

Meeting Minutes
Herring River Executive Council (HREC)
Thursday, June 15, 2023, 3:00 pm

Virtual meeting via Zoom

HREC members present: Deborah Freeman, Geoff Sanders, Helen Miranda Wilson, Janet Reinhart, Brian Carlstrom; Coordinator: Carole Ridley; Others present: Christine Odiaga, Tim Smith, Bill Biewenga, Dale Rheault, Christa Drew, Katie Castagno, Gabrielle Sakolsky, Gail Ferguson, Barry McLaughlin, Josh Yeston, Laura Runkel, Al Kraft, Kathleen Bacon.

Minutes

Following the meeting welcome and introductions, the draft minutes of March, 16 2023, with date at top corrected, were approved by unanimous consent.

Herring River Restoration Project Update

Carole Ridley introduced Wes Stinson of Environmental Partners, to provide an update on construction of the Chequessett Neck Bridge.

Mr. Stinson reported that MIG of Acton, MA is the contractor and works with a crew of six. Construction began in March 2023 with preparation of the Duck Harbor Road staging area and establishment of site access adjacent to the water, working north to south on the upstream side of the dike. The purpose is to provide access to build the temporary bypass. The Northern and southern abutments are under construction with installation of tie rods and sheeting. There is also installation of stone armor for the permanent bridge which must be installed now because it will be located under the temporary bypass. Test piles also will be driven to analyze loading capacity at the permanent bridge. A larger crane will be moved in, up to 150 to 180 ft. Environmental Partners and MIG are sensitive to community comments, and have been careful to minimize traffic disruption. Final submittals for the temporary bypass are under review by Massachusetts Department of Transportation. Once the bypass is constructed utilities that now cross the dike will need to be temporarily relocated to the bypass.

Brian Carlstrom asked if MIG will need to enlarge the staging area at Duck Harbor Road. Mr. Stinson replied that the permitted plans show a larger area, but MIG believes they will be able to work within the smaller staging area.

Geoff Sanders asked if there is a lot of foot traffic in the area. Mr. Stinson reported that there are more people in the vicinity as the weather improves. MIG works diligently to keep the construction area safe.

Barry McLaughlin of Chequessett Club stated that he had contacted the Town Administrator about the speed of trucks on Chequessett Neck Road. Mr. Stinson said that he was aware of this issue and that MIG is also addressing this and safety is of utmost importance.

Mr. Sanders also asked when the bypass would be operational. Mr. Stinson replied that late October is the scheduled completion, barring unforeseen delays.

Helen Miranda Wilson asked if utility service would be disrupted during the movement of utilities. Mr. Stinson said that there would probably be some short-term delay, within a workday, and that he would have more information as the utilities' plans develop. Affected property owners will be notified.

Following Mr. Stinson's presentation, Carole Ridley continued with other project updates. Final design plans are in various stages of completion for low road elevation and culvert replacements along Old

County, Pole Dike and Bound Brook Island Road; High Toss Road, and Way 672. Final design plans are also underway for mitigation measures on private property, including two properties on Way 672, one on Bound Brook Island Road, and the Chequessett Club.

Mr. Sanders reported that final design work for the Mill Creek Water Control Structure is complete and it is expected that this project will go out to bid soon.

Mr. Carlstrom reported that demolition and clearing of the Feil and Rosenberg properties has occurred.

Ms. Ridley reported that an additional grant of \$14,690,000 had been awarded to the Town of Wellfleet from the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration (NOAA). This funding, along with grants from US Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (\$27,200,000) and MA Division of Ecological Restoration (\$22,670,000) provide all funding needed to construct water control infrastructure on town-owned property, and all Phase 1 mitigation measures on public and private property. A rigorous grant tracking and reporting process is in place. The Town has contracted with Clifton Larson Allen (CLA) an accounting firm with municipal finance expertise, to assist the town with grant administration. The grant funding agencies, Environmental Partners, and Herring River Technical Team are also providing support in this grant tracking and reporting process. CLA and Environmental Partners are funded through grant proceeds.

Helen Miranda Wilson asked if contractors were selected through a competitive process. Ms. Ridley reported that MIG and all future construction contractors will be selected through a competitive bid process.

Tim Smith provided an update on vegetation clearing activity. Approximately 80 acres have been cleared in Duck Harbor, and 40 more acres will be cleared next winter. Additional funding is available to clear woody vegetation in the area that will be inundated in the first year of tidal restoration. That work will occur in Winter of 2024. Mowing of phragmites will occur in Winter of 2025. The spoil berm pilot project is progressing. Ground and aerial surveys have been completed. Permitting will soon be underway.

In areas of Duck Harbor where vegetation has been cleared, there is growth of salt-tolerant successive species that will last two or three years before salt grasses start to grow.

Ms. Ridley mentioned that a shellfish relay had been organized by Nancy Civetta in early April which resulted in relocation of 20,000 oysters from upstream of the dike to a prohibited area below the dike.

Herring River Stakeholder Group

Bill Biewenga, Chair of the Stakeholder Group, commented on the professional manner in which the Feil and Rosenberg structures were removed. He also asked if a new member could be added to the Stakeholder Group to report on financial management of the project. Debbie Freeman commented that it would not be appropriate for town staff or consultants who prepare these reports to be members of the Stakeholder Group. Ms. Wilson added that the Stakeholder Group would have access to any public reports. Mr. Carlstrom asked if regular financial reports could be incorporated in the project updates given to the Executive Council. Ms. Ridley said that was possible, and any public reports in Selectboard meeting packages could be shared with the Stakeholders Group and, if questions arise, they could be pursued. Mr. Biewenga was satisfied with the approach as long as there is an opportunity for two-way communication. Gail Ferguson asked if financial management was within the charge of the Stakeholder Group. Mr. Biewenga said he thought the information would be important to the group's role as project advisors on implementation issues.

HREC Member Announcements:

There were no member announcements.

Public Comment

There was no public comment

Next Meeting Dates

The following meeting dates remain in 2023:

Thursday, September 14, 2023, 3:00 pm

Thursday, December 14, 2023, 3:00 pm

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 pm.

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Approved by consensus on September 14, 2023 and Submitted by Carole Ridley

Herring River Restoration Project

Herring River Executive Council

June 15, 2022



Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Approval of minutes: March 16, 2023
3. Herring River Restoration Project Updates
4. Herring River Stakeholder Group
4. HREC member announcements
5. Public comment
6. 2023 meeting dates (virtual or in-person):
 - Thursday, September 14, 2023, 3:00 pm
 - Thursday, December 14, 2023, 3:00 pm
7. Adjourn

Project Updates – Construction

Wes Stinson, Environmental Partners

Project Updates – Other Project Elements

- Final design underway and bid advertisements est. late 2023 for:
 - Mill Creek Water Control Structure
 - Low road elevation culverts
 - Culvert modifications for increase scour protection
 - Road profile modifications for increased drainage
 - High Toss Road causeway removal and road elevation
 - Property impact prevention
 - CYCC
 - Way 672
 - Bound Brook Island Rd

Project Updates – Fundraising/Grants Management

- \$64,560,000 grant agreements approved & executed by Town:
 - USDA/NRCS \$27,200,000
 - MassDER - \$22,670,000
 - NOAA - \$14,690,000 Transformational Habitat Restoration Grant Program
- Funding for marsh/vegetation management
 - NPS/NPF funding for vegetation management
 - NAWCA ≈\$2M grant – Ducks Unlimited
- Grant Administration and Reporting
 - Clifton Larson Allen under contract by Town
 - Comprehensive grant tracking by source and activity
 - Grant agency reporting requirements

Project Updates – Vegetation Clearing

- Expected Sequence of Activities Through 2025 (“Year 1” of Tidal Restoration)
 - Winter 2022/2023: Duck Harbor Restoration - Up to ~120 Ac to be cleared
 - Winter 2023/2024: Clear ~62 Ac of Trees, Shrubs, and Vines in Area Flooded Within Year 1 of Tidal Restoration (Prior to Inundation)
 - Fall-Winter 2024/2025: Mowing ~45 Ac Phragmites (Prior to Inundation)
- Spoil berm removal pilot project – surveys and initial discussions with permitting agencies

Shellfish Relay – April 8



4. Herring River Stakeholder Group

5. HREC member announcements

6. Public comment

7. 2023 remaining meeting dates:

- Thursday, September 14, 2023, 3:00 pm
- Thursday, December 14, 2023, 3:00 pm

8. Adjourn