



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
December 22, 2022
7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

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

Chairperson: Mike Geis

Clerk: Ron Parenti

Others in Attendance: Himaja Nagireddy (Select Board Liaison), 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 29 November with modifications recommended by Matt Mostoller and Barry Rosen were reviewed. A motion to approve the amended minutes was made by Ron Parenti and seconded by Mike Geis. Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, Joe Robb, and Mike Geis voted to approve the minutes; Matt Mostoller abstained since he had not attended the 29 November meeting. The draft minutes of the 12 December Zoning Subcommittee meeting were also reviewed, and a motion to approve was made by Matt Mostoller and seconded by Barry Rosen. Matt Mostoller, Barry Rosen, and Joe Robb voted to approve the Subcommittee minutes; Ron Parenti and Mike Geis abstained as they did not attend that meeting.
- B. Public Remarks/Comments – Kim Kastens reported that she had attended a recent Planning Board meeting that discussed ground water protection zoning and that she had subsequently reviewed the water protection zoning bylaw. She noted that the Planning Board can grant exemptions to the bylaw and that some existing uses may be grandfathered. It was also noted that home owners are not routinely notified of the zoning status of their property. Kastens also emphasized the need for additional educational materials relating to ground water protection. These remarks led to a more extended discussion of septic system impacts and the mechanisms for bylaw enforcement. Matt Mostoller discussed some of the tradeoffs between a high density of small septic systems and a centralized package treatment plant. The lack of consistent enforcement of septic system pumping sump pump drainage regulations was also mentioned. Joe Robb noted that in years past the Board of Health had the primary responsibility to educate the public about groundwater protection, but that task is now shared by several Town departments and the Acton Water District. These are all issues that WRAC may wish to include in a future position paper.
- C. Discussion of Zoning Subcommittee Report Outline – Barry Rosen explained that he, Matt Mostoller, and Joe Robb had met on 12 December to begin work on a short (4 to 5



page) document that would inform the public about the existence of the water protection zoning regulations in Acton and outline the responsibilities of residents to comply with those regulations. The subcommittee members intend to include a chart that would illustrate the manner by which rainwater is absorbed into the ground, transported through subsurface materials toward local rivers and streams, and is extracted from the ground by the wells that provide the Town's drinking water. The document will emphasize that the sole purpose of groundwater zoning is to protect the purity of the Town's drinking water, and that the zone boundaries are defined through measurements and modeling of water flow to the Water District's wells. It will be made clear that these overlay zones have not been devised as a means to control Town growth. Barry Rosen noted that the document that is being written should not be viewed as a position paper, but rather as an educational document that will initially be presented to the Select Board. Kim Kastens suggested that an abbreviated version be sent to all Town residents to allow every homeowner to understand the zoning designation and use restrictions for their property. Himaja Nagireddy recommended that the WRAC attempt to complete the report in time to present it to the Selectboard in January or February.

- D. Discussion of Water Resources Educational Charts -- Ron Parenti presented a set of charts that he and Mike Geis had assembled, which summarizes the current water supply situation and the potential impact of the new PFAS regulations. Since these charts are intended to be presented to the Town Finance Committee, the cost impacts of water treatment are highlighted. The presentation includes a discussion of the potential need to connect to MWRA in order to satisfy the more restrictive PFAS regulations that may evolve from the EPA guidelines issued last summer. The Committee members critiqued this draft presentation and recommended several changes. Barry Rosen and Matt Mostoller objected to some of the specific cost numbers and regulatory requirements that were mentioned, since there is still a high degree of uncertainty about these numbers. Both recommended that the discussion with the FinCom be delayed until later in 2023 when more is known about the EPA's PFAS regulations and the estimated cost to connect to MWRA. Kim Kastens advised the Committee to have an abbreviated discussion with the FinCom at its next meeting in order to initiate a discussion about WRAC's water concerns. Parenti promised to circulate a revised chart deck and then ask the WRAC members for their advice regarding a presentation to the FinCom in January.
- E. Great Road Study Update -- Parenti discussed a recent email communication with Corey York, who provide an update on the Great Road study being performed by Wright-Pierce. The company has obtained a variety of data from the Town, the Water District, and the DEP relating to current water use and the number of septic systems in the Great Road corridor. Wright-Pierce is currently evaluating several alternative wastewater treatment options, including the use of excess capacity in existing privately owned treatment plants, the construction of one or more new plants within the corridor, and a connection to the Adams Street plant. Requested information relating to the date of the next review meeting or the projected study completion date was not provided.
- F. Any Other New Business -- None.



3. Adjournment

Committee members agreed to hold the next meeting on 19 January 2023 at 7pm. A motion to adjourn was made by Mike Geis and seconded by Joe Robb. Adjournment was approved at 8:50 pm by a unanimous roll call vote of the four WRAC members in attendance at the meeting's conclusion, Joe Robb, Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, and Mike Geis.

Meeting Chat File

19:06:56 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

4.3.8.1 The Planning Board may grant a Special Permit for any change or substantial extension of any PRINCIPAL or ACCESSORY USE designated with "N" in Table 4.3.7.2 that is in existence as of April 7, 1997.

19:08:39 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

The quote in my previous chat was from

<https://www.actonwater.com/assets/media/documents/GroundwaterProtection.pdf>

19:12:18 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

Footer on the doc I quoted from was Town of Acton Zoning Bylaw, April 2008, so possibly there might be a more recent version.

19:14:51 From Matthew Mostoller to Host and Panelists:

Kim, that reference is in the 2022 version as well.

19:54:50 From Matthew Mostoller to Host and Panelists:

<https://www.acton-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2399/GPD-Rules-September-2019?bidId=>

19:55:04 From Matthew Mostoller to Host and Panelists:

<https://www.acton-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/122/Groundwater-Protection-map-with-ammendment?bidId=>

19:56:57 From Matthew Mostoller to Host and Panelists:

I just added these links to the map of the entire town with Zones 1-4 shown and the rules and regulations for special permits in GWP.

19:59:12 From Joe Robb to Host and Panelists:

Thanks Kim!

20:13:39 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

Hi Ron, I don't have your charts

20:15:36 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

The docushare has been inaccessible all evening

20:21:03 From Joe Robb to Host and Panelists:

Kim, Ron included his charts in an email today at 9:20am and you were copied at your Colombia.edu email address

20:22:19 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

Thanks, Joe, I found them!