

ASG Comments on Jerry's Pond Proposals:

May 20, 2021 (by Mike Nakagawa)

The Alewife Study Group has been considering plans for Jerry's Pond and the surrounding area proposed by IQHQ, Friends of Jerry's Pond, the Cambridge Bike Safety Group and neighbors. Also, Wetlands Scientist and wildlife biologist, Matt Schweisberg, was hired by Alewife Neighbors, Inc., to assess the area.

Key concerns are:

- Safety for walkers along Russell Field and leading to the Alewife T Station
- Safety of walkers and cyclists along Rindge Ave
- Air pollution and noise along Rindge Ave and Alewife Brook Parkway, if that area is used
- Contamination in the pond and soil if digging is required
- Improving ways to view wildlife
- Wildlife and wetland protection and impact during construction work

From careful consideration of many experts and feedback from neighborhood residents, the following is a summary of the direction that the Alewife Study Group is taking in regards to Jerry's Pond.

Improved bike lanes along Rindge Ave and along the Parkway to the Minuteman Trail could reduce cut-through biking where people walk. Walking on a boardwalk along the Russell Field would be pleasant and reduce foot traffic on the existing path. A good, safe bike route around the pond (along Rindge Ave and the Parkway) could keep most bikes away from the playing fields and where children are active.

Alewife Brook Parkway is the second most congested road in the state ([2019 MassDOT report](#)). Air pollution from cars has bad health effects on children. Recreation areas should focus outdoor activities away from the Parkway and Rindge Ave. Improving the city-owned area near Russell Field brings children away from the area of the most car traffic, noise and pollution.

The wooded area and wetlands on the Parkway side of the pond is too narrow to shield people from Parkway noise and pollution if a walkway went through it. That area is best left protected as a larger space for wildlife.

Filling part of the pond would require digging out somewhere else on the property because of laws on flooding. The least amount of digging to meet acceptable health and safety improvements is best. Because a large amount of asbestos was found near the fieldhouse, that area should have minimal digging to make sure the asbestos stays safely buried under protective ground cover.