

Fawn Lake Committee
Minutes of Meeting
May 6, 2015
Department of Public Works Conference Room
314 Great Road, Bedford, MA

PRESENT: Margot Fleischman; Allan Wirth; Schorr Berman; Elizabeth Cowles;
Linda Oustinow; John Zupkus

Adrienne St. John, DPW; Dennis Freeman, DPW
Elizabeth Bagdonas, Conservation Administrator
Jessica Cajigas, CEI Consultants

ABSENT: Michael Barbehenn; Sharon McDonald; Bill Simons

Chair Allan Wirth called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm. A motion was made by Mr. Wirth and seconded by Ms. Fleischman to approve the draft minutes of April 15th; the motion passed 4-0-2, with Mr. Zupkus and Mr. Berman abstaining.

The Committee began the exercise on Pair-Wise Ranking. Criteria rather than alternatives were first considered. Ms. Fleischman presented a color-coded “Pond Management Strategies Matrix”, showing nine criteria arranged in the same order in both columns and rows: **Environmental Impacts, Plant Response, Logistics, Neighborhood Impacts, Future Operations and Maintenance Requirements, Time to Complete Treatment, Longevity of Treatment, Permitting Complexity and Cost, and Overall Project Cost.**

A discussion of the matrix followed, including the issues of relating values and costs, defining longevity and improvement, and establishing a cost/benefits factor. Ms. Fleischman stated that some issues would tend to be resolved toward the end of the process. She recommended conducting a comparison of options that were somewhat defined in 2008, determine by which criteria each option should be evaluated, and how greatly to weight one option against another.

Ms. Cowles started an exercise across the row, beginning with environmental impacts.. Mr. Zupkus commented that consideration of longevity leads to looking at choices differently. He also brought up the possibility of combining pond improvement with dam reconstruction.

Ms. St. John explained that the Fawn Lake dam would not need to be replaced in the near future, and that the Town had recently removed and replaced two dams without drawing down the water. He added that detailed searching needed to be conducted to see how different projects might evolve, to ensure that the Town would not lose values it wanted to preserve. Ms. Cajigas advised making some basic choices before considering the wealth of information that is available.

Discussion followed on revisions to the categories. It was agreed to change **Time to Complete Treatment** to **Time to Permit and Complete Treatment**, to delete **Permitting Complexity/Cost**, and to develop a definition of **Neighborhood Impacts**. There were differing opinions on **Environmental Impacts**, indicating that more details were needed, as well as a focus on important goals. Ms. Cowles stated that not having a criterion of **“Recreational/Aesthetic Enjoyment”** was preventing her from ranking. Mr. Zupkus suggested separating negative and positive impacts. Ms. Bagdonas pointed out the responsibility of the Conservation Commission to rate (adverse) environmental impacts over recreation. Mr. Wirth agreed that environmental impact was a criteria over which the Commission had jurisdiction. Ms. St. John suggested adding **“Recreational Use and Enjoyment”** to the matrix. There was some consensus that **Neighborhood Impacts** should include both neighborhood and Town-wide impacts. Ms. St. John also commented that on-going maintenance activities, such as hydro-raking and chemical applications, might create post-project neighborhood impacts, which Mr. Berman presumed would be negative or an inconvenience. The committee agreed that future operation and maintenance should be included in progressing to a choice of method.

The committee then began the process of ranking, working across the chart. Some values appeared to differ over varying amounts of time. Ms. St. John stated that effectiveness should be factored in, and perhaps should be in a different box. Ms. St. John also wanted to know if operation and maintenance should also involve logistics. She added a reminder that the actual high cost of logistics had not been considered in some of the past environmental impact discussions. Mr. Wirth advised consideration of the Conservation Commission’s jurisdictional role in evaluating adverse environmental impacts.

There was general agreement on the first line (beginning with Environmental Impact), with the exception of the ranking of **Recreational Use and Enjoyment** and **Environmental Impacts**, where there was considerable difference of opinion. Consensus was reached to rank this comparison as 50/50, and the same split was agreed on between **Environmental Impacts** and **Longevity**. Mr. Wirth felt that the goals of the Committee were somewhat at odds. Ms. St. John thought that a 50/50 split could be a goal in itself. The committee also differed on whether, when evaluating a treatment option, more or less weight should be given to treatment effectiveness, even if less positive on a sliding scale with regard to environmental impact. The Committee continued through all lines and columns, with some discussion on the relative value importance of habitat stability versus diversity.

The scoring was briefly discussed. Ms. Fleischman will complete the table and send it out prior to the next meeting.

In order to schedule the next meeting, the Committee agreed to poll the members via email regarding availability on June 16, 17 and 18. The agenda would be carried forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Minutes prepared by Elizabeth Bagdonas.

Minutes approved as revised at meeting of July 29, 2015.