

ACTON BOARD OF HEALTH  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
JANUARY 6, 1987

RECEIVED & FILED

DATE 1/29/87

Barbara Brown  
TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Board members present were Chairman Daniel Costello, Eleanor Voorhies, George Emmons, and Richard Stephens. Staff present were Sanitarian Edward Wirtanen and Secretary Carol Holley.

The meeting opened at 7:35 with an informal discussion of the future of the Nursing Service. Miss Voorhies expressed pleasure at the fact that a formal study of the Nursing Service is being done. Mr. Stephens wondered if the agency could be run more as a business.

While reviewing a memorandum on Redstone, Mr. Emmons asked staff if data on rainfall and groundwater levels were available and relevant.

Formal discussions opened at 7:42 p.m. Mr. Emmons moved to accept the minutes as amended. Miss Voorhies seconded. All voted in favor.

A draft regulation on the transferability of septic system installation permits for new systems was discussed. Mr. Costello arrived during this discussion, at 7:44 p.m. Mr. Stephens asked about the purpose of the proposed form for transferring the permits. Mr. Wirtanen explained the circumstances leading up to the need for this form, and the ramifications of change of ownership of a property before the septic system is constructed. Mr. Stephens asked that the language of the draft regulation reflect the life span of the original permit, and that it specify that transfers of permits pertain to new construction only. This matter was tabled pending staff revision of the draft document and regulation.

8:06 Review of memo regarding filter medium. Mr. Stephens expressed a desire to formulate a working definition of the filter medium without requiring the performance of a perc test on the material. He agreed with Mr. Kreissl's use of sieve analysis as a definitive measure. Mr. Wirtanen mentioned that Title 5 was designed to prevent surface pollution and did not deal with pollution below ground level. Mr. Wirtanen agreed that the idea of pressure dosing the system instead of using gravity was a good one. Gravity systems can create an anaerobic zone which can lead to the propagation of harmful bacteria. Mr. Stephens preferred dosing larger systems to ensure complete coverage throughout the bed. Mr. Emmons asked what the additional cost of pressure dosing would be. Mr. Wirtanen stated that one just adds a pump and pump chamber, and the cost would not be a significant addition to the current cost of housing. Policing and maintenance of the additional equipment for pressure dosing will have to be a part of the septage management program.

A brief discussion on the special permitting process was held. The need to revise and render permanent the Temporary Aquifer Protection Regulation was discussed. Mr. Wirtanen mentioned the paperwork burden generated by the current special permit process.

Mr. Costello stated that the Town needs regulations to enforce better management of septage and septic systems, but there is no reason to enact such regulations without implementation of appropriate enforcement/management tools.

Computerization of Health Department records was discussed.

A general philosophical discussion regarding future regulations to be formulated, and a historical perspective of regulatory procedures in Acton was held. The futility of designing programs without the means of implementation was brought up several times.

Mr. Stephens requested that staff generate a list of properties for which the Board of Health has no data.

Regarding Aquifer Protection areas and the special permitting process, Mr. Stephens and Mr. Emmons agreed to work together to redraft regulations governing these issues.

The question of acid treatment of failing septic systems was raised by Mr. Wirtanen, who had been asked by a septic pumper if this were allowed in Acton. The Board stated that this was not allowed in Acton.

During a discussion of the proposed Rosestone Condominium development, Mr. Costello asked that a copy of a letter from Parker Village Condominium Trust's attorney be forwarded to Town Counsel.

A memorandum regarding the Kelley's Corner study was reviewed. Mr. Stephens volunteered to serve on the committee to help select an engineering firm. A review of the Kelley's Corner area records led Mr. Emmons to ask about pump slips indicating overflow at the Bowladrome. Mr. Costello stated that pump slips need to be redesigned to show the sources of any problem conditions.

10:11 p.m. Preliminary discussion of Redstone Condominiums pending arrival of their engineer. Mr. Costello stated that there were two problems that needed to be addressed. Mr. DeFeo, the engineer, had been asked to come up with both long term and short term solutions.

10:15 Mr. Fred DeFeo and Redstone Condominium Association appeared. Mr. DeFeo had brought a plan prepared by Perkins Co. He stated that EJ Flynn had also done testing in the area. Mr. DeFeo stated that he did not have a good solution to the problem. The system could be put in that would be an excavation and fill system. He would need 13-14 trenches, each 100 feet long. He stated that the elevations were not suitable. This system would not last very long because there would be breakout on the slope behind an adjoining house. Water is coming from behind and around the building and flowing into the septic system. Mr. Stephens stated that there is a groundwater issue in general in that the site would be flooded due to groundwater even without the septic system. Superimposed on this is the fact that septic systems are also in the area. Mr. Costello asked how these issues will be resolved either on a long-term or short-term basis. There are no breakout problems in dry months.

Mr. Silman of the condo association asked why they should be responsible for the water problems that originate off their land. Mr. Stephens asked how to lower the water table. Mr. DeFeo stated that blowing up ledge for an interceptor trench would be a problem due to nearness to the building and the existence of a gas main in the area. Mr. DeFeo would like to explore an area where groundwater does not appear. He indicated on a plan how he would like to

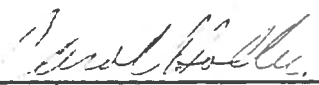
construct a temporary interceptor trench filled with crushed stone now to make the water move under the blacktop. If sewage were not involved, the water could be channeled right into a storm drain. Mr. Costello asked about buying adjoining property and using the land for Redstone's septic system. Mr. DeFeo stated that it depended on what was found in terms of soil conditions. Mr. Stephens asked about small treatment plants. Mr. DeFeo stated that he found they did not work well. Mr. Stephens asked about the cost of a proposed drain. Mr. DeFeo estimated \$5,000-\$6,000. Mr. Stephens asked if this could be a phased solution, with installation of the drain as the first step. There will be intermingling of sewage and groundwater with this drain. Mr. Ed Richter, an observer, asked about the placement of a drain on school property. Mr. DeFeo stated that he would like to get the water underground. He also stated that he recommended the people at Redstone install water saving devices. Mr. Silman stated that he wished to install the drain trench recommended by Mr. DeFeo and then try to put in the drain behind the building on school property. Mr. DeFeo stated that the groundwater problem will have to be solved on school land. It was preferred to invest in the drain prior to spending money on a new leaching system. After the initial trench is installed then the leaching system can be dried out and rebuilt in place if necessary. Mr. Stephens stated that the interceptor will be vigorously pursued to get the water under control. Mr. Costello asked about a timetable. Mr. DeFeo stated that the initial trench will be done in 4-6 weeks. Mr. DeFeo stated that he needed an emergency repair permit to construct this trench. Mr. Costello expressed concern about the way to later remove the connection between the underdrain from the leaching field. Mr. DeFeo felt he could run a pipe and later plug it. Options on how this could be done were discussed. Mr. Costello asked about variances required. Mr. DeFeo stated that he needed variances to construct the trench, 3 feet wide filled with 3/4" to 1 1/2" stone. It is being built directly on impervious material. This does not conform to anything in the State Environmental Code Title 5. This would be a variance to build a temporary overflow trench.

Mr. Stephens moved to issue an emergency repair permit for the emergency construction of a temporary overflow drain for the leaching field. Miss Voorhies seconded. All voted in favor.

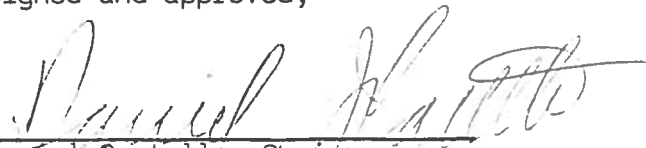
Mr. DeFeo stated he will meet with Mr. Kessler of the School Department regarding construction of an interceptor on school grounds. Mr. Costello stated he wanted a progress report in 30 days.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Emmons moved to adjourn. Miss Voorhies seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carol Holley, Sec'y

Signed and approved,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel Costello, Chairman  
0360Z