

Roger Williams Park Pond Restoration Public Meeting Summary

February 7, 2012

The RIDEM Director Janet Coit attended the meeting and recognized the “daunting” task of addressing the problems in the park and watershed but that starting with a plan and having people rallying around the issues would help to get the water quality restoration needs “out in front”. Direct Coit noted that although financial resources are strained, DEM is putting staff and technical assistance towards the project and the issues. Director Coit admired the many project partners and noted that the urban neighborhoods deserve to have clean water in their ponds.

Public Discussion:

Community Outreach and Volunteering

- Contact the Quisqueya Association <http://www.quisqueyainaction.com> – they do a Broad Street clean up and are really well organized.
- Have you contacted the Providence School Department? You could do lesson plans for the elementary school teachers – the Broad Street school is nearby.
- A lot of high schools require community service.
- The MET school does some projects in the park and we will continue to involve them.
- People in the park going by the community garden are interested in the sustainable projects going on and how they can learn about them. The Master Gardeners program would be happy to also educate park users about the restoration projects in the Park.
- There is an Elmwood Neighborhood Group who might be interested in volunteering.
- There is a large Laotian community who fish in the ponds and providing information to them is important.
- The Southside Community Land Trust would be a good source for translating if you are preparing signs in multiple languages

- What are you doing to reach out to the various ethnic groups who reside around the ponds? You should do an announcement on El Poder 1110 FM radio <http://www.poder1110.com/>
- Contact Representative Grace Diaz who has an office on Broad Street
- There is a Dominican Festival in the Park – you should have an educational table at that festival
- Contact Carmen Castillo, new City Council member for Ward 9 and includes parts of S. Elmwood and Elmwood in the lower watershed.

Litter in the Park

- Concern over litter in the ponds – is there a fine?
- There is a new garbage can that has a very narrow opening that you could use in the park.
- Labeling the trash cans would also help educate the park users

Phosphorous and Nutrients

- Alum has a lethal effect on salmonid species such as salmon and trout.
- The state should regulate the amount of P in fertilizer because commercial fertilizers have too much P in them. Scotts is taking P out of home fertilizer in the near future.
 - RWP does not use fertilizers in the park.
 - Maybe the park could sponsor a composting day where you could come and pick up organic composting.
- Do you have an estimate of what the amount of P is going out of the system? It seems as if it's possible that you could have a net increase of loading in and out of the system each year.
- Are the Zoo and Mounted Command good at using BMPs on their properties?
 - The Zoo is but we need to work closer with the Mounted Command to do better management of potential phosphorus sources.
- Where is the phosphorus coming from that is in the stormwater?
 - Phosphorus comes from the sand and salt that is applied to the roads in the winter (it is used in the mixture), gas stations also use

P in their cleaning products, and it also comes from atmospheric deposition.

- Could do a soil-testing day for residents to see if they even need to add fertilizers with phosphorous to their lawns.

Restoration Projects

- Question about how BMP #28 would be constructed and where pavement would be removed. Any thought of using a rotary at the proposed BMP #28.
 - A rotary is not likely to resolve the water quality and infiltration issue, but traffic engineer will have final call on design.
- Lennox Ave has a lot of water problems and the catch basins there are in bad disrepair and some are still made out of wood.
- Suggestion to contact Donna Williams from the Blackstone Valley regarding their rain garden projects.
- Have you looked at the effects of impaction on the soils/grass areas? How does this affect the infiltration capacity of the vegetated areas? Would different vegetation allow for more infiltration?

Goose Management

- What will the USDA be doing with Geese Management and how much will it cost? Will you continue to manage the Geese after this year?
- It was suggested that geese droppings don't have phosphorus in them.
 - However, this is not true because the grass and other foods that geese eat contains phosphorous.
- Must enforce the law that prohibits feeding the geese or any waterfowl.
- Adding plants to the shorelines will have a big impact on the geese populations.
- You will need to educate the public about why you are letting areas of vegetation grow back because they will complain about access to the ponds.
- Suggestions to construct some docks in strategic locations so that fishermen can access the ponds for catch and release.
- There will be a clean up on April 21st in the park.