



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2023
7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

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

Chairperson: Joe Robb

Clerk: Ron Parenti

Others in Attendance: Alissa Nicol (Select Board Liaison), Kim Kastens, Terra Friedrichs, and David Boccuti

1. Opening

WRAC chair Joe Robb opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

2. Regular Business

A. Public Remarks/Comments -- Kim Kastens reviewed the results of a recent water conductivity survey of the Nashoba Brook watershed conducted by Green Acton and OARS. Kastens noted that conductivity numbers have risen from 100 $\mu\text{s}/\text{cm}$ in the 1970's to levels that are now in excess of 500 $\mu\text{s}/\text{cm}$, and attributed most of this increase to the use of road salt to control ice in the winter. Barry Rosen noted that most town are reducing the use of sand, which has to be removed in the spring, and relying primarily on salt or salt substitutes. In response to a question about seasonal variations in conductivity, Kastens stated that measurements are typically only taken during the summer months.

Terra Friedrichs recommended that the WRAC approach the Select Board about expanding the Committee's charter. Joe Robb then noted that he has had conversations with Alissa Nicol about how the WRAC can best serve the Select Board in the future. An expanded discussion of future WRAC tasks occurs later in this meeting under Any Other New Business.

B. Review Minutes -- A motion to approve the minutes for 12 October was made by Barry Rosen and seconded by Matt Mostoller. Mostoller requested a change to the minutes regarding a statement that he had made concerning the likelihood that the W.R. Grace site is a source of local PFAS contamination. The revised minutes with that revision were approved unanimously by roll call vote.

C. Presentation of Zoning Report to the Select Board -- Barry Rosen reviewed the presentation that he and Joe Robb made to the Select Board on 16 October. Barry reported that the zoning report was well received by the Board, and that the members voted unanimously to approve funding for printing and distributing the report to Town residents and businesses. Matt Mostoller indicated that he has discussed a cost sharing plan with John Mangiaratti; the Town will probably agree to pay printing costs while the



Water District will be responsible for mailing expenses. Mostoller also reported that Mangiaratti asked that the zoning report include information about ways for non-English speaking residents to obtain a translation. Alissa Nicol urged the Committee to complete all of the necessary changes quickly and mail the report prior to the December holidays. She suggested that to expedite this process the Water District could pay the full cost of printing and mailing, with the understanding that the District would be reimbursed by the Town for approximately half of the cost. Mostoller recommended electronic posting by the Town and Water District in addition to mailing. Joe Robb requested that a discussion of distribution through social media be placed on the agenda for the next WRAC meeting.

Following the presentation of the Zoning Report to the Select Board, Dave Martin commented that the WRAC should investigate non-drinking-water PFAS exposure pathways and recommend ways for Acton residents to reduce their PFAS intake. Joe Robb discussed some potential sources of information on this topic, and Ron Parenti expressed an interest in pursuing a study of alternative exposure pathways. However, Terra Friedrichs and Kim Kasten both expressed the opinion that the WRAC should maintain its focus on water-related problems, such as the potential impact of new zoning regulations on water demand. Following a discussion of this topic, Committee members agreed that an in-depth investigation of PFAS exposure pathways would not be the best use of WRAC's limited resources.

D. Update on Wright-Pierce Response to Great Road Study Comments – Ron Parenti initiated the discussion by providing a brief review of the history of the \$40k allocation to WRAC for a water resources study, which was approved by the voters at the 2020 Town Meeting. Following discussions with the Town Manager, WRAC agreed to use this money to fund the potable water portion of the Great Road Wastewater study performed by Wright-Pierce. WRAC received the draft final report prepared by Wright-Pierce in July, and the Committee's comments on the report were sent to the Town Manager in September. Wright-Pierce subsequently responded to those comments in a memo issued on 25 October. Several WRAC members expressed the opinion that Wright-Pierce had not been responsive to the Committee's requests to clarify and expand some sections of the study. However, it was also noted that the Add Alternate segment of the wastewater study had been underfunded, which made it difficult for the contractor to perform an in-depth analysis of each of the seven study tasks defined by WRAC. Matt Mostoller expressed a strong objection to a few of the statements in the report, which appear to minimize the challenges that the Water District is facing in meeting the current and projected water demand. He also expressed his concern that those statements could be taken out of context in future briefings. Mostoller recommended that WRAC request a meeting with the contractor to discuss a limited set of wording changes, and offered to contact Wright-Pierce about this request. Joe Robb and Barry Rosen volunteered to assist in the preparation a short list of recommended revisions, which will be reviewed by the Committee at the next WRAC meeting. If the recommended wording changes are not made, Alissa Nicol advised the WRAC to prepare an addendum that could be attached to the report. Joe Robb suggested that in future communications the Committee should



highlight the merits of the information compiled by Wright-Pierce in the Great Road Wastewater report, and plan to ask the Town to fund a more expansive investigation that would build upon the findings of this study.

E. Any Other New Business – Matt Mostoller returned to a discussion initiated earlier in the meeting about future WRAC tasks, and suggested that the Committee consider a stormwater study that would include a survey of stormwater utilities in the region. This information could be used to generate an educational report to be distributed to Acton residents, and would provide guidance to the Select Board about the formation of a stormwater utility in Acton. Alissa Nicol asked the Committee to investigate methods to reduce the use of road salt and prepare a report on this topic to the Select Board. A further discussion of these suggestions will be included in the agenda of a future meeting.

3. **Adjournment**

Committee members agreed to hold the next meeting on 15 November 2023 at 7pm to review the list of recommended revisions to the Wright-Pierce wastewater report. A motion to adjourn was made by Matt Mostoller and seconded by Barry Rosen. Adjournment was approved at 8:50 pm by a unanimous roll call vote.

Meeting Chat File

20:03:53 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

<https://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/Get/Document-88972/TownWRACComments-WPResponseMemo.pdf>