



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2021
7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Present: Barry Rosen, Matthew Mostoller, Ronald Parenti, Ron Beck

Chairperson: Ron Beck

Clerk: Matthew Mostoller

Others in Attendance: Joe Robb, Himaja Nagireddy, Kim Kastens, Mike Geis, Terra Friedrichs (by phone)

1. Opening

Chair Ron Beck opened the meeting at 7:07 PM.

2. Regular Business

- A. Approval of Meeting Minutes – The meeting minutes from the Water Resources Advisory Committee’s (WRAC) August 12, 2021 meeting were approved on a motion by Ron Beck, seconded by Barry Rosen. The committee discussed the June 24, 2021 minutes and ultimately approved them on a motion by Matthew Mostoller, seconded by Ron Beck, with a note about the adjournment issue that occurred when the Zoom session was ended prior to a formal motion to adjourn was made. Ron Beck still owes draft minutes from the February 5, 2020 and June 9, 2021 meetings.
- B. Public Remarks/Comments – No one from the public asked to speak during this time so Barry Rosen suggested Matthew Mostoller could apprise the group on two water issues. He provided an update on concerns identified with a proposed housing project at 516 Massachusetts Avenue. The Board of Water Commissioners sent a letter to the Chair of the Acton Community Housing Corporation expressing the concerns as they relate to a future well site adjacent to the project. He also provided an update on the bedrock well exploration and permitting, which is currently open for public comment and State review.
- C. Review Membership of WRAC – Joe Robb joined the meeting and introduced himself as a resident that may have interest in volunteering on water related committees in the community. He is a 17-year resident of Acton and has over 25 years’ experience as a professional hydrogeologist. His current job is with a consulting firm, and he has written multiple articles in U.S. and global publications. Ron Beck spoke to Himaja Nagireddy about the process for onboarding new members. The Volunteer Coordinating Committee (VCC) has not been meeting and the Town Manager is working to facilitate the VCC in moving forward. A discussion of committee objectives, the plans for the next 1-2 years, and history of our recent work occurred. Ron Beck noted the need for consulting assistance was critical to move the committee’s goals forward. Matthew Mostoller mentioned that we took a hiatus during COVID and the long timeline since our workshop



in 2018 was a combination of digesting information from the workshop, framing what a water study should achieve, understanding existing data and information, and finally getting back on our feet after the hiatus. Funding is now in place via the Town's capital budget although those funds are likely only a starting point for our work. Ron Parenti wondered if the Water Land Management Advisory Committee (WLAMC) is dissolved, would any of the remaining members be interested in joining the WRAC.

- D. Prepare for meeting with Select Board – Himaja Nagireddy indicated the Board sets the agenda approximately one week in advance of a meeting. This would make October the first possible meeting times for us to prepare. She suggested we prepare a brief description of what we wish to discuss with the Board to assist in setting up the time.
- E. Continue work on advancing the Water Study – Barry Rosen shared some of the questions that were generated as part of the 2018 workshop. Matthew Mostoller suggested our time might be better spent discussing the draft RFQ from Ron Parenti and the ideas outlined in Ron Beck's email as they were more relevant and forward focused. Ron Beck was in touch with Andrea Becerra regarding examples of scopes of work. The conversation turned to priorities for covering in the study based on the Ron's email. Kim Kastens was pleased to see climate change on the list but was curious where droughts, floods, and nature-based solutions fit in. Barry Rosen sees the need for wastewater as it relates to sources of supply, however any work needs to be actionable. Ron Parenti felt some of the topics were too broad and beyond the scope of WRAC. Matthew Mostoller agree that wastewater needed to be understood as a threat and the study should be done in multiple phases. He also indicated the study should address if Acton wants to continue to be water independent and what the paths to alternatives are. If the choice is to remain independent, the community needs to double down and protect the resources it has. Terra Friedrichs thank us for our work, indicated small boxes are better for understanding issues, appreciated Ron's email scope, highlighted wastewater solutions versus problems, and liked Matt's call for protection. Kim Kastens asked for more details on Matt's concerns. He indicated that our understanding of threats to groundwater were evolving, weak bylaws and other regulatory protections existed, too much pressure on the resource, encroachment of existing sources and protection areas, and a change in concern from major incidents (such as a WR Grace) to smaller threats without the same level of understanding by the community. Ron Beck thinks the phased approach is needed to make the work useful and discussed what blocks make sense to do when. Ron Parenti questioned the role of the consultant versus WRAC while Matthew Mostoller suggested some of the work might readily fit into other planning activities and studies. Mike Geis indicated it can be difficult to get information and that the water resource issues are multi-faceted. We need consensus on the priorities and a sense of urgency to make the work happen and be useable. The group should give this thought and be prepared to sort out the priorities at the next meeting.

4. Adjournment

The committee discussed our next meeting date. Based on schedules, it will be on September 9, 2021 at 7pm. On a motion by Barry Rosen and seconded by Ron Beck, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM by a unanimous roll call vote.