



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

March 21, 2023

7:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

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

Chairperson: Mike Geis

Clerk: Ron Parenti

Others in Attendance: John Mangiaratti (Town Manager), Himaja Nagireddy (Select Board Liaison), Alissa Nicol, and Kim Kastens.

1. Opening

WRAC chair Mike Geis opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

2. Regular Business

- A. Public Remarks/Comments – Kim Kastens informed the Committee that Green Acton had voted to support the ground water zoning article that will be discussed at the upcoming Town Meeting. She also provided an update on the work that Green Acton has performed in conjunction with OARS to obtain conductivity measurements throughout the Fort Pond Brook tributary system. These measurements are strongly correlated with salt content, and elevated readings from Coles Brook indicate that Acton’s Transfer Station is the likely source of salt input to this stream. As a result of this work, the Town hired Comprehensive Environmental Inc. to verify Green Acton’s data. Their results verified that the Transfer Station is the likely source of salt contamination, and Comprehensive Environmental subsequently issued a report recommending steps that the Town should take to remediate this problem.
- B. Review Minutes – The draft minutes from 16 February with minor modifications recommended by Matt Mostoller were reviewed. A motion to approve the amended minutes was made by Barry Rosen and seconded by Mike Geis. The minutes were subsequently approved by a unanimous roll call vote of the five Committee members
- C. Zoning Subcommittee Document Review – Barry Rosen discussed the latest revision of the water protection zoning document and explained that he and Joe Robb had incorporated most of the changes suggested by Committee members. Kim Kastens suggested that he include the word ‘Acton’ in the document title, and Ron Parenti recommended the inclusion of instructions for accessing the Town’s GIS link to obtain the zoning designation for a specified address. The method of distributing the document was discussed, and it was agreed that a direct mailing to all residents was the preferred method. Himaja Nagireddy recommended that the Committee discuss the report with the Board of Health and the Planning Board prior to a presentation to the Select Board. A request for the funding needed to print and mail the document can be made during the



Select Board presentation. Since the Board's schedule will be heavily booked prior to Town Meeting, the Committee may not be able to present the report to the Select Board until May. Nagireddy asked Matt Mostoller if the Water District might consider sharing the cost of mailing the water protection zoning document. Mostoller indicated that the District and the Town have engaged in cost sharing for mailings in the past, and that it was likely that the Commissioners would approve funding for this distribution of this educational report. Kim Kastens suggested that in addition to the mailing, a link to the document be sent to Marion Maxwell for posting in her newsletter. Alissa Nicol also recommended that a presentation of this material could be given on Acton TV. Joe Robb agreed with Nicol's suggestion, but cautioned that the preparation for a televised presentation would take time. At the conclusion of this discussion, Parenti moved that the Committee accept the groundwater protection zoning document with the modifications agreed upon at the meeting. That motion was seconded by Mike Geis and approved unanimously by the five Committee members.

- D. Great Road Potable Water Study Kickoff Meeting -- Ron Parenti discussed the kickoff meeting with Wright-Pierce, which had taken place a few hours prior to the WRAC meeting. He and Matt Mostoller had attended, along with several of the Town staff including Corey York, QinRui Pang, Andrea Becerra, and Kristen Guichard. The Wright-Pierce representatives included Tom Hogan (Civil/Stormwater Lead), Marc Moccio (Lead Project Engineer), and Kevin Olson (Project Manager). Parenti noted that he had expected the Wright-Pierce team to begin the meeting with a discussion of their intended approach to the potable water study. However, Tom Hogan stated that the purpose of the meeting was to elicit direction from the Town, Water District, and the WRAC as to the goals of the Add Alternative tasks listed in the Great Road Corridor Wastewater Solution RFQ. Mostoller expressed the opinion that this was probably a good way to initiate this section of the study, and thus avoid misunderstandings about the scope of the investigation. He further stated that he was pleased with the discussions of the first three topics involving the roles of the various agencies that have control of the Great Road Corridor, the issue of stormwater management, and the review of Town bylaws. The fourth item in the list of tasks speaks to wastewater treatment, which was addressed in the first part of the study. Tom Hogan stated that Wright-Pierce would provide a cost analysis of the wastewater options discussed in the interim memorandum issued on 28 February 2023 in the company's final report.

Mostoller stated that he and Parenti had emphasized the need to address the potential impacts of enhanced business growth along the Great Rd. corridor on water demand and pollution in the second part of the study. Wright-Pierce was also reminded of the importance of the task to create series of GIS maps that would identify water resources areas, public supply wells, wastewater discharge areas, and stormwater infrastructure. With regard to the question of demand growth Tom Hogan stated that a 25% growth factor was used in the wastewater portion of the study, which they believe is the maximum increase that the Water District would likely see as a result of the installation of sewers along Great Rd. Hogan also stated that Wright-Pierce had performed an outreach to determine the demand for sewers by residents along Great Rd. and current



businesses. Their study found only limited interest among residents, and the occupants of Gould's Plaza currently have no interest in connecting to a sewer system. Kristen Guichard stated that there are a number of smaller businesses within the corridor that are in need of a sewer connection, and promised to supply additional information about the companies that have requested access to a sewer line.

Several WRAC members and meeting visitors asked if another meeting could be scheduled with Wright-Pierce to address several questions, including the methodology used to generate the 25% demand growth estimate. Parenti asked the members to submit questions to him, and promised to contact Tom Hogan to respond to these questions.

- E. Draft EPA Regulations for Drinking Water -- Ron Parenti asked the Committee members if they would be interested in forming a subcommittee to study the new EPA regulations for PFAS and draft a comment for submission to the EPA. Matt Mostoller indicated that most of the Water District's wells currently exceed the proposed EPA limits and would require upgrades to provide treatment to comply with these regulations. Joe Robb expressed his support for a WRAC subcommittee study; however, John Mangiaratti and Himaja Nagireddy advised the Committee that any statement written by WRAC would need the Select Board's approval prior to release. Parenti indicated that he would draft a comment that he may submit to the EPA as a private citizen, and that he would discuss the document with the Committee at a future WRAC meeting.
- F. Discussion of Town Meeting Article #40 -- Alissa Nicol presented a series of slides in support of Article 40, which will be discussed at the Town Meeting that begins on 1 May. This is a non-binding resolution that asks for a study that would investigate potential changes to the management of the Town's sewer resources, such as the formation of a committee to advise the Select Board (which currently serves as the Sewer Commission) or the creation of an independent Sewer Commission. The motivation for this article is the concern that the Select Board may not have the technical expertise or the time to provide adequate management of a very complex sewage distribution system and treatment plant. Nicol asked the WRAC members if they would vote to support this article at Town Meeting. Barry Rosen and Mike Geis both expressed their strong support for an independent sewer commission. Parenti stated that at a Town Meeting in the late 90's the Select Board had indicated their intent to transfer oversight of the sewer system to an independent commission within a few years. Following a discussion, which included questions about the legal process of creating a separate commission, Mike Geis moved that the Committee vote to support Article 40 at Town Meeting. This motion was seconded by Barry Rosen. Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, Joe Robb, and Mike Geis voted aye; Matt Mostoller abstained. The motion to support Article 40 was approved by majority vote.
- G. Any Other New Business -- None.

3. **Adjournment**



Committee members agreed to hold the next meeting on 13 April 2023 at 7pm. A motion to adjourn was made by Barry Rosen and seconded by Mike Geis. Adjournment was approved at 9:05 pm by a unanimous roll call vote of the five WRAC members.

Meeting Chat File

19:09:49 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

Here is the link to the Green Acton post about road salt and conductivity measurements, mentioned in my public comment:

<https://greenacton.org/2023/02/23/road-salt-threatens-aquatic-ecosystems-in-acton/>

19:34:13 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

email address to get a notice about the GWP zone doc put into Marion Maxwell's email newsletter for seniors and pre-seniors: maxwell.house000@gmail.com

20:56:45 From Alissa Nicol to Host and Panelists:

alissa.nicol@gmail.com

21:04:11 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

<https://pfascommunityengagement.org/register/> April 11: Region 1 Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, 10 Tribes