



Manchester-By-The-Sea Meeting Posting

Notice of Public Meeting – (As required by M.G.L.Ch.30A §18-28)

Board/Committee: Water Resources Protection Task Force **OFFICIAL KICK OFF**

Day & Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: VIRTUAL

Signature: Sue Croft

ATTENDEES: Steve Gang, Ron Mastrogiacomo, Sue Brown, Peter Colorusso, Tom Kehoe, Jeff Cochand, Fred Wales, Joe Sabella, Olga Hayes, Ann Harrison, David Lumsden, Randi Augustine, Jessica Lamothe, Chuck Dam, Jon Round, Mike Carvalho, Nate Desrosiers, Francie Caudill, Helen Bethell, Ron Parker, Scott Horsley, Erika Brown, Gordon Turner, Jim Benke, Sarah Creighton, Melissa Flinn

MINUTES

- Steve Gang initially brought the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Then Senator Bruce Tarr joined the meeting briefly to express his thanks to the Task Force for embarking on this endeavor which is important to him as he chairs the North Shore Water Resiliency committee to address issues within the Ipswich River watershed area. He also pledged his support in any way he is able and touched on Infrastructure funding that is coming to help municipalities in MA address these important water-related issues.
- Introduction of Members and Staff – twenty minutes or so was dedicated to the Advisory Board members briefly introducing themselves after which Steve introduced staff members and additional volunteers (who will work on a more informal consultant-type basis).
- Review essential reading (distributed and on webpage) – Scott Horsley discussed Horsley Witten 1990 Water Protection Plan. He referred to the list of recommendations included in this report and that much of those recommendations and information (specifically hydrology and mapping) are still pertinent today. Identifying additional areas of focus (mostly regarding climate change) will also be important. Also mentioned as considerations were storm water, wastewater, and land use. Also discussed was the importance of prioritizing the areas to focus the Task Force’s efforts when updating the 1990 HW Report. Later in the meeting it was noted that there are currently three reports posted in the Task Force webpage that are recommended to be read first (1990 HW Report; DEP Wellhead Planning document; and DEP Surface Water Planning document). The remaining documentation, of which the Task Force has a significant amount, is currently posted on a Dropbox site to which Steve Gang will give access to everyone. Once the documentation is properly prioritized and categorized, additional documentation will be added to the Task force webpage.

- The group reviewed a draft document that recommends breaking the Task Force into six separate work groups in order to address all 14 issues to be tackled by the Task Force and simultaneously streamline the work. Ideally, an Advisory member would head up each team with individuals volunteering to be on an individual team(s) that would work separately on their particular issue and report back to the group as a whole periodically. Next steps include individuals expressing interest in a particular category and confirming ownership of working groups' leaders and sub-team members. Each of the six categories were discussed separately in detail. See workplans table below for reference.
- During the discussion surrounding civic engagement, it was asked by what means should we inform the public about what we are doing. Responses included:
 - Hikes in the watershed areas
 - Elementary school involvement
 - Blog
 - Cricket (continue)
 - Social media (but use with caution)
 - Need to have a firm grasp on the issues and associated data first
- Briefly discussed that the Task Force may need to consider a regional approach to our watershed(s) as part of this effort.
- PFAS contamination update – Chuck Dam gave the group background and update on the PFAS situation for the LSW and Gravelly Pond. Background: testing at both locations for PFAS6 (as required by the MA DEP) started back in the Fall. Exploratory samples from LSW started at 14 ppt (parts per trillion) then increased to 18 ppt which required the Town to test the LSW monthly whereas previously it was quarterly (Gravelly Pond/WTP continue to have low enough levels – 10 ppt or below – therefore only quarterly testing is still required there). The highest level tested so far at the LSW was 19.8 ppt (the MA DEP threshold is 20 ppt and the federal max is 70 ppt). Due to this, separate samples were sent to two another lab for testing given the challenges and uncertainties surrounding the ability to effectively gather a clean test sample. The first sample came back yesterday at 10 ppt. Results from the other sample not yet received. It was noted that testing at such minute levels and the fact that PFAS are in most everything poses serious challenges, and that significant variability does happen. Sampling continues at LSW monthly at present. The Town currently has a consultant working to address the PFAS issues at the LSW and has confirmed that treatment is a viable solution to get PFAS down to zero although this treatment is not inexpensive or easy. It was asked if other North Shore towns are having similar issues. Chuck Dam responded saying that he wasn't aware of any NS towns that are over the threshold. Chuck Dam also noted that annual testing for PFAS is done at the landfill and that those results are high.
- Update on 133 Essex St development in Hamilton – A luxury condo complex for seniors is currently in front of the Hamilton Planning Board. Essex, Hamilton and MBTS all have wells/water sources in close proximity to this proposed development. Representatives for MBTS plan to get involved to understand the impact this development would have on the watershed/water sources.
- Next steps, next meeting, additional questions/issues:
 - The next meeting will be scheduled for Wednesday March 2nd from 4:00-5:30
 - Jon Round requested a tour of the LSW and WTP for the Task Force members. This suggestion was enthusiastically supported by the rest of the group.

- A concern was raised as to the impact of the Essex County Club (ECC) and their use of fertilizers and the impact that might be having on the LSW. Chuck Dam responded that the ECC provides the town with an annual report with specifics regarding their fertilizer use and chemical storage. In addition to that Chuck recently had a tour of their facilities and he personally isn't concerned based on what he was shown (e.g. proper storage of fertilizers/chemicals, water-based fertilizer usage and the fact that the ECC uses Horsley Witten as their engineering consultant to produce these annual reports). Tom Kehoe added that an easement agreement exists between MBTS and the ECC.
- A question was raised regarding financial planning for the Task Force and if there will be money available to retain consultants for various areas of subject matter expertise. The response was that there has been money identified for this effort in the FY23 budget which is currently under review by the Finance Committee and will ultimately need to be voted on at Town Meeting in April. Money would likely not be available until July 1.
- Steve Gang asked Sue Croft to highlight an additional Town initiative which will begin in the next month or so called CREAT. Sue Croft gave a brief outline of this program to which MBTS was asked to participate through the EPA, NOAA and a consulting firm called Cadmus which will focus on water resiliency and climate change specific to our drinking water system. A 2015 CREAT study has already been done for the Waste Water Treatment Plant. She also mentioned the possibility of recruiting one or two members of this Task Force to participate in this effort once it becomes clear how many team members are needed for the CREAT program and what exactly the approach will be.
- Steve Gang also mentioned that Sue Croft (in her role as Grant/Special Projects Coordinator for the Town) would keep the Task Force informed with regards to the infrastructure grants that Bruce Tarr mentioned at the beginning of the meeting.

		WORKPLANS (initial draft, to be fleshed out by each Working Team)			
WORKING TEAM	Scope of Work	Assess Current Situation	ID & Understand Key Issues	Develop Potential Strategies	Issues Previously Identified
1	Usage & Demand for Drinking Water	Current stats & trends Update H-W '90 Report Projections (collect/make)	Indoor vs. outdoor (seasonality) Residential vs. other Greywater vs. Blackwater Distribution of usage by user Pricing (vs. comparable towns) Conservation opportunities		1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 13

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REVIEW

2	Supply & Sources of Drinking Water	Current stats & trends Update H-W '90 Report Regional aspects Status of watersheds Projections (collect/make)	Protecting watersheds Relying only on Gravelly Pond Potential new sources (wells) Regional possibilities		2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14
3	Effects of Climate Change	Trends in temps, storms, flooding, sea level Existing studies of climate change & drinking water Projections (collect/make)	FX of greater severity (storms with higher precipitation, heat and droughts, salt intrusion from sea level rise, etc.) Case studies from other towns		3, 7
4	Contaminants	Current stats & trends Update H-W '90 Report Projections (collect/make)	PFA fixes (short/long-term) Long-standing contaminants Potential for as-yet-unidentified		7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14
5	Citizen Awareness & Engagement	Survey awareness/interest	Recruiting more volunteers! Citizens' levels of concern Willingness to make tradeoffs (easy to difficult)		12
6	Town Responsibilities, Authority & Accountability	Current situation (reporting, decision-making)	Who's in charge of managing drinking water supply & demand? What are best practices from similar towns?		4, 5, 6, 7