

West Acton Sewer Action Advisory Committee
May 10, 2018, 7:00 p.m.
Acton Town Hall, Room 9

Meeting Minutes

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

Absent: Committee member Peter Henry

Visitors: Al English, Leo Fochtman, Terra Friedrichs, Mike Geiss.

Chairman called meeting to order shortly after 7:00 p.m.

Approval of 11/9/2017, 12/14/2017, 2/8/2018 minutes (with corrections to 12/14 draft).

Mr. Troidl summarized status of committee discussion as of 2/8 meeting, with reference to color-coded map of West Acton, depicting proposed Sewer District expansion (blue), potential Sewer District coverage (yellow), Town property (diagonal lines), proposed pump station near school campus. Estimated project cost: \$12-14M (blue properties only). Assumptions about AB campus need to be pinned down.

Mr. Head provided status-update about AB building project, with reference to Project Master Schedule milestones as of 5/3/2018. MA School Building Authority did not authorize search for owner's project manager until February; AB signed project manager agreement in May with Skanska, which has experience with Army Corps of Engineers, Minuteman Regional District.

In next 2 months, AB will go through designer-selection, for 7/10 MSBA designer panel consideration, complete selection of designer by 7/24. MSBA controls designer selection, with 13 seats to AB's 3.

Aim for new AB building is energy efficiency, net-0 water usage with re-use of grey water. Won't know plan for handling of solids, whether tight tank, septic or sewer, until get into feasibility study in early 2019. MSBA will require that AB consider various building/site options: twin school at Gates is preferred option. Expect to go to Town Meeting in 2020 for construction funding.

Current Gates-Douglas wastewater system is fine. Pump annually. Have had a couple of Title V inspections, last one a few years ago.

Discussion of avoided-costs calculation for AB, with reference to Cost Estimate Summary updated 3/7/2018, which lists \$1-2.5M. Difficult to estimate in absence of any invoices, which is why range is large. AB won't know specifics until have schematic design, maybe fall 2019. Acceptability of on-site system would be decision of MA Department of Environmental

Protection, and if sewerage were available, could be difficult sell. School designs based on number of students.

Discussion of how to align AB building timeline and possible sewerage timeline. WASAAC could aim to get a proposal to Town Meeting in 2019, which would be fast. AB OPM must communicate with DEP about on-site wastewater treatment. AB could dig test pit in fall and share results with committee.

Discussion of need for public outreach to determine support for sewerage in blue-mapped areas, and challenge of explaining cost to citizens, given uncertainty as to whether sewer expansion will include AB building project, and less attractive numbers that result if sewer expansion excludes AB project. Perhaps should proceed on assumption that sewer expansion will exclude AB, do calculations accordingly; could add some yellow-mapped areas, though their addition also would add to expense due to topography, other complicating factors. Would have to start public outreach soon, emphasize public-health need. Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan identifies high-needs areas; although some in town question CWRMP and underlying assumptions, it is standard practice to rely on such reports as justification.

Discussion of possible public subsidy for sewerage costs. In past, residents declined to pay for sewerage not benefitting their property. Public outreach should include funding options.

AB OPM and designers could meet with WASAAC or with Mr. Campbell and Woodard & Curran representatives. WASAAC could get on agenda for School Committee and/or School Building Committee (which meets monthly on Wednesday evening). Maybe August. Of \$1.3M feasibility study cost, \$300K is for Skanska, balance is for designer. Test pits not part of Skanska's work but should be and needs to be done before summer.

Public comments: Terra Friedrichs alleged that CWRMP was development plan, not needs plan; also alleged that Town had received a letter from Gottlieb of MA DEP saying that Acton didn't need sewers; committee members involved in early sewerage efforts did not recall such a letter. Al English asked how Town will explain that need sewer expansion but can't get AB to hook up so just focusing on homeowners, who will be hit with expense; alleged that sewerage more expensive than septic. Mike Geiss alleged that CWRMP written by sewer company, so conflict of interest (Ms. Chang noted that she was among Town committee members involved in preparation and review of CWRMP). Leo Fochtman requested and received confirmation and clarification that property owner was obligated to pay betterment if sewerage passed by property frontage; suggested that public outreach include comparison information about cost of septic-system replacement.

Adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

- Janet Adachi, clerk for meeting