



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

57 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139 • TEL (617) 349-4680

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

May 30, 2001

To: Maryellen Carvello, City Manager's Office

From: Julia Bowdoin, Conservation Commission

Re: Questions regarding past activity at MDC's "Goose Meadow"

Please accept this memo as the Conservation Commission's response to Council Order #16, dated 5/7/01. The Council Order requests an update on the "Goose Meadow" with particular attention to the change of grading within 100 feet of the Charles River.

Site Description

The area referred to as the "Goose Meadow" by some Cambridge residents is a sloped triangular piece of land owned by the MDC as part of the Charles River Basin park system. It is located adjacent to the east side of the Boston University (BU) Bridge on the Charles River in Cambridge.

Background

Under the Wetlands Protection Act, the Cambridge Conservation Commission reviews and approves work proposed to take place within 100 feet of the Charles River. In October 1999, the MDC requested permission from the Conservation Commission to remove invasive vegetation, establish native grass and shrubs, and construct a safe pedestrian walkway through the "Goose Meadow" area, a portion of which lies within 100 feet of the river. The Conservation Commission approved this request, with the recommendation that the MDC leave undisturbed all of the native non-invasive trees on the site and all vegetation within 25 feet of the riverbank in order to protect and preserve the high quality riverfront wildlife habitat and stability of the riverbank.

Change of Grading within 100 feet of the River

The MDC did not propose and the Conservation Commission did not permit any re-grading within 100 feet of the Charles River. In response to previous questions on this matter, the Conservation Commission and the MDC conducted a comprehensive site investigation in October of 2000 with detailed plans of the area and the approved landscape design. This site investigation did not show any evidence of illegal grading or other land disturbance within the area of Conservation Commission jurisdiction. Nor did there appear to be any adverse impact from the project on the riverbank or Charles River water quality. The MDC asserts that work was conducted in compliance with the approved plans, with the exception of several native shrubs that were mistakenly removed along the periphery of the work area by landscaping contractors. The MDC has agreed to replace this vegetation in the Summer of 2001.

It should be noted that the Conservation Commission did not prohibit the MDC from re-grading portions of the site farther than 100 feet from the river. The Commission has no jurisdiction over that upland area and does not know of other approvals the MDC would have needed in order to re-grade that portion of their property.

Please feel free to contact me at (617) 349-4680 with any questions or comments.



5.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

June 4, 2001

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 01-190, regarding a report on the geese meadow with particular attention to the change of grading within 100' of the river, received from Conservation Commission Director Julia Bowdoin.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Healy" clearly distinguishable.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment



2295

Consent Agenda #5

Awaiting Report Item Number
01-190, regarding a report on the
geese meadow with particular
attention to the change of grading
within 100' of the River.

In City Council June 4, 2001

PLACED ON FILE