

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
WASTEWATER ALTERNATIVES COMMITTEE
MINUTES FOR APRIL 9, 2024 MEETING**

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

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Dave Gauthier, Barb Peck, Maureen Wilcox, Paul Birnholz, Ann Pigeon, Susan S

Meeting Began: 3:00pm

Public Comment/Items Not on Agenda:

None.

Discussion:

1705 Update:

Holly Delisle reported that she sent an email to David Tudhope on Friday including the scope of work. She has not yet received a response.

There is news from George Pigeon that he has a deposit on the purchase of the 1705 property. The buyer wishes to remain anonymous. WAC research on this property is on pause. We are waiting to hear from Mr. Pigeon to know if we should withdraw the signed permission slip or carry on.

WCH Update:

Holly reported that she sent the permission request form to the Westford Common Hall. They will bring it to the board at their next meeting, review, make changes, and respond.

Martha Heath wondered if we should ask the Selectboard for funding for engineering on the Westford Common Hall property. Ron asked if we should put the request to the Selectboard to approve finding before we have permission from the WCH board. There is no harm in having approval in case we need it. The Selectboard can consider this question at their next meeting. Carol Winfield asked if the Selectboard approves funding, would they also decide who to contact and request bids? Carol suggested contacting Tudhope to see if he would be willing to do this. Bill Hill asked what information already exists about research on the WCH property. Lori Johnson responded that preliminary information exists. There is an estimated 1200gpd capacity based on a few test pits. Lori said that the Selectboard has said that they want it to be an engineer other than Stone Environmental. Ron added that Stone might not do this work anyway. Martha added that the end of the report from Stone says some additional work should be done like bedrock blasting, etc. Bill asked about the demand for the Town Office and Library. Stone estimated 710 gpd based on current use. Holly added that Weimann Lamphere estimated 643 gpd the Town Office (not the Library) for future use. This calculation includes meeting space. Bill stated that we need numbers for the matrix. We need to get the civic buildings on the chart. Carol said that yes, we need numbers, but need will not dictate capacity. It is most important to find out capacity. The 1200gpd calculation did not include pre-treatment. We won't know capacity until the engineering is done. Jeremy Berger wondered if the WAC should ask the Selectboard to consider using \$5K to continue Stone's evaluation and to get an estimate of each building's need. Ron replied that we are trying to find a suitable property first. The second question is what we want/what properties need to be served. There is a map on file from Green Mountain Engineering that shows a snapshot of the whole village's Wastewater demand to be roughly 10,000 gpd. Carol stated that the report was estimated when the

WCH was church, so the data may not be accurate. Bill Hill said that it is crucial to fill in data – it can always be updated if inaccurate.

George Lamphere proposed the following wording to put to the SB: *Is the Selectboard supportive of hiring an engineering team to investigate soil capacities of the Westford Common Hall?* If yes, that is a green light to go start the bidding process, if the WCH approves. Carol asked, in consideration of expediency, who finds the engineer? If the Selectboard is supportive, they can designate a member of the committee to work with the Town Administrator to identify potential engineers. We should get testing going right away. This process holds true for any property that is considered. Martha reported that the WCH board will be meeting tomorrow morning.

Matrix Work:

Bill Hill reported that he worked on chart and received feedback from Ron & Holly. He has updated the ideas and created two phases on attributes. Core ideas to detailed information. The edits are subject to review and discussion. Bill wants to add gallons per day numbers to the ideas map in the interest of transparency. We need to know needed capacity. We can get some of the data from public information and include footnotes on data sources.

The “Information Gathering Process” sheet shows the 4 active properties and 4 steps: access agreement, engineering data source, site visit, and report.

Matrix Phase 1 shows areas to fill in data for site soil capacity, estimated cost, user scale, and consideration. All options must meet modern environmental standards.

The data will be presented, and the choice of options is up to the Selectboard.

The Committee’s next steps are to fill in the blanks as information is gained.

Homework: The group should think about statements regarding issues/considerations for each of the top choices. There may be other things to add to the matrix.

George Lamphere said that working documents need to be on the website. Bill will work on a new publishable version with sourcing and data records.

The committee updated the matrix documents. Old documents will be replaced with new documents on the website.

Draft Front Porch Forum Update:

Holly was designated to post monthly updates. She will bring a draft update to the committee before each posting.

Martha Heath suggested that the update should refer to the 4 ideas that are being explored, where to find information on the website (links), and a statement that reports have not come back yet. We don’t want people to think we have definitive information yet.

Jeremy Berger recalled that there were concerns about excess capacity at Maple Shade and that the zoning regulations could allow some build-out around the Common. Is there the potential to change the zoning regulations? This is outside the WAC’s current scope.

A FPF Update will be posted on 4/26/24. Holly will also work on an update for the Town newsletter.

Task Assignments:

Holly will start working on the draft of the monthly update. She will add the map with Wastewater needs to the website, along with the updated matrix. She will ask the Selectboard the question about hiring an engineer for the WCH. Holly will send a permission letter to Paul Birnholz.

Jeremy recalled that there was supposed to be a Selectboard representative on the WAC. Holly reported that no Selectboard member has stepped forward to join. She can ask again, or the WAC can change the mission statement. Martha Heath thinks it would change the dynamic to add someone at this point, but it would improve communication. Ron said we will have answers for next Tuesday's meeting. The WAC should send a list of recommended engineering firms to Holly. She will have to post the request for bids in the newspaper. Bid requests will be emailed to select recommended people and posted in the paper.

George Lamphere asked about other private properties, as we have someone who is expecting us to pursue their property. Holly said she has not sent other permission requests yet.

Ron stated that we have 3 properties with prior engineering. If someone offers their property for investigation, they should come to a meeting with all information and constraints about the property before the WAC takes them up.

Dave Gauthier asked how far out from the Common are we looking? Ron replied that it is just the Common Zoning District right now. If we go too far out, there will be a larger cost. Dave commented about a property on Post Road that borders the Maple Shade property. The parcel had a gravel pit and good soils.

Next meeting: April 16, 2024

Adjourn: 4:04pm