



GENEVA CLIFFS COMMUNITY MEETING

February 9, 2023



City of Boston
Parks and Recreation

MEETING RECORDING



The Boston Parks and Recreation Department will be recording the meeting and posting to our project webpage for those who are unable to attend the Zoom meeting live.

It is possible that participants may also be recording the meeting with their phones cameras or other devices. If you do not wish to be recorded during this meeting, please keep your microphone and camera off.

VIRTUAL MEETING ETIQUETTE

We want to ensure this conversation feels accessible to everyone and each one of you feels comfortable sharing your questions and comments.

Please be respectful and mindful of other's time when asking questions/ providing comments, so that all attendees are able to participate in the meeting.

Keep questions/ comments project-specific and not personal to yield a solution driven discussion.

You can always set up a conversation with Cathy Baker-Eclipse, cathy.baker-eclipse@boston.gov to further discuss the project or process.

ZOOM TIPS

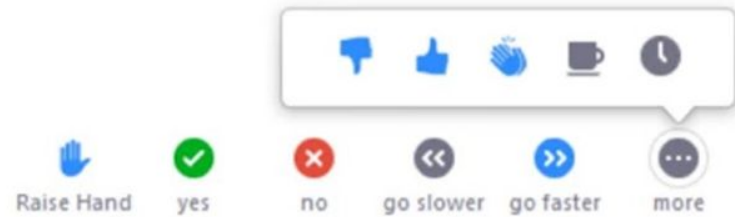
Here is how you can participate during the question and answer part of the presentation.

DURING THE PRESENTATION:



VIA WEB:

Turn video on / off.



To use these non-verbal options click on participants (bottom of screen); these options will pop up in side bar.

DURING THE Q&A:



JOINING VIA PHONE?

Use *9 to raise hand to ask for audio / video permission to ask questions or provide comments.



VIA WEB:

Chat to ask questions / comments or provide responses to poll questions



Raise hand to ask for audio / video permission to ask questions or provide comments.

Agenda



- **Welcome & Introductions**
 - *Cathy Baker-Eclipse, BPRD Director of the Capital Plan*
 - *Christine Brandao, BPRD Outreach Coordinator*
- **Purpose of Meeting**
- **Site Overview & Background**
 - *Cathy Baker-Eclipse & Paul Sutton, BPRD, Urban Wilds Program Mgr.*
- **Potential Site Re-Classification and Future Uses**
- **Discussion & Next Steps**

Purpose of Meeting

- *To seek community input on the future direction of Geneva Cliffs*
- *To consider a formal request from the Friends of Geneva Cliffs to have the site reclassified from “urban wild” to “park” to allow for more varied use of the site by the public*
- *To inform and initiate a planning and design process for another capital reinvestment in Geneva Cliffs based on community input (funding, process & timetable)*

Geneva Cliffs Site Overview

- *+ - 2 acre site owned by the Conservation Commission and managed by BPRD's Urban Wilds Program*
- *Managed as a "natural area" with a conservation focus*
- *Adjacent to 4 open space parcels owned by Eversource*
- *2008 renovation project initiated through planning efforts of Dorchester Bay CDC in partnership with Friends of Geneva Cliffs, the City and various community partners*
- *In conjunction with Geneva Cliffs renovation, Eversource removed fencing and a foundation of an off-line substation, and allowed a portion of its land to be included in the urban wild renovation.*

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1906



Geneva Cliffs (and adjacent vacant Eversource, Private and DND parcels)

Background



Early Years (2008 - 2017)

- *Renovation completed in 2008*
- *Active period of event planning sponsored by DBCDC and FOGC (Wake up the Earth, Star Gazing, Haunted Forest) and other groups*
- *Annual cleanup sponsored by FOGC and Urban Wilds Program*
- *Urban Wilds holds more frequent cleanups with outside groups*
- *City also assumes maintenance of Eversource parcel*
- *Walking group and area school groups frequent the site*



**Site conditions at Geneva Cliffs
before 2008 Renovations**



Adjacent Eversource parcel prior to demolition

E!



Celebration for 2008 renovation



Friends of Geneva Cliffs



JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF STARGAZING AT GENEVA CLIFFS URBAN WILD

WHEN: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH
6:30PM - 8:30PM

WHERE: GENEVA CLIFFS URBAN WILD AT THE CORNER OF BOWDOIN ST. AND GENEVA AVE., DORCHESTER 02122

Join us for an evening under the stars on the cliffs of this historic urban wild. The Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston will guide us to the wonders of the night sky. We'll explore celestial sights including planets and constellations. We'll provide the hot chocolate - you bring a flashlight, a blanket or chair, and your curiosity!




EVENT IS FREE. FAMILIES & STARGAZERS OF ALL ABILITIES ARE WELCOME

   **Bowdoin Street Health Center**

WORKING TOWARDS A GREENER CITY.

BOSTON NATURAL AREAS NETWORK

For more information, contact BNAN at 617-542-7696 or info@bostonnatural.org.
For more events visit www.bostonnatural.org



Background

Recent Years (2018 - 2021)

- *Eversource expresses concern over liability of public use of their land*
- *FOGC no longer allowed to use Eversource land (without insurance) for events and activities, sports, dance, cultural and craft fairs, music and food celebrations, etc.)*
- *Homelessness, drug activity, and vandalism ticks up*
- *FOGC becomes less active in site stewardship on urban wild*
- *Urban Wilds Program struggles to maintain site with no field staff and limited funding*
- *City continues to contract out mowing services and Urban Wilds Program recruits more outside groups to assist with site maintenance*

Request for Reclassification of Geneva Cliffs

- *8/24/18 FOGC submits letter requesting City to consider reclassification of Geneva Cliffs from “urban wild” to “park” to allow for more site use*
- *Subsequent multi-year City and FOGC efforts to meet with Eversource and secure transfer of adjacent Eversource parcel to the City were unsuccessful*
- *Flat, open Eversource parcel seen as a more accessible and multi-use space compared to the adjacent urban wild*
- *8/30/21 FOGC renews its appeal to the City, expressing concern over the dwindling public use of Geneva Cliffs due in part also to conservation land use limitations*

Request for Reclassification of Geneva Cliffs

How is a park different from an urban wild?

Urban Wilds:

- *Showcase natural features such as rivers, ponds, woodlands, wetlands, salt marshes, meadows, rock outcroppings, etc, and focus on plants & wildlife habitat*
- *Allow only for passive recreation (walking/hiking/nature observation), environmental education, and conservation uses*
- *Are not required to comply with ADA (US Forest Service Guidelines for Accessibility)*
- *Typically do not incorporate lighting and electricity*
- *With no turf grass, can appear “messy” if entrances, edges and pathways are not adequately maintained*
- *Are highly dependent on volunteers and outside support for maintenance*

Request for Reclassification of Geneva Cliffs

How is a park different from an urban wild?

Parks:

- Can take many forms (active versus passive recreation) such as Ronan Park, Ceylon, Mother's Rest*
- Can potentially accommodate different types of uses (jogging courses, play areas, athletic fields, public squares, hiking trails, etc)*
- Comply with the American Disabilities Act standards for access and accessibility*
- Can include electrical, plumbing and irrigation systems*
- Can allow for a wide range of events and programs (fairs, cultural events, music, fitness programs, theater)*
- Receive a higher frequency of grounds maintenance from Parks Maintenance staff*

Discussion

Next Steps

- **Share this conversation with friends and neighbors and motivate them for the upcoming design process**
- **Who else should be made aware of the upcoming work?**
- **Timeline for design process**

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THANK YOU!

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