

West Acton Sewer Action Advisory Committee
August 15, 2019, 7:00 p.m.
Acton Town Hall, Room 9

Minutes

Present: Committee members David Martin, Chairman; Ann Chang, Vice-Chairman; Joanne Bissetta; Samuel Rice; J. D. Head; David Wellinghoff; Town Engineer Paul Campbell

Absent: Committee members Jon Cappetta, Garry McCarthy, Peter Henry

Visitors: Jack Troidl & Jim Rivard, Woodard & Curran; Leo Fotchman; Mike Geis; Terra Friedrichs; Michelle Holland; Scott Blaufuss

Mr. Martin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m to begin the meeting.

Regular Business

Agenda Item #1 - Public Comments/Questions

- Mr. Geis discussed his concerns outlined in his email to the committee. He stated that he and Mr. Campbell are in agreement. Mr. Geis discussed the failure rate of pumps for low-pressure sewer systems. Mr. Troidl stated that the West Acton sewer project estimate includes the cost of purchasing the pumps and that SRF funding requires the Town to maintain the pumps for 10-years. Mr. Troidl estimated pumps to cost in the \$2,000 to \$5,000 range. Mr. Martin believes that a low pressure sewer connection could be cheaper than a gravity connection.

Agenda Item #2 – Review of meeting minutes

Approval of 7/18/2019 minutes. Ms. Chang moved to approve the minutes, Mr. Head seconded and it was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Agenda Item #3 – Comments from the Chair

Mr. Martin stated that the Select Board toured the wastewater treatment facility last week.

New/Special Business

Agenda Item #4 – Update on AB School District twin-school project

Mr. Martin attended the school building committee meetings. He stated that the superintendent told the committee that a sewer connection is cost neutral. Project timing between the school project and sewer project is a concern. A cost estimate for the school is being conducted and it's

anticipated that the septic option for the school is \$500,000. Mr. Martin said that DEP approval for a variance is not expected until after Town Meeting.

Mr. Head reported that the test pits conducted for the school septic system went well and that the results of the test pits may have been responsible for reducing the cost of the septic system.

Mr. Campbell asked the committee if the school is planning for a cost estimate for a system if there is no DEP approval for the school's variance request. Mr. Martin answered that school costs must get to the state September 4th and that the sewer betterments should reflect three scenarios: a sewer project with no school (in the event the school vote fails), a school with a standard septic system (in the event DEP approves the variance) and a school with an alternative septic design (in the event DEP denies the variance).

Mr. Head discussed the sewer schedule and expressed the school's need for a wastewater option in August 2020. Mr. Troidl explained the schedule with built-in contingencies and how the sewer contractor would be responsible for the school having a waste water option if construction was not completed on-time. Mr. Troidl explained how MassDEP extended the SRF funding letter to Special Town Meeting, which provided more flexibility for the sewer construction.

Mr. Martin suggested that there should be a target date in the spring for which the school makes a decision to be in or out of the sewer. Mr. Troidl answered that it would be known earlier than this spring, once Town Meeting occurs. Mr. Campbell recommended that the school and town come to an understanding prior to Town Meeting that the school would connect to sewer if all Town Meeting votes for both projects succeed.

Ms. Chang recommended that the betterment estimate at Town Meeting be shown with a range. Mr. Troidl responded that there would need to be a range shown, not only for the various school options, but that inherent to a construction project there are estimates for the sewer service area (total SBUs) and construction costs that could vary.

There was a general discussion about Special Town Meeting.

Agenda Item #5 – Project limit information

Mr. Campbell discussed the potential limits of the sewer area as shown on the Project Extents map provided to the committee. He reminded the committee that the West Acton High Needs area identified in the CWRMP is shown in blue on the map. The potential extents shown in yellow are outside of the high-need area and should only be considered if there is a public need.

- Extent #1 – Houghton Lane. A resident (Ms. Holland #5 Houghton) wishes to connect. Recommend this area may need low-pressure in order to connect.
- Extent #2 – Half-moon Hill. Residents at Half-moon Hill appear to prefer to be out.
- Extent #3 – Mass Ave toward Water District. AWD has no long-term plans for expanding capacity. Recommend this may be a separate project in the far future.
- Extent #4 – Arlington Street. This area should extend by gravity but resident at #284 (abutting fire station/Sarah Lane) wishes to connect.
- Extent #5 – Willow Street. No public interest to date. Recommend to extend by gravity to practical limit/stream. Area is beyond West Acton High Need Area.

- Extent #6 – Central Street. No public interest to date. Recommend to extend by gravity to practical limit. Area is beyond West Acton High Need Area.
- Extent #7 – Windsor Ave. Housing Authority discussed sewer potential. Possible location for a pump station and railroad crossing. Area towards Central outside of High Need area.
- Extent #8 – Kinsley Road. Dover Heights, AWD and neighborhood public interest. Possible railroad crossing. Area mostly out of High Need Area

Mr. Campbell recommended the committee consider the areas in the following priority groups:

Group 1 – Out/Not considered or consider low-pressure

- Extent #3 – Mass Ave (potential future project)
- Extent #1 – Houghton Lane (potential low-pressure connection)

Ground 2 – Extend gravity to practical limit

- Extent #2 – Half-moon Hill
- Extent #4 – Arlington Street
- Extent #5 – Willow Street
- Extent #6 – Central Street

Group 3 – Consider redesign for public interest

- Extent #7 – Windsor Ave
- Extent #8 – Kinsley Road

Mr. Troidl discussed the cost estimates for each extent area and provided a table to the committee. Mr. Martin had met with Half-moon Hill residents and said that they are split on the decision to be included in the sewer area. Mr. Wellinghoff asked if including any of the extended areas would affect the Town's general benefit responsibility. Mr. Troidl responded saying that there would be some additional paving, etc that may change the Town's cost.

Mr. Troidl estimates that the Housing Authority would be half of the expected flow of the school. Mr. Martin asked if the cost of extent #4 was \$127K as shown on the chart. Mr. Troidl responded that it was a general estimate using a uniform methodology for the entirety of West Acton but the actual construction costs, due to the depth of the sewer main expected to be much shallower in this area, would most likely be less.

Mr. Troidl stated that Extent #8 (Kinsley) was not cost effective unless it was included with #7 (Windsor). Mr. Martin suggested that the committee vote on extents 1, 2, 4, 7 and 8 at the next meeting, depending on public interest in them. Ms. Holland asked how much public interest is needed for the committee to approve of an area. Mr. Martin answered that it would be a judgement call for the committee. Ms. Chang stated that in the original sewer project, it took 100% of one street to vote themselves out of a project.

Mr. Martin asked if there was any public interest in Kinsley Road being in. Mr. Campbell answered that a resident at 33 Kinsley did not want to be included when he was under the

impression that the SBU cost would be \$60,000 per SBU but once the project was explained to him with a cost estimate of around \$30,000 the resident seemed more amenable. Mr. Campbell provided a handout of other public interests in each of the extended areas.

Mr. Head asked what is included in the sewer cost? Mr. Campbell answered that the costs are: 1) betterments, 2) connection fees, 3) use fees and 4) permit fees for the connection. Ms. Bissetta asked if the committee should vote on these areas at the next meeting and was concerned with having enough time for the public to consider it. Mr. Martin suggested that the committee at the next meeting spend the first portion of the meeting getting public feedback prior to voting on the areas. Mr. Rice asked if it were more beneficial for all the areas to be included and have the extents vote themselves out but Mr. Martin believes that it is a judgement call that it'd be more practical to vote areas in.

Ms. Friedrichs asked if it's known how the sewer betterments would affect rents at the Dover Heights property. Mr. Campbell and others stated that that was unknown.

Agenda Item #6 – Timeline for Special Town Meeting

Mr. Campbell recommended the following schedule for Special Town Meeting:

1. September 12th – Public Forum at Town Hall to finalize project limits
2. September 22nd – AB Farmers Market
3. September 26th – Health & Human Services open house
4. October 8th – Fin Com meeting
5. October 10th – Public Forum in W.Acton for business community
6. Late-October/early-November – Estimated betterments sent to district
7. November 4th – BOS Meeting
8. November 12th – Tri-Board Meeting (BOS/Fin Com/School)
9. November 14th – Public Forum at Town Hall. Committee recommendation
10. November 18th – BOS Meeting. Town Meeting warrant recommendation.
11. December 10th – Special Town Meeting

Mr. Troidl provided a project schedule for the West Acton sewers for the committee. Ms. Friedrichs asked if the businesses can get their betterment estimate prior to Town Meeting which Mr. Campbell answered yes they will be provided at the same time as the residential properties.

Agenda Item #7 – Public outreach

Mr. Campbell sought approval for the recommended public outreach schedule:

- September 12th – Hold WASAAC meeting in room 204 of town hall for the first public forum meeting.
- September 22nd – AB Farmers Market
- September 26th – Health & Human Services open house
- October 10th – Hold WASAAC meeting in West Acton (The Gallery) allowing the business community to discuss sewers with the public.

- November 14th – Hold WASAAC meeting in room 204 of town hall for the final public forum meeting prior to Special Town Meeting. Committee recommendation vote for BOS November 18th
- December 10 – Special Town Meeting date

Mr. Campbell stated that he will mail residents in West Acton information on these public outreach events. Mr. Martin discussed the potential materials available to the public at these forums and the format of the forums. Ms. Chang recommended that the committee should recommend to the BOS that all paving and police details be included in the Town's general benefit.

Mr. Martin asked if multiple town meeting votes were necessary to include the Town's general benefit and if there were any policies for police details on town projects. It was recommended to speak with the Town Manager.

There was general discussion about potential outreach via the Beacon or at Octoberfest. It was suggested to create an email group on the website for updated information and forums. Mr. Wellinghoff asked if there was any EDC engagement. Ms. Chang, representing the EDC, stated that the EDC supports sewers in West Acton. The committee supported the upcoming schedule.

Agenda Item #8 – Potential future schedule & topics

The committee determined September 12th to be the next meeting date.

Information on the sewer project may be found on the Town's website here: <http://www.acton-ma.gov/645/West-Acton-Sewer>

After discussing the agenda items, a motion to end the meeting was made by Mr. Head, seconded by Mr. Wellinghoff and approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Paul Campbell, clerk for meeting

Documents Discussed

- Draft minutes, 7/18/2019
- MassDEP Extension Approval – July 23, 2019
- Acton Extension Cost Table (DRAFT) – August 15, 2019
- Acton Schedule
- Acton Water District email – July 29, 2019
- Citizens' Concerns reported August 15, 2019
- Engineering Response to Mike Geis Memo – August 14, 2019
- CWRMP – High Needs Area – West Acton
- West Acton Sewer Extents – Updated August 15, 2019

Discussed documents and other material for the 8/15/2019 meeting available on Town of Acton website at:

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-9473>