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Acton Board of Health
693 Massachusetts Avenue
Acton, MA
September 17, 2012

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Board of Health Members Present: Mark Conoby, Chairman, William McInnis, and Michael Kreuze

Water District Commissioners Present: Ronald Parent, Chairman, Leonard Phillips and Stephen Stuntz

Staff Present: Doug Halley, Health Director, Chris Allen, District Manager, Mary Jo Bates, District Treasurer/Collector, Mary Bassett, District Counselor, Matthew Mostoller, Environmental Manager, Lynn Protasowicki, Commissioner Secretary, William Guthlein, Finance Committee

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

Co-Meeting between Acton Board of Health (BOH) and Acton Water District Commissioners

Some topics of discussion included:

1. The District's current and long-term plans to maintain water quality and increase supply.
2. The potential need for the Town to place limits on future growth based on water availability.
3. The possible impact of the Town's aging septic systems on water quality.
4. Potential for retro-fitting municipal buildings with water saver fixtures.
5. Update on the legal proceedings involving AWD vs. Assabet Sand & Gravel, LLC.

Mr. Conoby opened the discussion by thanking the Water Commissioners for inviting the Board of Health to their meeting. He noted that this is the first time that the two Boards have ever met.

#1 Water supply-

Mr. Allen informed the BOH that the Christofferson Well was determined to be groundwater under the influence and as a result the Mass DEP put out a consent order requiring treatment. In response, pilot studies were performed at the Christofferson Well and Assabet Wells.

The BOH asked what percentage of the water that is being pumped into system is treated. Mr. Allen responded by stating that all water is treated by chemical injection; water from the North Acton Water Treatment Plant is filtered as well. He also stated that on an average day, 1.5 million gallons of water is pumped into system and that at peak demand 2.6 million gallons of water is pumped. Water from Assabet Wells 1 and 2 is aerated prior to chemical treatment. Mr. Stuntz talked about brown water problem being new issue since 2002 and mainly due to more chlorine being used in system.

The discussion came up about an increase in sodium in the water. Mr. Mostoller mentioned the study that WLMAC worked on a couple of years ago. BOH mentioned that the Town is using more salt than sand during winter months.

#2 Future growth-

BOH inquired about future well sources that haven't been put through zoning by-law that BOH could look into. Mr. Allen mentioned the Flannery-O' Toole property on Mass Ave (by the Municipal playground) and Icehouse/Holland. There was also discussion regarding looking at deep bedrock well sources, such as Quail Ridge, which is part of the AWD 5-10 year master plan. Mr. Conoby requested a list of the sites that are possibilities for new sources.

BOH mentioned that there are nine private wells in service area (totaling 200 units-mainly condominiums and apartments) that they would like AWD to take over. Mr. Halley stated that currently there is no advantage to the District to take over these wells but could speak with MassDEP to give withdrawal credit to AWD. The BOH could work on a financial strategy to transfer these wells over to AWD. The group talked about needing to come up with hook-up fees (what it would cost to hook-up to the District). They discussed making it a requirement to hook-up private wells to AWD and mentioned they would need to come up a plan for customer to be able to pay for that hook-up in a payment plan if they couldn't afford to pay in one lump sum.

#3 Septic systems-

Mr. Stuntz asked the BOH about the town's wastewater treatment plan and how they treat and test. The BOH responded by mentioning the Johns Hopkins Study that was done three years ago. The study took samples of the medicine waste and retested the discharge. They don't know what everything is that needs to be treated.

BOH asked AWD if there were any plans to expand services outside the boundaries of Acton. Mr. Allen stated no plans currently except for emergency situations. He also updated the BOH regarding the Massachusetts Inter-municipal Agreement between AWD and Town of Boxborough; supporting the recently approved legislation that dictates management of water rights.

#4 Addressing the retrofitting municipal buildings with water saver fixtures-

Mr. Mostoller stated that the new school buildings meet the new codes but could go beyond that. AWD would like to see dual flush toilets, waterless urinals, and motion-sensing faucets. Historically there has been grant money to pay for these replacements but there is no more money. He stated that students on the "Green Team" at the high school recently completed a water audit and identified places where water could be saved. He informed the BOH that AWD does have an appliance rebate program in place for homeowners. Mr. Halley requested that information be sent to him so that it can be shared with homeowners looking to remodel bathrooms and replace septic systems. Mr. Mostoller stated that with the help of the BOH we could start changing the people's mindsets about water and the value it holds.

Mr. Stuntz asked about reuse of gray water and the thoughts that BOH had on it. Mr. Conoby stated that it's not prohibited in Massachusetts but it is very difficult to get permit from the State Planning Board and Mass DEP. He stated that single family homeowners can not use gray water because of so many requirements and restrictions.

#5 Update on the legal proceedings involving AWD versus Assabet Sand & Gravel, LLC-

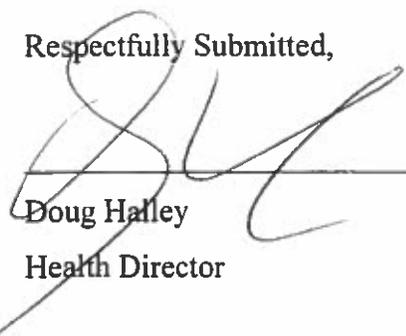
Mr. Allen updated the BOH on the legal proceedings between AWD and Assabet Sand & Gravel, LLC. Stating that there is a three acre encroachment on Assabet 1A & 2A Wells which they became aware of when the land was being appraised in 2010. He stated that AWD placed certain timelines for the owner to remove the encroachment to however the owner has not followed. AWD is stating it is a trespass case and Assabet Sand & Gravel is stating its adverse possession. The case is currently active in Land Court.

The BOH suggested that the AWD put into place a mosquito spraying plan.

The two Boards will meet again in either January or February for updates.

On a motion made by Mr. Kreuze, seconded by Mr. McInnis, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,


Doug Halley
Health Director


Mark Conoby, Chairman
Acton Board of Health