



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
January 19, 2023
7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Present: Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, and Mike Geis

Chairperson: Mike Geis

Clerk: Ron Parenti

Others in Attendance: Himaja Nagireddy (Select Board Liaison), Terra Friedrichs, and Kim Kastens.

1. Opening

WRAC chair Mike Geis opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

2. Regular Business

- A. Review Minutes – The draft minutes from 22 December were reviewed; a motion to approve the minutes was made by Barry Rosen and seconded by Mike Geis. The minutes were approved unanimously by the three members present, Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, and Mike Geis.
- B. Public Remarks/Comments – Kim Kastens informed the members that she is working on a non-binding article for the Water District’s Annual Meeting, which will request that the Acton Water District perform a water rate study. The article asks that a consultant be hired to recommend changes to the existing rate structure to promote water conservation and ensure that water would be more affordable for low-income residents. Kastens invited the Committee to comment on the wording of this article. In response to a comment by Barry Rosen, Kastens made it clear that the article would permit the Water District Commissioners to set the scope of the study.
- C. Great Road Study Update – Ron Parenti presented the contents of an email distributed by Corey York, which contained the following summary.

Wright-Pierce has been collecting and analyzing data from the Acton Water District and the Concord Water Department. They’ve also been working with the health department regarding septic systems and obtained data from the DEP for the existing treatment plants within the vicinity of the study area with existing ground water discharge permits. They’ve taken all this data and their analysis and imported into our GIS so they could develop possible approaches. Wright-Pierce will have their Design Basis Development memo for review shortly. Now that they’ve collected and analyzed all this data, they’re in a position to also start the Water Resource portion of this project. A draft memo from Wright-Pierce will be distributed as soon as it is ready for release.



Barry Rosen asked if it had already been determined that a sewer line along Great Rd. would be beneficial to the Town. Parenti reminded him that the current wastewater treatment investigation was one of the recommendations included in the Great Road Corridor Revitalization study, which was published in 2021.

- D. Zoning Subcommittee Report Update -- Barry Rosen discussed the document that he, Joe Robb, and Matt Mostoller have been drafting, which explains the need for groundwater protection zoning regulations. The report includes a graphic and text that describes the water cycle, by which the aquifers that the Water District's wells withdraw from are recharged by rainwater. Only a fraction of the rainwater that the Town receives reaches the underground aquifers, and contamination can occur at any point within the water infiltration process. A second graphic will show the locations of the District's wells, aquifer regions, and the boundaries of the four water protection zones within Acton. This information is intended to help Town residents understand the methodology used to establish the zone boundaries, and the regulations that apply to their residence or business. The subcommittee also intends to include a section on regulation enforcement. A second draft of this report will be reviewed at the next WRAC meeting.
- E. Water Needs Subcommittee Presentation to FinCom -- Parenti reviewed the presentation that he and Mike Geis gave the FinCom members on 10 January. Two charts were shown to the Committee, the first of which compared the historical water demand in Acton with withdrawal limits set by MassDEP and the second described the possible financial impacts of the new PFAS regulations. This talk elicited a number of requests for additional details, as well as questions about the impact of water needs on future planning decisions. Terra Friedrichs expressed her support for this type of outreach, and asked if the Committee plans to speak to other Town boards. Rosen replied that WRAC does intend to continue to speak to the Select Board and Town Committees about potential threats to Acton's water supply and the actions that should be taken to mitigate those threats.
- F. WRAC Contribution to the Annual Report -- Mike Geis presented a first draft of WRAC's contribution to Acton's Annual Report, which must be completed by 28 February. Comments from the other members were generally favorable, but it was noted that the included figures, which were originally generated for viewgraph presentations, would need to be reformatted for the report. Ron Parenti offered to simplify the charts, and convert the plots from color to black and white figures to conform with the standard report format. The second draft will be reviewed at the next meeting.
- G. Any Other New Business -- Barry Rosen provided an update of the Water District's recent investigations regarding a future connection to MWRA's supply system. Barry noted the following points:
- MWRA's engineering firm, CDM Smith, is moving forward with their next step which is to utilize the forecasted daily water usage provided by each water supplier to run a simulation. The goal is to understand if the MWRA infrastructure configuration would be able to handle the demand. The MWRA does not provide a water infrastructure; they are only a water supplier to a community's delivery system.



- For communities that would be blending water and/or wheeling water through another community, there could be water chemistry issues with which to deal. The responsibility of dealing with these issues would be up to the local communities.
- MWRA is considering utilizing the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and examining local roadways as alternate supply paths.
- Wayland is pursuing an expedited connection to MWRA, and is hoping to obtain approval to move forward at its Town Meeting this spring.
- Some local towns, including Littleton, are hoping that a connection to MWRA would result in a significant increase in water capacity, which would enable business growth. It is unclear at this time if this assumption is correct.
- The results of the work performed by CDM Smith will be distributed to all interested parties.
- There is not sufficient information at this time to estimate the cost of Acton's connection to MWRA or evaluate the long-term benefit of this connection. A best estimate of the connection timeline is 10 years or longer.

3. Adjournment

Committee members agreed to hold the next meeting on 16 February 2023 at 7pm. A motion to adjourn was made by Barry Rosen and seconded by Mike Geis. Adjournment was approved unanimously at 8:30 by the members present, Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, and Mike Geis.