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June 5, 1997

Mike Nicoloro
Cambridge Water Department
250 Fresh Pond Parkway
Cambridge MA

Dear Mr. Nicoloro;

Thank you very much for holding the public meeting on June 3rd regarding the Master Plan for the Fresh Pond Reservoir. The proposed Water Treatment Plant appears to be a lovely building and much of the plan seems laudable. I am writing primarily to reiterate my questions and concerns about the proposed Master Plan for the reservation area. I pre-apologize for the length of this letter, yet I hope you will find it helpful. My concerns, some reasonable, some admittedly not, are as follows:

General. Fresh Pond's relatively not-built environment promotes diversity of plant and animal life which, aside from being crucial to the health of the reservoir, makes FP a unique space in Cambridge. Some intrusion into this environment may be necessary to obtain high water quality, yet it is not apparent to me why there needs to be any work done to the surrounding reservation area beyond those which promote good water quality. I question those intrusions which are intended to make the reservation more 'interactive' and 'attractive' to people. What promotes increased 'accessibility' and 'education' for the public, may come at the expense [losing the] uniquely 'wild' character of the reservation. Most reservation users love that 'not-built' character. Should this reservation try to be so many things to so many people?

Lusitania Field. This area was once a natural wetlands. It abuts two stretches of wetlands and a forest, which is home to a variety of plants and bird life. The forest edge around the field is very important for migrating and nesting birds.

I am alarmed that this sensitive land may serve as the staging area for the WTP construction.?

Will the surrounding habitat not be terribly disturbed, even permanently injured?

What is the probability that this part of the path will be closed down to park users?

Would the proposed two youth soccer fields in place of the current one field not put additional burdens on this area? I appreciate the need for space for kids' games. There are a number of soccer fields in Cambridge, and but few remaining natural wetlands in the area..

Is it appropriate to site parking for the field up at Neville Manor, again putting additional foot-traffic pressure on the forested area on the way down to the field?

In order to best protect the whole reservoir, might it be best to turn over the permitting process and maintenance of the field to CWD?

Finally, might the reservoir best be served by returning the field to the natural wetlands it once was? It could add habitat and filter runoff into pond.

Removal of Vegetation. I fully understand that the removal of some vegetation is necessary to maintain the reservoir area. However, it was not clear in the Master Plan how much will be removed, though it seemed from Mr. Kissiter's presentation, that some removal will be undertaken for the visual pleasure of users.

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As I said at the meeting, I believe that those trees provide valuable protection for the waterfowl which come through Fresh Pond September through April.

Mr. Kissiter stated, with some audience members agreeing, that one can't see the pond because of the vegetation. Is it necessary to make 'nice' views of the pond? The pond is fully visible seven months of the year. In the warm months one can see the pond almost anywhere along the path if one just stops to find a frame of green to peer through. This may not be possible for the residents of Neville Manor, but is that enough of a reason to clear cut?

During the summer, the Kingsley Park lookout points do permit water views if one simply goes off the path to the benches situated before those lovely masonry walls.

This brings me towards my last point. The reservation is a place of great, natural beauty where the user is integrated *into* the natural environment. S/he can come to appreciate the value of the reservoir and its needs because s/he desires to preserve that environment. Education and preparation of scenic viewing spots are little likely to teach those who don't appreciate the sensitivity of watersheds to appreciate them. You may stand a greater chance of success increasing watershed sensitivity by allowing visitors to experience the reservation as integrated users, rather than as observers.

 Public Art. There is a proposed public artwork which is intended to express the connection between the visitors to the reservation and the water, or role of the reservoir. I have two comments and questions about its proposed site.

I am concerned that the site for the proposed artwork will be disturbing to the 'not-built' continuity of the pathway.

Second, isolated along the pathway, it is likely not to have much impact. Would it not make more sense to situate the artwork close to the WTP, to draw those interested viewers towards the building itself, and into its educational exhibit?

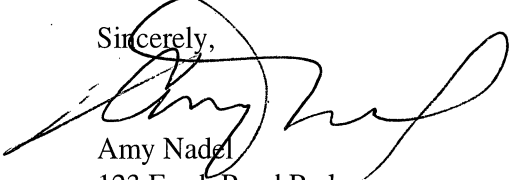
Will there be a viewing of, and public comment on, the proposed artwork?

Miscellany. Would it be possible to find some material to use for the pathway which would not entice roller-bladers?

There are built park environments around Cambridge for those times one would prefer that, but there is no other natural environment like Fresh Pond. It's worth preserving.

Thanks very much for your patience (with the length of this letter) and interest in public comment. Best of luck with all the hue and cry, and with the task before you.

Sincerely,


Amy Nadel
123 Fresh Pond Parkway
354-8273

cc: Chip Norton, Cambridge Water Department
Town Clerk, City Hall

*would it be possible to have to city council
request a public hearing on this issue.*

Consent Communication #8

S-376

Communication was received from Amy Nadel,
123 Fresh Pond Parkway, transmitting her
concerns about the proposed Master Plan for
the reservation area.

In City Council June 16, 1997.

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