



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
May 15, 2023
7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Present: Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, Mike Geis, and Matt Mostoller

Chairperson: Mike Geis

Clerk: Ron Parenti

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

1. Opening

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

2. Regular Business

- A. Review Minutes – The draft minutes from 13 April with minor edits recommended by Barry Rosen were reviewed. A motion to approve the amended minutes was made by Matt Mostoller and seconded by Mike Geis. The minutes were subsequently approved by a unanimous roll call vote of the four Committee members present.
- B. Public Remarks/Comments – None.
- C. WRAC Zoning Subcommittee Document Review – Barry Rosen informed the Committee that he had sent version G of the report to the Town Manager, the Board of Health, and the Planning Board for comments, and had received several suggestions for revisions. Rosen and Robb implemented the changes that they viewed to be appropriate (some of the suggested changes were judged to be technically incorrect). Rosen indicated that the next step would be to present the revised version of the document to the Select Board, and at that time a funding request would be made to print and mail the subcommittee's report to Town residents. Other distribution methods are also under view, such as the use of email and the inclusion of the document in a tax bill. Alissa Nicol promised to place a discussion of the distribution process on a future agenda of the Select Board. In response to a question about the cost of the Water Words newsletter distributed by the Water District, Mostoller stated that the cost for printing and mailing is usually about \$5,000. Mostoller also reminded the Committee that the map in the current version of the report will need to be updated, since revised water protection zones were approved at the last Town Meeting. Terra Friedrichs suggested that the report include a statement at the beginning that would indicate the document's purpose so that people would understand the reason for the mailing. Alissa Nicol agreed with this suggestion, and the revision was also supported the Committee. Rosen requested a vote to approve these revisions, which was moved by Parenti and seconded by Geis. This motion was approved by a unanimous vote of the four members present.



- D. Update on Town Meeting Vote to Perform a Sewer Commission Analysis -- Alissa Nicol reviewed the response to the article that she sponsored at Town Meeting, which asks for a review of the management Acton's sewer system. The members of the Acton Select Board have served as the Sewer Commissioners of the Middle Fort Pond Brook Sewer System since its construction was approved in 1999: however, this arrangement was never intended to be permanent. The article makes the argument that the management of the sewer system requires significant time and a level of technical expertise that the members of the Select Board may not possess. Nicol indicated that she will ask the Select Board to add an investigation of sewer management to the list of near-term Town goals. This investigation would probably be performed by a contractor, and Nicol estimates that the cost of the study would be of the order of \$20,000. She also noted that about \$1,000,000 had been budgeted but not spent by the Town in the past year due to numerous unfilled positions. The possible outcomes of such a study include the creation of a sewer advisory committee that would report to the Select Board, or an independent Sewer Commission.
- E. Comments to EPA Regarding Proposed PFAS Drinking Water Regulations -- Ron Parenti reviewed information presented by the EPA at two recent webinars that discussed the proposed PFAS regulations, and summarized some of the comments submitted by water providers during the EPA's on-line hearing on 4 May. Most providers have requested more time to evaluate the supporting material issued by the EPA, which is extensive and technically complex. Parenti noted that the EPA's financial analysis is primarily model-based, but capital costs for systems that have already been built to comply with state regulations typically exceed EPA's estimates by at least a factor of 3. Matt Mostoller stated that the EPA does not intend to extend the comment period, but that a number of professional organizations plan to submit detailed comments before the end of the comment period. Mostoller also informed the Committee that he is working on a response that will be submitted by the Water District. Mike Geis asked if WRAC should take any further action on this issue, but Parenti commented that further action is probably unnecessary given that the Water District will be responding. He recommended that WRAC continue to monitor the impact of the new water quality regulations on the Water District and the Town.
- F. Any Other New Business -- Ron Parenti informed the Committee that he recently contacted Julie Pierce (Acton's Economic Development Director), and invited her to discuss the Town's views on the benefits of providing sewer access to the businesses within the Great Road corridor. Proposed expansions of the Town's sewer system have been a topic of discussion at several WRAC meetings, and Pierce has agreed to attend a future meeting to summarize the views of Town leadership on this issue.

3. Adjournment

Committee members agreed to hold the next meeting on 22 June 2023 at 7pm. A motion to adjourn was made by Mike Geis and seconded by Matt Mostoller. Adjournment was approved at 8:10 pm by a unanimous roll call vote of the four WRAC members present.



Meeting Chat File

19:10:49 From Matthew Mostoller to Host and Panelists:

https://doc.actonma.gov/dsweb/Get/Document-86586/Zoning%20for%20Groundwater%20Protection_v1_H.pdf