Mystic River Watershed Steering Committee
Wednesday, March 7, 2012, 9:30 am – 11:00 am
Meeting was held at Best Western Hotel Tria, Cambridge, MA

Agreement Points:

- The next Steering Committee meeting will be June 6th at MassDEP in Wilmington
- A smaller group of Committee members will meet at the end of May to discuss the future of the Steering Committee

Presentation of Local Stormwater Project (Catherine Woodbury, City of Cambridge)

- DCR is a partner in this project
- The project involves the construction of a wetland on DCR's land and should be completely done by 2015
- This project fits in very well with the Steering Committee's goals
- The project will reduce CSO volume to Alewife Brook and Little River by 85%.
- Fits in with DCR's Master Plan for Alewife Brook
- There will be significant public benefits and enhanced ecological resources
- Part of the long-term control plan, mostly in Cambridge
- 335 acres of CSO system is being discharged with a new separate sewer system
- Currently talking to the community about rain gardens and porous pavement
- The new stormwater wetlands will be the last treatment of municipal stormwater before it discharges into the Little River
- The sewer separation is a very invasive project so it will be done in chunks
- There will be built-in treatment systems and the discharge will be cleaner than the discharge currently emptying into the Little River
- In rotary next to Hotel Tria is a drain vault which discharges to the Little River and Fresh Pond. This will be closed.
- This project has public benefit because it will
    - help groups (such as Friends of Alewife) to educate
    - provide walking paths, benches/sitting areas and bike racks
    - have signage, a kiosk (from DCR) and an amphitheatre for education opportunities
    - get people to the water through a multi-use connector path
    - will have trails, boardwalks and overlooks of the wetland
- DCR will maintain the amenities while the city of Cambridge will do the maintenance of the wetland and forebay
- The wetland will consist of 4 levels of marshes with 115,000 new native wetland plants and 3800 new native upland plants
- Invasives were removed and will be controlled for
- There will be a forebay (similar to a retention basin) upstream from the wetland where stormwater is discharged and directed into the wetland area
- The city is working on an additional wetland creation
    - An oxbow for compensatory storage of water
    - A channel will be created which presents an opportunity for spawning and refuge for fish (i.e. River Herring)
- Will there be monitoring?
    - Yes, there will be a sampling location at the outlet and upstream of the forebay

    - Monitoring will be wet weather sampling at automatic stations
    - There will also be dye testing in revamped neighborhoods to test for new illicit
- MWRA and the City of Cambridge are funding this project, said to be the largest stormwater project in New England
- Also trying to get people to understand the difference between storm drains and sewers
- For more information, visit Cambridge's DPW website: www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/cityprojects.aspx

Discussion of Future Efforts

- Revisit this from a high level
- A lot of benefits are accruing from individual efforts
- This is a meaningful collaboration with EPA and the recent accomplishments are evidence
    - Porous Pavement Project
    - Green Infrastructure Ordinance Project in Chelsea
    - MOU with UMass Boston
    - MS4 Workshop in Chelsea
- Need to create more traction moving forward
- The priority list is very explicit and very powerful
- How far along are we? And what's our method to gauge our progress?
- Is it useful to have a standing method or to engage differently?
- We want to make this group as powerful as it can be
- The Steering Committee is a wonderful forum to spread good news, and provides networking.
- Little steps have gotten us to great projects and each community has re-established focus.
- The Steering Committee is set up to work on concrete actions beyond networking.
- One of the biggest obstacles which hurts the efforts of the group is the length of time that it's taken for the new MS4 permits to come out
    - Folks at EPA are methodically working through comments, and there is some disagreement within the EPA
    - The draft may need to back out for comment if it changes too much
- There are efforts at the WQ group level which address the SSO issue
- There is broad engagement among committee members
- How do we support efforts that we don't know about?
- Open Space has dissipated and has lost traction towards priorities
- We laid out these priorities, and it's important to track how we are doing on priorities progress.
- The question is: does the committee have enough horses?
- Ivey attended a meeting with the legislative caucus regarding the Mystic River Reservation
    - DCR has made it very clear that the governor's budget didn't have any money
    - Sean Garballey was supportive, talked to key people and pushed it forward in order to get money
    - Approximately $200K is needed to get movement on DCR's Master Plan
    - Looking for $400-450K
- Need leadership and administrative assistance to help strengthen focus
- More information is needed
    - Do we need a stronger administration?
    - How do we deliver information to the Steering Committee?
    - How do we deal with the structural issues on the Open Space committee?
- The value of the group is networking

    - Stay in orderly communication
    - Stay in touch with initiatives as they are forming
- MassDEP once had a great program to monitor and find illicit but they have since lost people
    - The lab is still there but that may be taken away as well
    - This organization may not have anything this year and the group could help out
- Stephen Perkins – proposes a call with the chairs of the Steering Committee and of the subgroups
    - Is there enough juice in the system? This will be a test.
    - Discuss how to have more regular reporting expectations
    - What are these groups doing and what do they need to be successful?
    - This puts more burden on those people who are in voluntary leadership roles
    - Ivey will help out on behalf of the Open Space Subgroup
- The funding issue is affecting the WQ subgroup's progress as far as need and timing
- There is also a potential change in administration on it's way
- The government needs to know challenges and be tuned into the process
- This affects the government's ability to be a partner
- The group embraces the Mission and Priorities, but do commissioners embrace and put enough "oomph" behind it? The Steering Committee may give help in executing particular items.
- A useful function of the group is to help influence policy, and encourage or direct funding
- It would be worthwhile and necessary for group and EPA staff to communicate the secretary and commissioner
- Should the Mission and Priorities be revisited?
    - The DCR Master Plan is not in there
    - There are other key issues that aren't raised
    - This would be a good topic for the committee chairs to discuss
    - Should we simplify? Focusing on a few items would be easier
        - Not a very good working document
        - Need 1 paragraph with bullets to get action from constituents
- The Water Quality subgroup needs a leader
- EK and Ivey will try to recruit a professional in the Open Space field
- Andy and George are the municipal chairs
- The science and water quality groups overlap – they need to be refined
- In looking at priorities 2 and 5, the Cambridge model from Catherine's presentation is a fabulous injection.
    - Explore this further; take points of slideshow and incorporate them in other groups
- Membership of these work groups could be shaped by what issues become
    - Raise conflicts or opportunities

Update on Draw 7 Park (Chris Mancini, Groundwork Somerville and Ivey St. John, CWC)

- Interested in Open Space planning
    - Sustainability and equitability of planning process
- Submitted an application to MAPC to do some planning around Draw 7 park
- It is a hub for many other pathways
- Federal Realty Investment Trust has promised $500K – put into escrow for development
    - The money comes when occupancy permits are granted by the city of Somerville
- Need to get the environmental justice communities involved

    - Cassandra Kataladis (from Medford) gave 10-15 groups that populate Medford and West Medford
    - Nick Cohen also provided some groups
- There is support from MyRWA, triCAP, FRIT, City of Somerville (the mayor), and Bill Hinkley

Announcements

- City of Chelsea
    - Opening bids for first public rain garden provided by MET
    - Broadway Infrastructure project (with LID) – Place based community project grant
- MyRWA
    - Promote GI in Chelsea
    - Expand to other parts of the watershed to help with GI and planning
- CRWA and MyRWA grant
    - Sustainable communities consortium convened by MAPC - $5.1 million
    - Move forward with goals
    - A lot of attention in on the Mystic
- MyRWA will weigh in heavily on the Silver Maple Forest to keep it from being destroyed
    - Have written a policy statement for the developer to support this effort
    - Keep trees and pervious spaces in place
- Andy DeSantis (Chelsea) received the Rita Barron Public Official Award
- Green Infrastructure training for Chelsea will be in May, June or September
- Porous Pavement Education Project was very successful in generating interest
    - There will be a lot of publicity
    - EPA will keep the Steering Committee informed
    - Will have an opportunity to see the site
    - There will be education and monitoring components
- Report Card event will be May 20th at MyRWA's Herring Run and Paddle, at the boathouse in Somerville
- Next meeting will be June 6th at MassDEP in Wilmington

Action Items:

- Committee Chairs will meet to discuss:
    - What each sub-group is doing and what they need to be successful
    - Current structure of the Mission and Priorities

Mystic River Watershed Steering Committee – Sign In sheet

Name	Organization	E-mail address
Stephen Perkins	EPA	Perkins.stephen@epa.gov
Lise Marx	MWRA	Lise.marx@mwra.state.ma.us
Karen Pelto	MassDEP/EEA	Karen.pelto@state.ma.us
Nick Cohen	Tri-CAP	ncohen@tri-cap.org
Kim Foltz	NOAH-CCAG	kim@noahcdc.org
Bill Hinkley	EOEEA	William.hinkley@state.ma.us
Chris Mancini	Groundwork Somerville	chris@groundworksomerville.org
EK Khalsa	MyRWA	ek@mysticriver.org
Nihar Mohanty	MassDEP	Nihar.mohanty@state.ma.us
Matt Shuman	Town of Winchester	mshuman@winchester.us
Ivey St. John	Charlestown Waterfront Coalition	Gran.nie@comcast.net
Ellen Mass	Friends of Alewife	elnmass@verizon.net
Andrew DeSantis	Chelsea DPW	adesantis@chelseama.gov
Jan Dolan	Friends of Upper Mystic Lake	dolanjanice@aol.com
Kate Renahan	EPA	Renahan.kate@epa.gov
Catherine Daly Woodbury	Cambridge DPW	cwoodbury@cambridgema.gov
Lynne Hamjian	EPA	Hamjian.lynne@epa.gov
Karen Simpson	EPA	Simpson.karen@epa.gov