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TOWN CLERK, ACTON

ACTON BOARD OF HEALTH
MINUTES OF MEETING
NOVEMBER 4, 1986

The meeting opened at 7:40 p.m. Present were Board members Richard Stephens, Charlotte Sagoff, Eleanor Voorhies, George Emmons, and Associate Member Richard Oakley. Staff present were Deborah Robertson, Acting Director, Sanitarians Edward Wirtanen and Marion Donahue, and secretary Carol Holley.

7:40 p.m. Review of correspondence. The Town of Stow By-law was almost illegible. Staff was requested to obtain better copies, perhaps, and to review Stow's proposed by-law in relation to Acton's. The By-law concerned underground storage tanks..

Letter from proprietors of Beef 'n' Ale regarding malfunctioning septic system. Mrs. Robertson stated that she expects to have to send them an official order to repair. Mr. Stephens suggested that they be allowed to install a system sized to accomodate possible future expansion in the event that the area be removed from a Lycott Red Zone.

Mrs. Robertson presented the Board with a map showing overlays of all the different water protection areas as viewed by different Town entities. It was stated that the first step in the coordination of the Town entities.. One of the questions raised by the Planner regarding the map was whether or not the Board of Health may follow property lines as guidelines for red zones. Mr. Stephens stated that the Beef'n'Ale should be told that the map is in flux, but that they still had to fix the system at present without expanding.

Regarding an estimate for blasting at the Napoli property to hook up to Town water, many of the Board members questioned the accuracy of the quote and requested staff to obtain confirmatory figures from the Highway Department. There was also a question of whether or not \$26,000 constituted a hardship for the individual involved. Mr. Stephens suggested the matter be tabled pending review with Highway.

A memo on the second round of stream sampling was discussed. Mrs. Robertson explained the differences in circumstances vis a vis the differences in the test results. She also passed on a lab technician's suggestion that they test for soap to confirm the presence of sewage breakout. Mr. Emmons asked about fecal strep as an indicator of breakout.

7:55 p.m.. Radio Tower. Mr. Wirtanen stated that this was a straightforward special permit request, and there was to be no discharge whatever at this site. Mrs. Sagoff moved that the permit be granted subject to the following conditions: no floor drains, no underground storage tanks, no septic system on site, conformance to the hazardous materials bylaw, and use of biodegradable cleaners. Miss Voorhies seconded, and the motion unanimously carried.

8:00 p.m. Review of additinal correspondence. Mainstream Associates lab report on sampling for tailrace dredging. Mr. Lagassa wished to move the material to another site, specifically the landfill area. It appeared that no hazardous materials were involved. There was no action to be taken by the Board.

Material on the WR Grace styrene tanks was reviewed. Ms DeGroot of the State and GZA's letters were discussed.

8:07 Bellows Farms. Mr. Stephens stated that he had three questions after reading Sasaki report. He stated that the request before the Board is for a speical permit for a certain number of units. Mrs. Robertson's first comment was that the Sasaki report was a preliminary study and a final hydrogeological study was to be done, and was not done. Mr. O'Grady of Keystone Associates stated that no further studies were requested. Mr. DeFeo stated that the report was done for some additional units, and the treatment plant was sized for that number of units, so it was felt that further study was not necessary. Mr. DeFeo stated that further study will come with the final phase of units. Mrs. Robertson asked whether or not the scop of the preliminary report had credence. She stated that a final report will have to be done, but is the original report still a legitimate preliminary study, given what else has happened in the area? Mr. DeFeo stated that monitoring wells in the first phase will be used for data for the study of the second phase. He expects to be looking at nitrate treatment. Mrs. Sagoff asked about timing. Mr. DeFeo stated that the design and hydrogeological study will be done together. Mr. O'Grady stated that staff had some concerns regarding changing what was already there, but at this point it looked like the biodisk system was better. Mr. DeFeo stated that the issue will be a nitrates issue. He stated that the addition of nitrate treatment was easier with a biodisk system; that they would have a RBC and after the RBC would be added a submerged disk. Mr. Stephens asked how long it would take before the RBC unit was in place. Mr. O'Grady stated that this was to be done in the next presentation, but the sooner it was in place the better. The time frame for the total development will be dictated by the real estate market. Thirty people have called on the first phase of 60 units. Development is figured in four phases as a four-year job. Mrs. Robertson asked when in this time frame would the final report be generated. Mr. DeFeo stated that he wanted some good hard data and he wanted monitoring wells with the sand bed in as soon as possible. He also stated that the open leaching would be farther away from the Conant Wells. Mr. DeFeo stated that the well is essentially pumping water from the brook. Mrs. Robertson asked about going back to ameration chambers for a reserve area, and the viability of those chambers. She also asked about the differential in sizing in going back to from open sand filters. Mr. DeFeo stated that ameration areas would be one-third again as large as the sand filter area. The test with the sand filters would be insect and odor problems. The only way they will fail is if the area becomes saturated. Mrs. Robertson asked the way of determining their credibility and what is their life span. Mr. DeFeo stated that with a sewage treatment plant the chambers last 30-35 years because of the lack of solids going in. Open pits basically will never fail, and can be restored by raking, and you do not need a reserve area. Mrs. Robertson asked about drainage and run-off problems. Mr. DeFeo stated that the area does have to be protected. Mrs. Robertson stated that the integrity of the system would have to be proved. Mr. DeFeo stated that the covers on the ameration chambers could be popped for an inspection at any time. Mrs. Sagoff asked how one builds in assurances that the plant will be built according to the final plan. Mr. DeFeo stated that the approval will be based on the monitoring wells and the levels of nitrates. Mr. DeFeo stated that the DEQE discharge permit conditions contain certain standards, including ability to issue fines without Court action. Mrs. Robertson asked regarding the use of intermediate filter material. Mr. Stephens asked how to distribute the

effluent through an open bed. Mr. DeFeo stated that the beds are dosed because the effluent is pumped. Mrs. Robertson also asked about the zoning lines and whether or not there was a use variance. Mr. O'Grady stated no, because all the treatment plant use would be under one condominium document. Mrs. Robertson also asked about the impact of the sodium on the well. Mr. DeFeo stated that no sodium will be added in the treatment plant. DeFeo stated he would be worried about nitrates and phosphates. Mrs. Robertson asked if the same firm was to perform the final study. Mrs. Robertson also stated that staff wanted to see the integrity of the reserve area proven and wanted to retain some kind of control in case the open sand filters do not work. Staff also wants the right to require additional testing. Mr. O'Grady stated that a 6-9 month time frame was involved.

Mr. Stephens stated that there are two requests before the Board - one for a special permit and option for construction of open sand bed. Mr. Stephens stated that there were two conditions - on the open filters being changed to subsurface if necessary, and monitoring wells. Mr. Emmons moved that a special permit be granted for this construction using open sand filters which, if found objectionable by the Board of Health because of insects, odor or other causes will be changed to aeration chambers and further construction of units will be stopped pending resolution of the problem. In addition, I move that monitoring wells be used and the rest or additional upgradient well be drilled, and if total Nitrates found excessive additional nitrate treatment will be required. Miss Voorhies seconded. Mr. Stephens added the conditions that the site be in conformance with the hazardous material by-law, that no underground fuel storage tanks be on site, that the subsurface sewage disposal system be approved by the Acton Board of Health staff, and that the subsurface system be 100 feet from wetlands. An amendment was made to the motion regarding monitoring wells showing the level of nitrates which in the Board's opinion pose a threat to the ground the Board may at its discretion impose a nitrate limit which would require nitrate removal as a part of the wastewater treatment plant. The vote was unanimous in favor of granting the permit.

8:57 Recess for soda, due to exceedingly dry air in the engineering room.

9:11 Victoria Heights. Mr. DeFeo stated that the site will be proposed as 774 low to moderate income housing units. The developer does not wish to wait until the next Town Meeting to resubmit his original plans. If, as the current project is moving forward things change, that is another matter. Mr. DeFeo handed out plans for a proposed leaching area and discussed previous testing on the site. The design perc rate under the DEQE guidelines is 10-20 minutes per inch. Mr. DeFeo feels confident testing is adequate to indicate the area will pass perc tests. Additional tests will be performed as required by the Board of Health. Mrs. Robertson asked if this would be applying for a comprehensive permit. Mr. DeFeo stated that under a comprehensive permit they would have the right to bypass the Board of Health but he did not intend to do so. Mrs. Robertson requested additional time to review the plan and data. Mr. DeFeo left the feasibility report for Great Hill Crossing, calling for a flow of 19000 gallons per day and a layout of a sewage treatment plant. Mr. Stephens wondered what the difference was between Great Hill and Faulkner hill in terms of make-up. Mr. DeFeo stated that when you look at Great Hill, the groundwater movement goes into the back of Great Hill and into the conservation area. The area is glacial till and the groundwater is at

seven to nine feet and follows the contours of the hill. A hydrogeological study will have to be done for DEQE. Mr. Stephens expressed concern on additional pressure in the South Acton area.

9:32 Acton Christian Church, 41 Minot Ave. Bruce Stamski appeared before the Board. Mrs. Robertson discussed the background of the plan for the repair. The plan has been reviewed and still requires one variance for a perc rate over 30 minutes per inch. Mrs. Robertson stated that the design flow and dosing effect will protect the area. The system will also be higher relative to the water flow. Mr. Stamski stated that the cost of implementation would be about the same. Mr. Emmons moved that the plan be accepted with the variance of over 30 minutes per inch per rate and the plan be sent to DEQE per standard procedure. Mrs. Sagoff seconded, and the vote was unanimous in favor.

9:40 W.R. Grace. Mr. Squire appeared regarding the styrene tanks. Two underground and one above ground tanks are at the site. The Division used to be in Acton and is in the process of moving buildings that were previously operating plants. Disassembly is about 90% complete at the site. Taking the tanks off the site has technical problems in that styrene is hard to break down into chunks to be removed, and there is an odor threshhold problem as the threshhold is in the parts per trillion level. Two underground tanks have been buried already and they show no rusting. There were about 30 tanks that were removed in 1982-83 and are now being used elsewhere. Mr. Stephens stated that the three tanks, he believed, held an unspecified mixture of styrene and polystyrene in an unknown form. Mr. Squire stated that polymerization can be completed by placing a light in the tank. Mr. Emmons asked about taking the tanks out via railroad. Mr. Stephens questioned whether or not a light could be used to reach the bottom of the large tanks. Mrs. Sagoff asked if, given the fact according to law there should be no underground storage tanks, they should remain. Mr. Stephens asked if there were residual styrene vapor. Mr. Squire stated that you can smell the styrene. Mr. Emmons asked if the EPA would allow them to leave the tanks in. Also, what would happen if the tanks were left in the ground for a long period of time. Mr. Emmons recommended pulling the tanks out of the ground and simply covering and maintaining them as if they were in active use. The Grace representative stated that there would be no safety problem. It was agreed that tank #35 was the problem. #34 could be taken out. Mr. Stephens stated that the two problems with tank #35 were total weight; you would need to remove the polystyrene, and tank #36, where you would need to remove the polystyrene because the tank is too wide to transport whole. The tank would be mechanically cut, which would take a long time. Mr. Stephens asked if the politics of the odor nuisance was not a problem, then the tanks could be removed. Mr. Squire stated it would be possible. Mr. Squire was told that it was politically not acceptable to create odors. Grace was sure that the styrene would not get into the groundwater. The Board of Health wants to see a plan to remove the tanks with the least disturbance possible, and get them out of town. The Board of Health did not feel that the odor was sufficient deterrent. Mr. Stephens asked what the timing of this process was. Mr. Squire stated he would have to reevaluate if their plan was changed from their original submittal. Mr. Stephens stated that they should start with the removal of tank #34 and the Board of Health would take the matter under advisement regarding the others. After #34 is removed public opinion could be gauged. Mrs. Sagoff stated that the police and fire department will have to be brought in. Mrs. Robertson stated that

Ken Wenger at EPA is the coordinator. The Acton Board of health has to submit written comments on this matter. Mr. Stephens stated they could report to EPA that based on the information available, technically at least two of the tanks can be moved and the problems are more PR in nature.

10:30 Curtain drains. Mr. Costello was to speak with a hydrogeological engineer, but he was absent. The State has an interpretation that testing should be done during maximum groundwater season. The staff would like to have something in writing from the Board in terms of policy. Mrs. Robertson suggests that Acton comply with the State suggestion regarding testing. Mrs. Robertson stated that subsurface system designers can design the drains. Mr. Stephens asked how long it would take to lower the water table. Mrs. Robertson stated it was site and season dependent, but the range would be three months to a year. Mr. Stephens asked if this should be put into code, to which Mrs. Robertson replied it should be placed in the regulations. The consensus of the Board of Health was that they understood and agreed with the clarification of the curtain drain procedure.

10:45 Kelley's Corner. The Board of Selectmen asked the Board of health to research data on new study target with recommendations and input. This information is to be submitted at the first meeting of the Board of Selectmen in January. General comments and input from the Board of Health for the study is requested by Selectmen. Mr. Stephens stated the Town should find an engineer other than SEA both for the study and the treatment plant design. Mrs. Robertson stated that SEA was to come into a meeting on the South Acton treatment plant. The Board of Health is to continue to move forward on those failures in the Kelley's Corner area and pursue solutions.

The Board of Health then discussed with staff the proper methods of approach to those parties at Kelley's Corner who are in violation, especially Meineke Muffler (Yetman). It was agreed that Sunoco and Redstone be called in before the Board of Health for the first meeting in December.

MacDonald's has stated in writing that they have retained Acton Survey as an engineering firm for their repair.

The issue of the breakout at the bank between Yankee Village and Finast plaza was discussed. The source of the breakout is as yet undetermined; however, testing of the Yankee Village system proved them innocent.

Mr. Emmons then moved that the minutes of the previous Board of Health meeting be accepted as corrected. Mrs. Sagoff seconded. Unanimous in favor.

The failed system at Brook Run condominiums was discussed in relation to a request for peroxide treatment permit. Mr. Emmons suggested that the Board grant permission on the basis that the repair of the system be done. This matter was tabled until the 25th of November.

11:35 p.m. Miss Voorhies moves to adjourn. Mrs. Sagoff seconds. Vote a pied; meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Holley
Carol Holley, Sec'y
03562

Signed and approved,

Daniel Costello
Daniel Costello, Chmn