



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
August 15, 2024
7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

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

Chairperson: Joe Robb

Clerk: Ron Parenti

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

1. Opening

WRAC chair Joe Robb opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

2. Regular Business

- A. Public Remarks/Comments – None
- B. Review Minutes from 24 July 2024 – A motion to approve the minutes for 24 July 2024 was made by Barry Rosen and seconded by Matt Mostoller. In the discussion that followed, three wording modifications were suggested by Joe Robb and Barry Rosen. These changes dealt with the Committee's interactions with the DPW and the responsible party for the action items listed in the last stormwater presentation slide. Following agreement on these revisions, Matt Mostoller, Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, Mike Geis, and Joe Robb voted to approve the minutes.
- C. Announcement of Stormwater Utility Kick-off Meeting on 21 August by DPW – Barry Rosen has been in contact with QinRui Pang regarding the presentation that WRAC is planning to give to the Select Board, and as part of those discussions he has been invited to a stormwater kick-off meeting that will be held by the DPW on 21 August. Unfortunately, Rosen does not yet have the agenda for that meeting, so the purpose of that discussion is unclear. It is known that representatives from Woodard & Curran will be in attendance; this consulting firm performed the Acton Asset Management Study that was completed in August of 2023. Rosen and Robb are planning to attend the DPW meeting, and an overview of the topics discussed will be given at the next WRAC meeting.
- D. Review of the Second Draft of the Stormwater Presentation to the Select Board – The draft presentation to the Select Board has been expanded slightly from 8 Charts to 10 charts, but the primary message to the Board remains unchanged. An outline of that presentation is given below:
 - Slide 1 – Introduction
 - Slide 2 – Presentation Agenda



Slide 3 – Review of the DPW 6/24 Presentation on Acton Stormwater Asset Management Plan

Slide 4 – Reasons to Fund Stormwater Protection

Slide 5 – An example of recent street flooding following a heavy rainfall

Slide 6 – Stormwater Management in Other MA Towns

Slide 7 – Plot of stormwater fees versus town population/town area

Slide 8 – Acton’s Stormwater Management and Funding Options (1)

Slide 9 – Acton’s Stormwater Management and Funding Options (2)

Slide 10 – WRAC Recommendations to the Select Board

Joe Robb, who will be making the presentation to the Select Board, described each of the presentation slides and noted the changes from his previous draft. Members agreed that Slide 5, which shows street flooding at Kelly’s Corner, provides a good example of the damage that can be caused when the stormwater drainage system fails. Alissa Nicol provided this picture, and she noted that she received several dozen pictures in response to a request that she issued for examples of street flooding due to a heavy rain event.

During the discussion of the slide that describes stormwater management in other towns, Kim Kastens made several suggestions for wording changes for clarification and to emphasize the importance of fee structures that encourage the use of permeable paving. The use of the term ‘equivalent residential unit’ (ERU), which each town defines differently, was also discussed.

Slide 7, which was generated by Mike Geis, has been added to the presentation. This chart includes fee structure data for towns in New England that have instituted stormwater utilities, and plots the annual cost for residents versus town population/town area. The plot suggests a linear increase in cost as a function of population density, which can be used estimate of the stormwater utility cost for Acton residents. Some Committee members expressed concern that the linear fit shown in the chart would probably generate an underestimate of Acton fees, since the cost numbers included in the data base will likely increase significantly when the long-term cost of supporting those utilities is better understood. It was also noted that the data for the towns of Fall River, Dedham, and Newton are outliers since their fees include the cost of phosphate remediation. Following this discussion it was decided that the chart should be included in the presentation, but instructed Robb to note the Committee’s concerns about cost estimates derived from the plot.

Slides 8 and 9 summarize methods for funding the maintenance and improvements of the Town’s stormwater infrastructure. The following set of funding mechanisms are described in these two charts.

- 1) Property taxes that finance line items in the general fund
- 2) External grants
- 3) Bonds and loans
- 4) Stormwater permits and connection fees



- 5) Special assessments to districts that directly benefit from system improvements
- 6) Stormwater utility financed by an enterprise fund

Parenti noted that these revenue sources are not mutually exclusive; for example, money derived from grants could be combined with money obtained from any of the other funding mechanisms. In response to a question about connection fees, Rosen indicated that it is likely that connection fees for new construction would be charged if a stormwater utility supported by an enterprise fund were to be established. A few minor wording changes in Charts 8 and 9 were suggested by Mostoller, Nicol, and Kastens, but no major objections were raised regarding the messaging included in these two slides.

The final slide, which summarizes WRAC's recommendation to the Select Board, is very similar to the one included in the previous draft of the presentation. A few minor wording revisions were implemented during the review of this chart, but no major changes were made.

Following this review of the stormwater presentation, Committee members and meeting visitors indicated their satisfaction with this revision. The tentative date for the presentation, which will be given by Joe Robb, is 23 September.

E. Any Other New Business – None

3. Adjournment

Committee members agreed to hold their next meeting on 12 September 2024 at 7pm to conduct a final dry run of WRAC's stormwater presentation to the Select Board. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Matt Mostoller and seconded by Barry Rosen. This motion was approved by a unanimous vote of the Committee members at 8:35 pm.

Meeting Chat File

19:56:19 From Matthew Mostoller to Host and panelists:
I am working through some storm issues at two of our plants.