

**Minutes**  
**Acton Water Resources Advisory Committee**  
**October 2, 2007**  
**Memorial Library Meeting Room**

Attendees

Members: Andrew Magee, Lauren Rosenzweig, Eric Hilfer, Ken Sundberg, Helen Probst, Allen Nitschelm, Joanne Bissetta, Chris Schaffner, Nancy Tavernier

Associates: Carol Holley, Ron Beck

Support Staff: Brent Reagor, J. D. Head

Public: Mary Michelman, Terra Friedrichs

Mr. Magee called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm

**Minutes**

Minutes of September 5, 2007 were approved unanimously.

**Future Agenda Item - Review of Priority Areas**

Mr. Hilfer suggested the committee revisit the priority areas and passed out an example of a format that could be used to do so.

**Future Agenda Item - Review of Capacity**

Mr. Nitschelm noted that the recent study suggests that the Town has 310,000 gallons of sewer capacity. He would like the Town to investigate what can be done to optimize that capacity. He asked if the Town could process septage pumping and thereby reduce user fees.

Mr. Nitschelm reviewed supersizing of the collection and treatment system. The Town was told there was potentially 500,000 gallons per day (gpd) of disposal capacity. Now the study says there is approximately 310,000 gpd of capacity. Now the Town must pay for the supersizing that will not be used and that currently the difference is paid by the incoming betterments and fees. This is 'robbing Peter to pay Paul.' Mr. Magee and Mr. Regor reviewed the history of estimates, starting with the 500,000 gpd estimate by Weston and Sampson, the 300,000 gpd estimate by Woodard & Curren, DEP's original allowance of 250,000, and the recognition by DEP, Woodard & Curran, and the Town that all of these were pre-development models. The most recent study by Woodard & Curran utilized models with up-dated data reflecting the actual use of the system. Mr. Magee noted that had the Town undersized the system and the updated capacity estimate come in at 500,000 gpd the costs for expanding/rebuilding the system would have been prohibitive and likely have led to criticism of lack of forethought.

### **Preliminary Design Study**

Mr. Magee noted that the preliminary design study contract had been awarded, but had not yet been initiated. As discussed previously by WRAC, initiation of the work was held until the capacity study was completed. Such delay had been deemed warranted in case the Capacity study indicated either too little capacity, or so much as to warrant a larger study area. Ms. Tavernier concurred. Mr. Hilfer suggested that the needs areas had not been revisited, and therefore maybe the Design Study should be delayed further. Mr. Nitschelm suggested that there was no plan to utilize the existing capacity as best as can be done, and therefore the Preliminary Design study should be tabled until such a plan is developed. Mr. Nitschelm suggested that, in order to reduce costs, those people within the system who are not hooked up could sell their betterments to others outside the system. Mr. Nitschelm noted that he had proposed such a plan to the FinComm but had it been “shot down.”

Mr. Magee reviewed the Town Meeting vote which authorized the Capacity Study. Ms. Tavernier noted that the subcommittee had studied the issue and, while she agreed the delay in initiation the study until the Capacity Study had been completed was prudent, she believes we have an obligation to Town Meeting and the neighborhood in question to proceed with the study. Mr. Beck said it was clear that it had been agreed that this study should be done and that he didn't think you could go back on Town Meeting. As to the capacity of the system, he had not heard anyone promising the excess would be there, but that it had seemed promising. He also noted that the areas that could be severed by the treatment plan were limited. Mr. Nitschelm suggested that all neighborhoods should be studied before authorized the design study; currently there are two neighborhoods being considered, maybe we should add a third.

Ms. Tavernier suggested the discussion should be brought to closure. She thought the idea of taking on septage flow was good one, although she noted that the original sewer committee had studied the idea and abandoned it. She thought it was worth re-evaluating.

Ms. Friedrichs suggested that when the CWRMP was approved it was done so with conditions. Now that the capacity wasn't there, those conditions are not there.

**John Hopkins Public Health Study Results.** Mr. Reagor distributed results of a study that looked into the presence, or lack thereof, of emerging contaminants in the Town's post-treatment discharge.

**On-site Wastewater Management Perceptions.** Mr. Reagor introduced an exercise that he had observed used to good purpose in a town in New Jersey. The goal of the exercise is to identify and discuss the perceptions people have around different wastewater management systems. Recognizing that the discussion would be an extensive one, Mr. Magee postponed further action on the exercise until the next WRAC meeting.

Mr. Magee adjourned the meeting.