



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2022
7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Present: Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, Joe Robb, Matt Mostoller, and Mike Geis

Chairperson: Mike Geis

Clerk: Ron Parenti

Others in Attendance: Andrea Becerra (Sustainability Director), Alexandra Wahlstrom, Kim Kastens, and Terra Friedrichs

1. Opening

Co-Chair Mike Geis opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

2. Regular Business

- A. Review Minutes –A motion to approve the minutes from the 7 April, 2022 meeting was made by Barry Rosen and seconded by Joe Robb. The minutes were approved without modification by roll call vote with 4 ayes; Matt Mostoller did not attend the previous meeting and abstained.
- B. Public Remarks/Comments – Kim Kastens informed the Committee that Green Acton is planning to hold its next educational seminar on the evening of 8 June and invited members of the WRAC to attend. Terra Friedrichs expressed her concern about the Town’s plan to connect the new affordable housing units on Main St. to the Town’s sewer system, and she asked Committee members to review the proposal and suggested that on-site wastewater disposal be considered as an alternative.
- C. Review Status of Great Road RFQ – Ron Parenti told the Committee that the RFQ had been issued on 11 April and that the bids were due on 6 May. He received information from the Town Manager that 23 requests for the RFQ had been received, but the number of organizations that will be sending responses is still unknown. The bid review process will likely begin within a week. The technical sections of the proposals will be scored before the cost proposals are opened.
- D. Suggestions for Future WRAC Committee Tasks – Several suggestions for future WRAC tasks were made by Committee members and meeting visitors.

Ron Parenti suggested that the Committee undertake a thorough itemization of each of the Water District’s wells and treatment plants to document their supply capabilities under nominal and drought conditions. This investigation would include estimates of current, near-term, and long-term supply capacities. The required data should be available from studies funded by the Water District, and information known to the District manager, staff, and the Water Commissioners. Parenti noted that since the



manager of the Water District will be retiring in the summer of 2023, this would be a good way to help preserve the District's corporate memory. Andrea Becerra suggested that information from the Town's hazard mitigation studies be included in this study.

Matt Mostoller suggested that the Committee revisit the idea of establishing wastewater management districts that would help ensure that septic systems are properly maintained, as well as provide financial help to residents with failing systems that require replacement. This idea has been promoted in past meetings by Ron Beck, who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. The Select Board has also encouraged the WRAC to study this management concept.

Mostoller also mentioned that the Town has been interested in an investigation of a stormwater utility. Becerra noted that in some towns this type of utility is funded by charges that are based on the area of non-permeable pavement at homes and businesses.

The Committee decided to take no action on these suggestions at this meeting since it is unclear how much work will need to be done by the WRAC in the future to support the Great Road RFQ. This will be clarified when the bids are received and evaluated, which should occur before the next scheduled meeting.

- E. Discussion of Town Meeting Article #53, Non-Binding Resolution – Terra Friedrichs asked the WRAC to formally support Article #53, which states the following: "Protecting Acton's potable water should be a higher priority than promoting/encouraging additional water uses." Friedrichs argued that the passage of this article was important to establish the fact that water protection is a higher priority for the Town of Acton than the promotion of commercial growth, which could significantly increase demand. A lengthy discussion followed in which questions were raised regarding the specific wording of the article, the underlying motivation for the article, and the impact of passing a non-binding resolution at Town Meeting. The WRAC members made it clear that they supported efforts to publicize the need for water protection efforts, but did have concerns about a vote to recommend passage of Article #53. At the conclusion of the discussion a motion to support the article was made by Ron Parenti and seconded by Barry Rosen. The motion was approved by roll call vote, with four ayes and one nay.
- F. Any other new business – None.

3. **Adjournment**

The Committee agreed to hold its next virtual meeting on May 18 at 7PM. Following a motion by Matt Mostoller that was seconded by Joe Robb, the meeting was adjourned by a unanimous roll call vote at 8:50 PM.