

**Minutes**  
**Acton Water Resources Advisory Committee**  
**February 21, 2007**  
**Emergency Operations Center**  
**Public Safety Facility**

Attendees

Members: Lauren Rosenzweig, Eric Hilfer, Helen Probst, Allen Nitschelm, Ken Sundberg, Nancy Tavernier, Joanne Bissetta, Ann Chang

Associates: Carol Holley, Ron Beck

Support Staff: Brent Reagor (9:00PM)

Public: Mary Michelman, Terra Friedrichs, Aidan Smith, Andy Munro, Steve Gargas, Gloria Jacobs

Lauren Rosenzweig called the meeting to order at 7:05PM.

**Citizens' Concerns**

Mary Michelman handed out an aerial view of the Adams St. area showing the delineation of Zones 1 & 2 in the area of the treatment plant and sand beds. Most of the RIB area is shown to be in a Zone 2. She is concerned about the ground discharge from the treatment plant migrating to the drinking water wells. Other members shared the concern and want to be sure this concern is addressed as part of the RIB capacity study.

It was pointed out that it has always been known by DEP and the Town that the RIBs are partially in a Zone 2 and in fact the Acton Zoning bylaw allows the discharge of tertiary treated effluent in Zones 1, 2 and 3. There are numerous monitoring wells that track the flow from that area.

Brent Reagor arrived at 9:00PM and added the following information to this discussion:

The Zone 2 area was first identified by the Lycott Study in the 1986-88 time frames and then verified in the 1995 SEA hydrogeology study and again in the 1997 Woodward and Curran follow-up. It is acknowledged in DEP letters to the town sent during the permitting process for the sewer system. The Zone 2 was grandfathered by DEP in the 1990's. Both the SEA and W&C models show the direction of flow from the RIB's is down gradient to the river not the drinking water wells. The delineation of a zone 2 is done with a computer model that simulates a 6 month drought and pumping at full capacity for 180 days, and then it notes the direction of flow from that exercise. Obviously it is way too expensive and would be prohibited by wetlands laws to do an actual test in the field so geologists have to rely on the simulation. It is just theoretical, it may or may not be accurate.

The information that was used to determine this zone 2 in the 1980's came from the USGS maps that show the soil composition of the area and then allows lines to be drawn accordingly. Those maps are still used today. There is new information now as a result of the WR Grace testing and that will be taken into account when the RIB capacity study is done.

### **Warrant Article discussion**

#### Article CC. Sewer Extensions Design Basis Report

Lauren reported on the recommendation from the Sewer Expansion Sub-committee for the Design Basis warrant article for April Town Meeting. The Sub-committee decided to reduce the original scope of the article to study only two of the High Needs area, Flint-Tuttle and West Acton Village east of the tracks. The rationale for this recommendation is that these areas will meet the current permitted capacity of the sewer system but the costs of expansion needs to be estimated before the Town can vote on design and construction funds at a future town meeting.

Terra requested that the scope of work be reworded to request that the costs of each area be listed separately and that the town needs to be given the analytical model that is used by the selected consultant. She proposed spending more on the study to get the full range of options available to solve wastewater problems.

The Committee discussed the deletion of the Article that would have made an application to the State Revolving Fund (SRF) in August. It was noted that the Article was dropped from consideration because the study being done regarding cost won't be completed by August and it was not advisable to make a submittal to the SRF without having a real estimate for a definitive project.

The committee edited the summary language by adding the names of the areas to be studied. There was further discussion about the need to show not only costs but benefits to the community. Some of examples of benefits would be 2 out of 5 High Needs areas would be served, it would take some areas of town out of Zone 2, etc. The current scope of the study seems to cover these concerns.

There was then discussion about who should pay the cost of these studies, the future users or the taxpayers. It was agreed that it was impossible to know who the future users would be when this study is only gathering information vital to making that determination in the future. Allen expressed hope that should the sewer expansion goes forward, the users will repay the taxpayers in the future for the \$34,500 cost.

Nancy moved and Ann seconded the motion to recommend to the Board of Selectmen the inclusion of this article on the Town Meeting warrant. Voted 7 Yes, 1 No (Hilfer).

#### Article CB. Wastewater Treatment Facility, Collection System and Rapid Infiltration Basins Capacity

Edits were made to the summary of the article that changed the description to a hydrogeology study and also added wording to the scope of study to address environmental concerns such as impact on drinking water.

Nancy asserted that the Treatment Plant and RIB's constitute an \$8-10M investment made by the Town and we need to know the full potential of that asset by measuring its current and potential capacity. Helen explained that the model to be used in the study will examine 5 years of flow and recalibrate the original model to match up to the existing information. If the study determines there is extra capacity available then the Town can decide to apply to DEP for a permit. At that point DEP will no doubt require additional studies.

Ann moved and Helen seconded the motion to recommend to the Board of Selectmen the inclusion of this article on the Town Meeting warrant. Voted 8 Yes, 0 No

### **Outreach for Town Meeting**

Ann Chang, Joanne Bissetta, and Helen Probst agreed to work together to prepare educational information on the Warrant articles for the newspapers and the Town web site to help Town Meeting voters understand the importance of these article. FAQ and Fact Sheets will be distributed.

### **Minutes**

Minutes of 1/10/07 were approved as written.

### **Meetings**

Next meetings were scheduled for: March 7 and March 21 at 7PM, location to be determined.

Nancy Tavernier  
Clerk pro tem