

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
WASTEWATER ALTERNATIVES COMMITTEE
MINUTES FOR APRIL 23, 2024 MEETING**

Members Present: Holly Delisle (Town Administrator), Ron Rodjenski (Moderator), Harmony Cism (Planning Assistant, Minute Clerk), Jeremy Berger, Martha Heath, Bill Hill, Lori Johnson, Carol Winfield

Members Absent: George Lamphere

Also Present: Terry Bosworth, Dave Gauthier, Maura O'Brien + partner, Maureen Wilcox

Meeting Began: 3:00pm

Public Comment/Items Not on Agenda:

Holly Delisle reported that the 1705 Property is no longer under contract. George Pigeon has given approval to pick up where the committee left off. Holly has reached out to Tudhope and is still awaiting a response.

A matrix discussion was added to the meeting schedule:

Bill Hill reviewed final edits to a PowerPoint presentation which will be added to the website. The group discussed gallons per day and demand. There is no verified demand for current use, but there is a publicly stated demand of record. Carol Winfield thinks this needs to be revisited. Martha Heath noted that Ron has said that we have lots of information about demand, but we are constantly in discussion of what the demand is. How should we approach this? Ron Rodjenski responded that demand calculations are time based. The calculations are done when the questions are asked. There is lots of history over time. It is difficult to plan for the long-term while considering today's demand vs. future demand. There is existing data from Green Mountain Engineering, who calculated a snapshot need for each property in the Village Center, which is where the 10,000gpd demand came from. There are no numbers as of today, all data is historical with potential projections to future need. Bill will remove these numbers from the matrix and add a footnote that capacity needs will be determined by WW Rules at time of the system design.

The 1705 property is back on the matrix and other pages. Maple Shade is on hold. The PowerPoint slides will be published to the website with the edits discussed by the group.

Lori Johnson asked about the question of permit-ability of the 1705 property. Holly has reached out to Emily Hackett with the State DEC but has not yet received a response.

Discussion:

Private Property Access Agreement/Pending Legal Review:

Ron Rodjenski said that legal advice is needed for the template letter approving access onto private properties. It should cover ownership of data, easements, etc. Holly will request Selectboard approval to speak with the Town Attorney before other private property owners are contacted. Tudhope needs to review the scope and okay the timeframe. It may be beneficial to have Tudhope come in and speak to the group.

Carol Winfield noted that the legal agreements we were looking at were more for the Town accessing and utilizing a parcel for septic. This is different for the 1705 property because the Town may purchase the property. Should we pursue spending money on legal, or focus on 1705 alone and put other

properties on the back burner? Ron replied that the Town Attorney will be made aware of this difference. He should be consulted on the matter.

Jeremy Berger asked if there is a backup engineer if Tudhope can't commit. Ron answered not at this time. The Selectboard named Tudhope specifically in their directive. Lori Johnson said that she sent names of other Class 1 designers to Holly.

Martha Heath asked if the town pursues the 1705 property, will we have to have a bond vote? The Town most likely can't purchase them without a public vote.

Lori Johnson said that we have no control over property. What legal agreements do we need? Sometimes it is possible to talk to the owner and ask to rent a property during investigation. Ron added that the terms and conditions of any agreement will need to be acceptable to both parties. Lori said that the Westford Common Hall has granted initial access permission. If the property is pursued, trees will need to be moved to get equipment to the possible septic area.

FPF Post Review:

Holly Delisle shared a pending post for FPF. It contains the same language as the recent newsletter inclusion. Holly will edit the section saying 1705 is off the table. After minor edits, the posting is ready to publish.

State Wastewater Rules/Gallons Per Day:

This was discussed above, and a note will be made on the PowerPoint slide. Ron reported that he reached out to the district regional engineer who said that for residential capacity calculations, no metering is allowed. Table 8-1 of the Wastewater Rules needs to be used instead. There are some alternative treatment methods such as pretreatment or mound systems to increase capacity. The regional engineer may attend a future meeting. There are links to Wastewater Rules and gpd formulas, but it would be more beneficial to have an expert in the room for discussion/Q&A.

Discuss Future Meeting Schedule

Meetings will continue to be held weekly as we see how to progress with the 1705 property. We will know more after the Selectboard meeting in 2 days. Martha Heath wondered what we would do at a meeting next week unless Tudhope responded or the Selectboard says to move forward with agreements from the Town Attorney. Ron replied that the SB has a lot to say about accessing info. Jeremy said that it makes sense to have a meeting next week. It can possibly be postponed if there is no information to discuss.

The group discussed the feasibility of continuing weekly meetings. It may not be necessary to meet this often.

Task Assignments:

Holly will reach out to George Pigeon about contacting Tudhope. She will also post to Front Porch Forum.

Bill will upload the edited PowerPoint slides.

Ron will follow up with the state engineer to see if someone is available to attend a meeting.

Holly will update the Selectboard on the matrix and ask for clarity on legal direction. The 1705 agreement may need legal review. Ron stated that the Selectboard needs to be made aware that we need a budget, we need an engineer on board, and there will be associated legal fees.

Lori wondered if the group should ask the Selectboard for a budget? Carol added that the group could request discretion to spend the budget as they deem it necessary. Martha noted that the Selectboard can't spend more than \$5K without going out to bid.

The group discussed Becca Davanon's research. Holly will send a confirmation and appreciation of receipt, but the information will not be posted to the website. The public can request it if needed.

Next meeting: April 30, 2024

Adjourn: 4:07pm