

Wastewater Management Task Force
13 November 2012
Minutes

Present: Douglas Wilkinson, Richard Prendergrast, Donna Bednar, Ernest Lorda, Frank Chan, Robert McCarthy; Kurt Zemba, facilitator; Dimitri Tolchinski, ex officio as Chair of WPCA; Bonnie Reemsnyder, First Selectwoman; Mary Jo Nosal, Selectwoman

The initial meeting of the Wastewater Management Task Force was convened by facilitator Kurt Zemba at 7:30pm.

Kurt distributed copies of the Task Force Roster, Meeting Agenda, Formation Memo from the First Selectwoman, and the Charge from the Board of Selectmen. Members introduced themselves, providing brief summaries of their backgrounds and interest in wastewater management.

First Selectwoman Bonnie Reemsnyder provided a brief history of wastewater management in the Town:

Town WPCAs (Water Pollution Control Authorities) were authorized by State Statute in the early 1980's in response to shoreline community reactions to a then-DEP (Dept of Environmental Protection) assumption that wastewater from the shoreline was impacting Long Island Sound.

The shoreline communities were required to initiate testing programs, adopt pumping schedules, and operate a sewer avoidance program. Test wells were established in various locations to ascertain that local waters were not being polluted.

In the early 1990's, testing was begun to measure nitrogen levels in groundwater and subsurface water in order to determine that the levels met standards established by the State Department of Public Health. Beaches were also tested regularly.

In 1998, the Old Lyme WPCA established a schedule requiring pumping of septic systems within a 7 year timeframe. Data collected by pumping company(ies) indicates that 95% of Town residents are in compliance with that schedule.

Two years ago, two chartered beach associations responded to a draft proposal from the WPCA to mandate septic system upgrades by initiating their own water pollution studies and forming their own WPCAs.

Those studies received partial (55%) funding through the Clean Water Fund, which required that the study 1) assess whether or not pollution is occurring, and, 2) evaluate several mitigation methods and identify the most cost-effective approach.

The methods evaluated were: 1) connection to the New London Wastewater Treatment Facility (i.e. sewers); 2) development of a community sewerage system; and 3) improvement of onsite septic systems. Connection to the New London sewers system was identified as most cost-effective and the two associations are now under a DEEP consent order to tie into those sewers. Because of concerns about the potential environmental risk from sewers as well as their impact on the character of the Town, the Board of Selectmen engaged the services of an engineering consultant to review the studies for the potential cost effectiveness of the other options.

That consultant, Lombardo Associates, identified another option – a septage effluent disbursement system -- that would be controlled by the Town and could handle not only the waste from the two beach associations in the study, but others along the shoreline as well if necessary.

The Board of Selectmen has formed the Wasterwater Management Task Force in response to the Lombardo report.

First Selectwoman Reemsnyder reviewed the Charge to the Task Force, which is to develop an RFQ (request for Qualifications) to “identify, investigate and evaluate possible sites for the critical effluent dispersal component for a local plan that could serve the maximum number of properties in the Shoreline area and their associated wastewater flows.” The Task Force will submit a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen. Because spring is the optimal time for the type of site testing required, the Task Force will be on a tight schedule.

The First Selectwoman has met with the DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection). A DEEP engineer has been assigned to work with the Town, which is eligible to apply for a Clean Water Fund grant to help fund the new study. Copies of Bonnie’s correspondence from the DEEP engineer were distributed.

The Task Force agreed on the following Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday, December 11

Tuesday, January 8

Tuesday, January 22

Tuesday, February 12

Tuesday, March 12

Additional meetings, including a second February meeting, will be added if needed. All meetings will begin at 7:30pm. Kurt Zemba’s goal is to keep the meetings to 90 minutes.

Kurt requested samples of previous Town RFQs that he will share with the Task Force members.

First Selectwoman Reemsnyder and Selectwoman Nosal thanked the Task Force members for agreeing to serve.

A motion was made by Doug Wilkinson, seconded by Richard Prendergast, to adjourn at 9:06pm. Meeting adjourned.

Catherine Frank
11/14/12