

West Acton Sewer Action Advisory Committee
March 14, 2019, 7:00 p.m.
Acton Town Hall, Room 204

Minutes

Present: Committee members Janet Adachi, Chairman; Ann Chang, Joanne Bissetta, Garry McCarthy, David Wellinghoff; Town Engineer Paul Campbell; Jack Troidl, Project Manager, and Amanda Sparks, Woodard & Curran.

Absent: Committee members Jon Cappetta, J. D. Head, Peter Henry, Samuel Rice

Visitors: Town Manager John Mangiaratti; Finance Director Stephen Barrett; Joseph Shea, Senior V.P., Woodard & Curran; David Baum, Kathryn Black, Pat Clifford, Leo Fochtman, Terra Friedrichs, Joan Gardner, Mike Geiss, Larry Kenah, Jim and Abby Kingsbury, Thomas Napoli, Ron Reagan, Andy Richardt, Debra Simes, Don Smith, Jim Snyder-Grant, John Sonner, Nancy Tavernier, Ray Yacouby, ~ 10 unidentified.

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

Regular Business

Approval of 2/14/2019 minutes. Ann moved, Garry seconded, approved unanimously.

New/Special Business

Public information session about possible sewerage in West Acton, including Town Manager's FY20 request for funding out of sewer enterprise fund for survey/preliminary design work. Chairman introduced WASAAC members, Town Engineer Paul Campbell and Jack Troidl and Amanda Sparks of Woodard & Curran.

Mr. Campbell went through slide presentation, which covered not only FY20 request for funding from sewer enterprise fund, but

- history of sewer district
- WASAAC's ongoing study of possible sewerage in West Acton
- potential cost for residential and business properties
- potential funding sources
- tentative timeline
- potential for coordination with AB Regional District relative to proposed new twin-school building at Gates School site

Mr. Campbell noted that current plan is conceptual, not final, and proposed survey/preliminary design work will provide detailed data that the Town will use to refine plan and cost estimates. Sewerage in West Acton could be better for environment than septic systems due to heavy regulation of sewers, and oversight of Acton system by Woodard & Curran on behalf of Town;

and sewerage could benefit businesses and enhance economic sustainability in West Acton. Finally, although Town and AB school building proposal are not dependent on each other, sewerage would provide AB with an alternative to septic for new building.

Following the presentation, Chairman invited public comments/questions, asking that audience members give names and street addresses if in Acton, or indicate if Acton business owners.

Public Comments

Debra Simes, Concord Rd: What happens to effluent from treatment plant? Nothing planned for Spencer-Tuttle-Flint neighborhood? What about package treatment plants?

Mr. Campbell: Rapid infiltration into basins at Adams street. Plan doesn't include or preclude STF. Package plant was considered in development of CWRMP, among 3 options for West Acton: sewer, small package plants, or wastewater management district. Evaluation of properties resulted in recommendation of sewerage.

Catherine Black, Central: Her property is on conceptual map, very happy about that. Cost of paving Mass Ave? What about other streets? Sidewalk?

Mr. Campbell: Should revisit paving issue. Central would be paved by public. Sidewalk will be repaved to stub of property line.

Dave Baum, Kinsley Rd: Represents 3 properties that border Mass Ave but have access to Kinsley. 7 homes, shared drive. Not part of Mass Ave, entire area environmentally sensitive, thought of running lines through seems ridiculous, even if Town has justification for doing so. Would love if whole road was to be done, if access via Kinsley Rd when Kinsley being done. Concerned, unhappy that access must be via Mass Ave instead of Kinsley.

Mr. Campbell: That issue definitely will be considered in preliminary survey. Kinsley has little stub, not sure how far down can go until do study.

Nancy Tavernier, Mohawk Dr: Delighted that coming up again. Indian Village nowhere near project area. Since then, half of homes have replaced systems. Sufficient capacity for continuation?

Mr. Campbell: Yes.

John Sonner, Maple: What risk of residential development, such as denser Chapter 40B construction? 40Bs everywhere.

Ms. Chang: Last attempt to continue sewerage failed because everyone said building would explode. So building exploded without sewerage.

Mr. Campbell: Cost estimate 20 years ago proved to be very close to actual cost. Anyone worried about cost should know that history indicates final projection was very close.

Terra Friedrichs, Wright Terrace: Everyone who has sent supportive emails is Chapter 40B lottery people or businesses working with people in Town Hall. Does water from treatment plant go indirectly to Assabet? Sludge is hauled away? To where? Circled spaces on maps were places where people wanted development. Disputes idea that MA-DEP thinks sewers better. Septic-sewer cost comparison handout shows lots of disparity for septic, 45K is high, other numbers low, JD Head said his cost would be 17K for septic replacement.

Mr. Troidl: Sludge hauled to NH. Ms. Adachi: Mr. Head's number is one number from one person whereas Mr. Campbell's range of numbers is based on actual and estimated costs for Acton replacement septic systems in various settings, and is more reliable than a single number for one property.

Jim Snyder-Grant, Half Moon Hill: Financing for engineering important to get done. 2 financial questions: 1) Betterment fees very different than for existing but user fees same because per cubic foot? 2) Avoided costs: If AB puts in septic, and gets reimbursed, what is avoided cost if already built septic? Complete streets policy, opportunity with sewer project to develop.

Mr. Campbell: Betterment fee different from 20 years ago. User fee same in District, with bifurcation between commercial and residential property. DPW Director already has started process for complete streets expansion. Mass Ave is priority sidewalk location. Won't be part of sewer project because sewer users shouldn't have to pay for that. FY20 appropriation could be multi-purpose, serving sewer study, sidewalk study and Acton Water District study.

David Martin, High Street: 3 points: 1) Thinks AB would have to install high-tech system, not just regular system so close to wetlands, with lots of monitoring, small-size treatment plant. 2) Before South Acton sewers built, his septic failed. Not part of sewer area. Has vernal stream thru front of yard, had to put in high-tech system. 20 years ago cost 40K, today 55K maybe. In addition, has blowers and pumps—aerobic, not anaerobic process—so inspection 2x/yr, 100. 150 electric to run. 2K/yr to keep septic running. 3) Sewage treatment plant concentrates sewage, plant on Adams discharges h₂o, perfectly clean, similar to septic. Where does septic sewage go? To sewage treatment plant?

Mr. Campbell: With failed septic, 2-year period for waiver once construction funds approved, so if something happens to system while sewer under construction, owner has option.

Debra Simes: Effluent from treatment plant or to septic is not *clean* clean due to pharmaceuticals and other substances emerging as problem.

Mr. Troidl: Pharamceuticals can be removed to certain degree.

Tom Napoli, Idylwilde, Arlington St: Re Arlington Street - going to negotiate boundaries of map? Estimated or etched in stone?

Mr. Troidl: Boundaries based on where seems reasonable to put pumping station, some places can do low-gravity systems but prefer not to.

Mr. Campbell: Acton Housing Authority has reached out hoping to be part of District.

When audience members had no further questions, Chairman concluded meeting, thanking audience members for attending, Mr. Campbell for presenting and along with Mr. Troidl and WASAAC members, being present to field audience questions. Adjournment at 8:10 pm. Ann moved Joanne seconded, approved unanimously.

- Janet Adachi, clerk for meeting

Documents Discussed

- Draft minutes, 2/14/2019
- Slide presentation as of 3/14/2019
- Handout comparing septic-replacement and sewer connection costs
- West Acton needs map with blue areas

Discussed documents and other material for 3/14/2019 meeting and public information session available on Town of Acton website at:
<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-10671>