

West Acton Sewer Action Advisory Committee
February 14, 2019, 7:00 p.m.
Acton Town Hall, Room 9

Minutes

Present: Committee members Janet Adachi, Chairman; Ann Chang, Joanne Bissetta, Samuel Rice, David Wellinghoff; Town Engineer Paul Campbell; Jack Troidl, Project Manager, Woodard & Curran; Steve Barrett, Acton Finance Director.

Absent: Committee members Jon Cappetta, J. D. Head, Peter Henry, Garry McCarthy

Visitors: Allan Dennison, Al English, Terra Friedrichs, Mike Geiss, David Martin, Ron Parenti (Acton Water District Commission)

The Chairman called meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Regular Business

Approval of 1/10/2019 minutes. Dave moved, Ann seconded, approved unanimously.

New/Special Business

1. AB School District Update: Committee passed over item in absence of J.D. Head, who had to attend rescheduled School Building Committee meeting postponed from Tuesday due to weather.
2. Town Manager's FY20 Budget Request, Public Outreach: Funding will come from sewer enterprise budget.

Paul suggested that public information meeting be on Thursday, 3/14, as part of WASAAC's regularly scheduled meeting. Acton Area League of Women Voters Town Meeting warrant meeting on 3/27 will include a presentation about sewer-related request. Other proposed outreach: meetings with Acton Water District, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, Water Resources Advisory Committee, West Acton businesses. Mathias Rosenfeld has proposed to meet with Paul after 3/14 information session. Janet will get in touch with Mathias about possible meeting earlier with West Acton Merchants Association. Ann moved to approve proposed public forum, Joanne seconded, approved unanimously.

Discussion of draft slides: Member suggestions:

- greater focus on present and future, and less on Sewer District history. Start presentation with current proposal. Maybe do handout with history.
- more information about potential cost
- clarify advantages to Town. Water quality, encouraging business growth, etc. Public forum flier refers to sewerage as public utility infrastructure that is essential for economic sustainability.

- imagine Acton in 40 years, with larger population
- include "roadmap" at beginning so audience knows what presentation will cover

Discussion of map of West Acton Needs Area: Members recommended that map depict only blue areas, showing potential locations in West Acton for continued sewerage; omit areas in yellow that are secondary areas for potential sewerage. Need list of streets in blue areas so residents/businesses will know if their properties could potentially be included.

Public Comments

Mr. English claimed that although one reason for sewer installation is water quality, real reason is that Sewer District has unused capacity. Ann noted that lack of sewerage in West Acton had constrained business operations. Paul explained that during development of original Sewer District, MA Department of Environment Protection had required Town to do Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan; and Town opted for oversized piping to allow for future expansion. Ms. Friedrichs asked how many SBUs would apply to West Acton pharmacy; Paul said SBU calculation would be based on formula in sewer bylaw. Ms. Friedrichs alleged that CWRMP didn't require sewerage, sewerage would undermine recharge and that sewer pipe through Guggins Brook would be bigger risk than septic. Mr. Geiss noted that Wastewater Advisory Neighborhood Task Force (2010) had done final report on sewerage cost, and that could be updated if WASAAC wished.

Mr. Martin said that septic system recharge was insignificant in comparison to rainfall, and modern sewage treatment plants discharge clean water; he suggested that slide presentation focus on proposed West Acton project, and information about methodology for determining high-priority areas go in backup slide. He added that he had to replace his septic system 20 years ago at a cost of \$40K, plus \$500/year for maintenance. He said oversized made sense because more expensive to add pipe capacity than to install larger pipe from outset.

Mr. Parenti noted that Water District in past had not been involved in discussions of sewerage and protection of water quality, and Paul had attended most recent Water District Commission meeting to explain FY20 appropriation request, WASAAC efforts. If at some point Water District were to consider a new well in West Acton, one concern would be nitrates, of which septic systems are one potential source.

Other audience comments: Q&A handout should include more comprehensive listing of fees; contribution of sewerage to water quality was debatable; if entire Town were sewerage, recharge would be unaffected; use ActonTV for public outreach.

Adjournment at 8:40 p.m.

- Janet Adachi, clerk for meeting

Documents Discussed

- Draft minutes, 1/10/2019
- Public outreach documents as of 2/14/2019: slide presentation, Q&A sheet, forum flier

- West Acton needs map with blue and yellow areas

Discussed documents and other material for 2/14/2019 meeting available on Town of Acton website at:

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-10671>