



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2023
6:30 PM
Virtual Meeting

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

Chairperson: Mike Geis

Clerk: Ron Parenti

Others in Attendance: Alissa Nicol (Select Board Liaison), Katarina Spasojevic, and Kim Kastens

1. Opening

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

2. Regular Business

- A. Public Remarks/Comments – Kim Kastens informed the Committee that Green Acton with assistance from OARS will be conducting another water conductivity survey. This study, which will be performed in collaboration with the Westford Conservation Trust, will be conducted on Nashoba Brook from its headwaters to the Assabet River. Acton-Boxborough student Katarina Spasojevic will be taking part in this survey.

Kastens also noted that she is part of an effort to establish a local newspaper to fill the gap left by the demise of the Beacon. She encouraged WRAC members to become involved in this new publication, and indicated that help is needed in a variety of areas including attending meetings, writing articles, and editing articles.

Alissa Nicol announced that Senator Eldridge has been instrumental in helping Acton to obtain \$20.85m from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund for a municipal sewer expansion along Great Road. She noted that while money has been approved, the Great Road Study has not been completed and no sewer construction project has yet been approved by Town Meeting. The application for funding was submitted by the Town as a placeholder, and the State is aware that Acton has no approved projects that this funding can be applied to at this time.

Nicol also provided information about the current need along Great Road for sewer access, which addresses a question that has been raised at several recent WRAC meetings. She noted that the former owner of Nagog Plaza sent an email to the Town Manager in 2021, which stated that the lack of sewer access has had a negative impact on the number and type of businesses that that could rent space at the Plaza. The owner indicated that requests from multiple business owners had to be rejected because of the limitations of the current wastewater treatment system. There are also homeowners who use the same treatment plant and have not been able to build additions due to capacity limitations. This information was recently forwarded to the Select Board because of



questions raised about the future of the Gould's Plaza, which has recently been purchased by the Colonial Auto Group. Nicol stated that the Plaza cannot become an auto dealership, since the property lies in a water protection zone that would prohibit this type of use. The Plaza owner has also expressed a desire for improved wastewater treatment in order to attract future tenants. Currently, Gould's Plaza appears to be exceeding the Title 5 nitrogen limit, so wastewater treatment improvements will be necessary to resolve this situation. Restaurants in the Acton Woods Plaza are also facing issues due to wastewater treatment limitations, and the seat count at Ginger Court is currently limited for similar reasons. Nicol noted that none of this information appears in the 2021 Rapid Recovery Report, which recommended the Great Road wastewater treatment study that is now being conducted by Wright-Pierce.

On a related topic, Nicol discussed the application for money from the State Revolving Fund for the Adams Street treatment plan. Unfortunately, Woodard and Curran recently reported that the application for plant renovation and an additional rapid infiltration basin did not make the funding cutoff for this year. Nicol then asked the Committee for verification that the supply of treated water to the homes and businesses along Great Road that are currently supplied by Concord is limited; in response to this question, Matt Mostoller discussed the nature of the restrictions on new connections that have been imposed by the Town of Concord.

- B. Review Minutes –A motion to approve the minutes for 18 May was made by Barry Rosen and seconded by Ron Parenti. The minutes were subsequently approved by a roll call vote in which Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, Mike Geis, and Matt Mostoller voted aye; Joe Robb did not attend that meeting and abstained.
- C. WRAC Zoning Subcommittee Document Update –Barry Rosen informed the Committee that the zoning document has been revised again to include a preface that describes the purpose of the report. The included map has also been revised to show the new water protection zones that were approved at the last Town Meeting. Joe Robb described the map revisions in detail, and also noted that the warrant article relating to the new protection zones has not yet been approved by the Attorney General. Robb suggested that a mailing in the fall after people have returned from vacations would probably be more effective than a mailing in the summer. Rosen and Robb discussed the possibility of obtaining help from the Town to generate the final map revision with Alissa Nicol. Nicol advised the Committee that the Select Board is expecting a presentation of the report as well as a funding request to print and mail the document.
- D. Great Road Study Update -- Ron Parenti informed the Committee that he has had several email exchanges with Marc Moccio at Wright-Pierce, who stated that their work on the Great Road study should be completed by mid-August. Moccio also promised that the WRAC would have an opportunity to review and comment on the final report prior to distribution.
- E. PFAS Regulation Update -- Ron Parenti discussed two recent litigation settlements that may provide funds to reimburse the Acton Water District for money that is being spent for PFAS remediation. On 12 June, Chemours, DuPont, and Corteva Agriscience



announced a \$1.2b that will settle 3,000 cases nationally, and on 22 June 3M announced a \$10.3b settlement that will be distributed over a period of 13 years. The EPA and the MassDEP have previously announced grant programs to help water providers install remediation equipment. It is Parenti's opinion that these settlements and assistance programs will only cover a small fraction of the costs incurred by the Water District for treatment, and that most of the cost will ultimately be borne by Acton residents. Parenti also noted that about 1,600 comments have been submitted to the EPA regarding the new PFAS regulations, most of which were sent after the official comment closing date of 31 May. In response to a question about settlement fund distribution, Mostoller explained that this would be done by a settlement team and that an attorney representing the Acton Water District is a member of that team.

- F. Committee Realignment -- Ron Parenti recommended that a vote be taken to select new leadership for the WRAC committee, since it has been more than a year since the last realignment. Parenti then nominated Joe Robb for chair, and volunteered to retain his position as clerk. These two nominations were seconded by Mike Geis and approved unanimously by roll call vote.
- G. Any Other New Business -- None

3. **Adjournment**

Committee members agreed to hold the next meeting on 27 July 2023 at 7pm. A motion to adjourn was made by Barry Rosen and seconded by Mike Geis. Adjournment was approved at 7:45 pm by a unanimous roll call vote.