

TOWN OF ACTON
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES OF MAY 17, 2018

Documents: Any documents utilized during this meeting are either included in these minutes, available on the web and/or can be examined at the Town offices during regular business hours.

Present: Matt Mostoller, Robert Sekuler, Lucy Kirshner, Ron Beck, Barry Rosen, Joan Gardner (BOS Liaison). Guests: Kim Kastens, Jennifer Querbes, Terra Friedrichs, Mary-Lynn Miller.

Note Taker(s): Barry Rosen

Chairperson: Ron Beck

Called To Order: The chairperson called the meeting to order on Thursday, May 17, 2018 at 7:05 PM.

Old Business:

1. Approval of Minutes: On a motion by Mr. Beck which was seconded by Mr. Sekuler, the minutes were accepted as amended (spelling error corrected) by a unanimous vote.
2. Report from Ms. Gardner on venue: Ms. Gardner reported to the committee that Rm. 204 (Faulkner Room) has been reserved for the water study workshop on September 22, 2018 (Saturday). The Town will also pay for morning and afternoon refreshments as well as the lunch for the workshop participants. The WRAC also asked Ms. Gardner if she could arrange that additional rooms be available for 5 breakout groups during the workshop.
3. Discussion on Workshop Facilitator: Currently two facilitators are under consideration by the committee to help us with the water study workshop.
 - 3.1. We received more information on Sarah Bursky during this meeting. She has been utilized by others who provided positive feedback on her. Ms. Bursky has a good background on environmental issues and is currently employed by the National Park Service as a community planner and rivers manager. The last group to utilize her facilitating services for a full day workshop was charged approximately \$200 which included a pre-meeting with the planners. [We would ask the facilitator to meet with us to go through the scenarios that would be presented to the workshop participants.]
 - 3.2. *Action Item:* Mr. Beck was asked to contact Ms. Bursky by telephone. He would get more particulars on her and ascertain if she would be available for the workshop date. During the discussion, he would also speak with her about the 5 scenarios that the WRAC proposes to utilize during the workshop.
4. Workshop Participants/Invitations:
 - 4.1. The invitations to attend the workshop for town employees would be done through the new Town Manager.
 - 4.2. Invitations for a town committee to send a representative would be done through the chairperson of the respective committee.

- 4.3. After considerable discussion, the WRAC decided that no NGOs would be invited to attend the workshop as participants.
- 4.4. It was decided that Ms. Kastens would be invited to act as the “citizens’ liaison” during the workshop. During the periods when the participants were in breakout sessions, Ms. Kastens would chair a citizen workshop where ideas would be gathered and reported back to workshop near the conclusion of the meeting. *[This fits nicely with the previously stated goal of the WRAC where we expected to listen to citizen comments during a feedback session near the end of the workshop. Note added by note taker.]*
- 4.5. The committee proposed to add several additional attendees to the workshop which are detailed in the attached Water Study Workshop chart. This raised the total participant list to 28 including the facilitator. [It was not decided whether a note taker would be present.]
5. Scenarios: The committee worked on narrowing the proposed scenario list down to the top 5 which would be utilized during the workshop. They will be discussed and finalized during the next meeting. They can be found on the attached “chart” as the highlighted scenarios.
6. Chart: The WRAC Workshop chart is the document that reflects the latest updates and thinking on the water study workshop. The yellow highlighted text indicates areas of change or edits from the previous chart. The chart date reflects the latest update to the document.

New Business:

7. Date/Time of Next Meeting: The next meeting of the WRAC will take place on Thursday, June 21, 2018 at the headquarters building of the Water Supply District of Acton, 693 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton, MA beginning at 7:00 PM.
8. Action Item: All members are asked to read the email sent to the WRAC distribution list by Mr. Beck on May 17, 2018 with the subject as: Policy Questions with Water Impact prior to the next meeting of the committee. The chair would like this “starting point” document to be used “...as a reference point to what a water study needs to accomplish in order to inform town policy decisions.”

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Sekuler which was seconded by Mr. Beck, the committee voted to adjourn the meeting by a unanimous vote at 9:10 PM.

What is the overarching goal of the workshop?

Allow the Board of Selectmen and the Water Supply District of Acton to define **the most important information** that they need in order to make intelligent decisions about:

- Protecting our existing water supply—quantity and quality.
- Forecasting the Town of Acton’s water needs for the next 20 years, recognizing that any forecast will need to be periodically re-examined.
- Looking for water supply solutions “without the box” that could reasonably be utilized in addressing the future needs of the town. Consider the supplier(s) and the possible sources of the water.
- Get to a “shared vision” of what questions we need to be answered. [New]

Where will the workshop be held on Saturday, September 22, 2018 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM?

The venue and the venue reservation must be addressed now.

- What are the appropriate places that can be opened for business on a Saturday? *It was decided that Rm. 204 in Acton Town Hall will be used. Joan will arrange for the town to fund the refreshments and a box lunch for direct participants only (not the observers).*
- *Ms. Gardner will also arrange to have at least 5 breakout rooms available for the participants. [It was also noted that observers may “drop-in” to the breakout sessions but may not participate in the breakouts.]*
- *Kim Kastens will coordinate a “citizens’ breakout/discussion” while the 5 participant breakouts are taking place.*
- *It was estimated that about \$200 will be required for the facilitator.*
- Which one will be most comfortable for the number of people expected?
- Will we provide coffee, refreshments, lunch in the venue? If so, is food permitted?
- Will the Town and/or AWD fund?
- Who will handle/reserve?

Should the invitees be policy people and/or implementer people or both?

The committee decided that policy people would be the best choice as they will be the decision makers who will need to have questions answered.

How many people should be in the room? Should there be a limit to the attendance?

The consensus is that about 25 direct participants would be a good number. Getting much beyond that, it will be difficult to get things done and for enough space to be available in the breakout rooms downstairs.

Who should be invited to attend the workshop?

- WRAC 5
- Town Manager 1
- Selectmen (all or how many?) 5? (will they all attend)
- Director of Health (Sheryl Ball) 1
- Board of Health member: 1
- Jamie Eldridge: 1 [*Decided it would be appropriate to invite. He may attend for at least part of the workshop.*]
- Director of Planning (Roland and/or Kristin Guichard) 1
- Planning Board member: 1
- Director of Public Works (Corey York) 1
- Zoning person? 1 *ZBA would need to decide who to send for the day.*
- Natural Resources: 1 (Tom Tidman)
- Conservation Committee member: 1
- Finance Committee member: 1 (to be selected by the Fincom)
- Fire Department: 1
- Land Use (Selby): 1
- Citizens' Liaison (Kim Kastens): 1
- Water Supply District of Acton (Matt's feedback from 4/9/2018 meeting)
 - o Matt: 1 (*already included in WRAC count above*)
 - o Commissioners: 2 (likely = Ron Parenti, Erika Amir-Lin)
 - o WLMAC 1 (John Cipar)
 - o Other ideas provided to Matt by Commissioners?
- Professional facilitator: 1
- Current Attendance Total: 28

Possible scenarios to consider?

It was decided (on 5/17/2018) that 5 scenarios would be chosen from those discussed.

- The rate of water consumption in Acton begins to exceed the amount permitted by the Water Management Act.
- A number of wells have to go off-line for an extended period of time perhaps due to a major problem with a WTP.
- Contamination enters a wellfield and renders it not useful for the foreseeable future.
- A large organization wants to construct a number of buildings in Acton's "technical district" where they will house their new campus. As many people will be located within this campus, a number of eateries will be included in the design as well as a large laundry facility. It appears that this new campus will require large amounts of water and will discharge a substantial amount of wastewater. The irrigation requirements for the campus are not yet clear. *[Revised to not include Nagog Park.]*
- Maynard (or another town) have a major water supply problem and ask Acton to supply them with a large quantity of water for an extended period of time while they begin a search for additional water.
- Stow approaches Acton to seek a mutually beneficial water supply.
- The Commonwealth announces the formation of the South Central Regional Water Supply District which will consist of Littleton, Westford, Stow, Maynard, Marlborough and Acton. *[New addition]*
- The Town needs to site another waste water treatment discharge site to accommodate disposal capacity for a neighborhood of failing septic systems. A large parcel of land identified as a future water supply well is in close proximity to this site. *[One scenario to consider is development or redevelopment of land that is critical to the existing and future supply of water. In what ways can the Town realize benefits from the land while respecting the sensitive nature of the parcel relative to groundwater resources?]*