



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2024
7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

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

Chairperson: Joe Robb

Clerk: Ron Parenti

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

1. Opening

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

2. Regular Business

- A. Public Remarks/Comments – Kim Kastens provided an update of the water conductivity measurements that Green Acton has been conducting in conjunction with OARS. She discussed a presentation made to the Conservation Commission asking for permission to install a continuously-recording conductivity sensor in Nashoba Brook at the US Geological survey site for two 3-month periods beginning in the late winter of this year and in the summer. That request was approved unanimously by the Commission. In response to questions about the instrumentation, Kastens noted that the equipment to be used in those measurements has been purchased by OARS, and that the recorded data will include information about stream flow. Joe Robb suggested that the WRAC discuss the possibility of conducting a similar measurement program in the future.
- B. Review Minutes from 13 December 2023 – A motion to approve the minutes for 13 December 2023 was made by Mike Geis and seconded by Barry Rosen. A question was raised about the person responsible for responding to the Open Space and Recreation Working Group regarding their recommendations for future WRAC tasks, and Barry Rosen volunteered to transmit the response drafted by WRAC at the previous meeting. Following the resolution of this question, the four Committee members in attendance voted unanimously to approve the minutes.
- C. Discussion of Future WRAC Tasks – At the previous meeting on 13 December, Joe Robb presented a list of future tasks that he thought the WRAC should consider. That list, which includes 20 task suggestions, was placed before the Committee again for a more in-depth review. The items on that list are divided into four categories: surface water, groundwater/water supply, stormwater management, and wastewater management. Robb suggested that the Committee could elect to work on several investigations in parallel by assigning subgroups of Committee members to separate tasks. An extended discussion followed, which covered the items listed by Robb, as well as other issues that the WRAC could address. Barry Rosen recommended that the Committee advocate for stronger



zoning bylaws for water protection and better regulation of sump pump discharge. The development of regulations for road salt use was suggested, but Rosen noted that it is very difficult for the Town to control the use of road salt on state roads. Better oversight of septic systems and the creation of wastewater management districts to provide that oversight was also discussed.

Alissa Nicol reminded the Committee members that the Select Board intends to discuss its recommendations for WRAC assignments at a future meeting, but since the Board is currently absorbed in budgetary discussions it will probably be at least a month before that topic will be addressed by the Board. Since additional educational outreach activities by WRAC had been one of the suggested Committee tasks, she reminded the members that DPW already provides educational materials on the topic of stormwater management. She expressed her support for an investigation of the impact of road salt use on water quality, the feasibility of establishing wastewater management districts, and better oversight of the use of residential sump pumps. She also noted that Town Meeting has indicated that it supports a town-wide water resources investigation.

Given the number of study topics that had been considered during this discussion, Ron Parenti suggested that the Committee focus on a limited number of high-priority tasks until direction is provided by the Select Board. In that regard, Mike Geis volunteered to initiate an investigation of the impact of climate change on annual rainfall, and Barry Rosen expressed his desire to pursue a preliminary study of wastewater infrastructure and zoning issues. To assist in these studies, Kim Kastens suggested that Committee members review the Acton Asset Management Plan recently released by Woodward & Curran for information about climate change and a description of the Town's stormwater infrastructure.

- D. Discussion of WRAC Contribution to the Town's Annual Report – Joe Robb presented his first draft of the Committee's contribution to the Town's Annual Report. This draft provides a high-level summary of the tasks completed by the Committee in 2023, including its oversight of the Great Road Wastewater Study performed by Wright-Pierce and the generation of a groundwater-zoning educational document that was mailed to Town residents. There were a few questions regarding the included description of activities performed by the WRAC in prior years, and a discussion about the length of the document. Parenti suggested that the report include an image of the zoning map included in WRAC's educational flyer, but noted that the color map would probably need to be converted to a black and white image. The completed report is due on 26 February, so the Committee agreed to meet again on 1 February to review and approve the document for publication.
- E. Discussion of Great Road Wastewater Report – A memo written by Joe Robb and Barry Rosen listing the WRAC's highest-priority wording changes to the Great Road Wastewater Report was sent to Wright-Pierce on 21 November, 2023. Four of the six recommended changes were included verbatim in the published report, and a fifth was included with modified language. Unfortunately, the Committee's most important recommendation, which asked Wright-Pierce to eliminate a Grace-owned parcel from



consideration for a wastewater disposal site, was not included. To address this issue and provide an opportunity to ask additional questions, the Committee decided to invite a representative from Wright-Pierce to a future meeting to review the potable water section of the report. Parenti agreed to contact Town staff and Wright-Pierce to arrange that meeting.

F. Any Other New Business - None

3. **Adjournment**

Committee members agreed to hold the next meeting on 1 February 2024 at 7pm to discuss the Committee's contribution to the Town's Annual Report, and an additional meeting was scheduled for 29 February for regular business. An alternative date of 22 February was also chosen in the event that Wright-Pierce is unable to meet with the Committee on the 1st or the 29th. A motion to adjourn was subsequently made by Ron Parenti and seconded by Barry Rosen. This motion was approved at 9:20 pm by a unanimous roll call vote of the four Committee members in attendance.

Meeting Chat File

20:27:50 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

Acton Asset Management Plan

The Town of Acton contracted Woodard & Curran Inc. to develop a Stormwater Drainage System Asset Management Plan (AMP) including a culvert condition assessment, storm drain infrastructure assessment, detention basin assessment, and a climate impact assessment.

20:28:16 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

<https://doc.actonma.gov/dsweb/Get/Document-89429/2023.08%20Acton%20AMP%20Final%20Report.pdf>

21:14:15 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

Have to go... good meeting... good night!