

West Acton Sewer Action Advisory Committee
February 8, 2018, 7:00 p.m.
Acton Town Hall, Room 9

Meeting Minutes

Present: Committee members Janet Adachi, Chairman; Joanne Bissetta, John Cappetta, Ann Chang, Peter Henry, Samuel Rice, David Wellinghoff; Town Engineer Paul Campbell; Joseph Shea, Senior V.P., and Jack Troidl, Project Manager, Woodard & Curran.

Absent: Committee members J.D. Head, Garry McCarthy

Chairman called meeting to order shortly after 7:00 p.m. and welcomed new member John Cappetta, replacing Bharat Shah as Planning Board representative.

Review of 11/9/2017 and 12/14/2017 minutes postponed to next meeting.

Sewer District Costs/Funding (continued)

Committee continued discussion of the potential West Acton expansion of sewer district. Mr. Shea noted lack of solid information about School District plans for West Acton campus; Woodard & Curran therefore has developed range-estimates in order to keep discussion moving forward.

Mr. Troidl reviewed derivation of \$12-14M cost estimate based on past project, for which value of sewer better unit was \$12,450. Calculation should exclude costs for improvements resulting from project that are not specific to sewerage but confer general benefit on Town, such as larger piping, new road-paving; for prior sewerage project, Town was responsible for about \$300K in paving costs. Also cost of traffic study and Pine Hawk study.

Calculation also must account for avoided costs; for West Acton campus, that would mean the cost of on-site treatment instead of sewerage. If School District plans to build new structure while using existing schools, there won't be enough real estate for new structure plus septic system, so School District might have to make decision early about sewerage. Avoided-cost calculation also should apply to Town regarding fire station, for which Town will not pay for sewer betterment units (SBU) but still should pay for benefit of sewerage.

So total projected cost encompasses \$3-4M benefit to Town and \$9-10M benefit to property owners in potential sewer district expansion. Betterment calculation based on property and zoning: for multi-family structure, 2/3 SBU for 2BR or smaller; commercial conversion based on floor-area ratio (FAR) as set forth in more detail in betterment regulations. Assuming 0.4 FAR in West Acton, 300-350 SBUs @\$27K-32K.

0.4 FAR in West Acton can be tough: 2-story structure can exceed 0.4 FAR. If commercial property is underdeveloped, look at potential development rather than current use. If existing use expands, levy privilege fees to account for expansion. Calculation of SBUs could take into consideration factors other than FAR.

In contrast, sewer fees are based on water usage.

On map of potential expansion area, blue indicates proposed project; yellow indicates potential areas. Acton Housing Authority site not included at present.

Estimated SBU cost today is not out of line with \$12K per SBU cost for prior project. First, equivalent cost today of 12K would be around \$24K. In addition, prior project focused on easiest areas to sewer. Projected cost today of \$27K per SBU is just \$3K increase.

What will be the impact of increased flow on existing pump stations? Currently 2 pumps in each, designed for 3, and 3d would be added as part of potential expansion. Town responsible for pump station near fire department; pump station serving school campus presumably would be School District's responsibility, as is pump station on Charter Road at main campus.

Ms. Adachi confirmed that there will be a Special Town Meeting in fall 2018.

For previous sewer project, first Town Meeting was for funding of design and construction costs; 2d Town Meeting addressed additional construction funding; and 3d Town Meeting was to fund paving.

For next meeting, Ms. Adachi or Mr. Campbell will talk to J.D.Head as to where feasibility study School District would consider wastewater treatment issue. Mr. Campbell will confer with Finance Department about proposed sewer-financing presentation.

Public comments: Terra Friedrichs wanted to know how to get out of proposed sewer route. Ms. Chang noted that during previous sewer project, residents on Maillet asked to be excluded from sewer district and were; then sold homes and new owners were upset that neighborhood was not in sewer district. One resident in South Acton would like to hook up to sewerage but extending line to his house would mean passing other houses on street and obligating owners for betterment fees.

Adjourned ~9:00 p.m.

- Janet Adachi, clerk for meeting