points, one on the northwest corner near the railroad tracks and another on the south facing point jutting in to the river, the garage site, and sediment in the river in an area proposed for development of a marina. Existing commuter rail lines could be used to ship contaminated sediment

offsite at nighttime. Some members expressed concern about using the commuter lines to ship contaminated sediment offsite and requested to be added to the Rutherford Avenue Advocacy Group listserv.

- A large community day event is planned at Riverbend Park on May 31 in the City of Medford. Members were invited to set up informational tables to conduct outreach for the Mystic River Watershed at the event. Member Alicia Hunt also offered to distribute Mystic River Watershed information from her table.
- Members were invited to attend the Mystic River Herring Run and Paddle on May 17.
- Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management was seeking comments on proposed changes to the boundaries of the Chelsea Creek Designated Port Area (DPA), a zone designated for water dependent development. Changes to the boundary could enable new, non-water dependent development in the area. Some groups are advocating for community conversations to help determine which sites might be removed from the DPA.
- The Friends of the Malden River (FoMR) planned a meeting for April 16 to discuss plans for remediation in the Malden River. The Friends of Malden River recently succeeded in submitting a request for Public Involvement Plan (PIP) at the Honeywell International site. Online records indicate that chemicals from the site may have reached the river. The PIP will require a public meeting to help people understand the proposed remediation plan. The Toxics Action Center may be meeting with FoMR to discuss how to effectively engage in the process. A member commented that the open spaces committee should be interested in this issue and several requested to be added to the Friends of Malden River listserv.

Sub Group Reports/Discussion

Committee members reported on the water quality and open spaces sub groups:

Water Quality Sub Group: During the last meeting of the water quality sub group, participants discussed the fish tissue/consumption advisory study, other opportunities to acquire fish tissue samples, and priority actions for the MS4 Municipal Technical Assistance Program:

The fish tissue study is wrapping up. The results of surveys conducted with anglers in East Boston and Chelsea indicate that anglers are catching and eating local fish, but the fish tissue study team's initial and secondary attempts to collect fish did not yield enough fish to warrant laboratory analysis. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries committed to help the study team catch fish in 2015. This will be the last attempt to collect enough fish for tissue sampling. It was suggested a fishing derby like the one held at Cornell Pond in Dartmouth, Massachusetts could be another way to catch fish for toxicological analysis.

Although municipalities are not focused on the MS4 permits since they are still in draft form, the water quality group is planning to convene roundtable discussions with municipalities to discuss issues of funding and community outreach related to MS4 implementation. These discussions will be part of the MS4 Municipal Technical Assistance Program to help municipalities prepare for and implement the MS4 permits. Continued outreach with municipalities will be needed to ensure the technical assistance is of most use to the municipalities. Municipal feedback suggests that peer-to-peer roundtable discussions about community outreach/engagement for MS4 and potential MS4/stormwater funding mechanisms may be useful at this stage. These roundtables could be organized in the fall.

The water quality subcommittee also revised the Mission and Priority document, and distributed a document highlighting the changes and a memo summarizing the changes that were made. The steering committee approved the changes. The group also decided to revise the priorities under the open spaces sub group in the fall after hearing Dan Driscoll's (MassDCR) presentation.

Open Space Sub Group: The steering committee members briefly discussed future meetings related to open spaces, a steering committee meeting focused on federal partnerships and another meeting to hear a presentation by Dan Driscoll. Group members agreed to hold two meetings, on one June 4 and another on June 18. The June 4th meeting will include Urban Watershed grant recipient presentations and potentially a presentation by another

federal urban watershed partnership; the focus of the meeting will be on federal partnerships and how to engage partners in the work of the Mystic River Watershed Initiative. Several steering committee (Ivey St. John, EK Khalsa, John Walkey) members volunteered to help plan the June 4 meeting. During the June 18 meeting, Dan Driscoll will present on DCR's Mystic Master Plan. Steering committee members suggested he focus some of the presentation on DCR's plan for Draw Seven and Mystic River Park Parklands and where additional improvements could be made.

A member commented that Steve Wynn agreed to landscape in Sullivan Square but the Wynn development mitigation will only impact the 93 North off bound ramp. She added that the development will produce difficult traffic problems in the areas, and that Dan Driscoll's presentation will be timely given the Wynn mitigation plan and Draw Seven plans.

Municipal Sub Group: EPA announced intent to organize another meeting this summer with the federal partners and municipalities to talk about open space grant programs. The goal of the meeting would be for the federal partners to describe the grant programs they have available and provide an opportunity for the municipalities and federal partners to discuss how the programs might assist in municipal open space planning. EPA is contacting municipalities to suggest who from their communities should attend.

A member commented that since steering committee interest in open spaces is focused along rivers and tributaries, it might be interesting to explore funding, partnering, or staffing opportunities to review municipal open space plans and use the information to develop a more robust watershed-wide open space plan focused specifically on rivers, streams, and lakes. The goal of developing such a plan would be to identify keystone parcels that provide connectivity or areas lacking open space and then focus future planning opportunities with municipalities on these areas. A member added that this would provide municipalities with the opportunity to plan for resiliency and sea level rise by providing open space buffer zones. Additionally, a member suggested this type of effort would help to illuminate how economic development priorities, community interest, and land use decision-making processes put pressure on property development. A municipal representative said Medford has a strong open space plan and would welcome assistance, but more focus on communities near the ocean may be valuable. She noted the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) maybe a potential partner since the Metro Mayors Coalition, which MPAC established, is working on an agreement regarding resiliency. EK and Alicia agreed to engage the MAPC in discussion of this idea.

Science Forum: Fifty-five people participated in the Science Forum on April 9th. Several presentations were made, including a brief presentation about the Mystic River Watershed Water Quality Commission by Representative Denise Provost. Participants also discussed opportunities for collaboration on future work. The presentations and a meeting summary will be posted on the website.

Review of Next Meetings Dates/Schedule for 2015

The following meetings are planned:

- June 4: Steering Committee Meeting – Federal Partnership Presentations at EPA
- June 18: Open Space Subcommittee – all are welcome to join – Dan Driscoll will present on the Mystic Master Plan at Delta Dental in Charlestown
- September 10: Steering Committee Meeting – MassDER Presentation, hosted by Chelsea Collaborative
- December 10: Steering Committee Meeting – No presenter or topic selected yet; will be held at the Massachusetts State House.

New Business

No new business was raised.

The conference call adjourned at 10:30 am.