

WLMAC MEETING NOTES OF APRIL 15, 2010

Present: Greta Eckhardt, John Cipar, Charles Olmstead, Barry Rosen

Chairperson/Recorder: Barry Rosen

Call To Order: 8:20 PM EDT on April 15, 2010 at AWD HQ.

Old Business:

1. The minutes of 18 March 2010 were presented and discussed. Chuck Olmstead moved that the minutes be accepted as presented. The motion was seconded by John Cipar. The motion was passed unanimously.
2. The committee reviewed and discussed the meeting held with the AWD Commissioners where Paul Malchodi presented an opinion that the commissioners must discuss items relating to AWD land use with the WLMAC. The AWD did not agree with this assertion and Mary Bassett later affirmed that this was not required by the District bylaws in her opinion. The WLMAC will offer its thoughts and opinions to the AWD in areas where it believes it has an interest and can add value. *[The discussion of this item was postponed from the previous meeting.]*

New Business:

The WLMAC decided to revisit its conversation with Matt Mostoller about salt concentrations in various Acton wells.

1. Chuck Olmstead felt that we would have a better chance of observing any patterns in the salt concentration if there were more data points. There are just too few measurements taken (one per year) of the wells' salt content to analyze.
2. The committee did not understand what the cost would be for a salinity only testing of well water. We did not believe that it was difficult to gather the samples but we did not have any information on the cost of the analysis for salt concentration.
3. Barry Rosen noted that the measurements all occur at the same time of year and therefore even plotting 3-4 of them would not reveal much information other than the salt concentration for that particular date.
4. John Cipar explained how, even with some additional measurements, there could be smoothing of the data.
5. Greta Eckhardt reminded everyone that salt, like other soluble substances will diffuse from areas of high concentration to low concentration. *[Recorder's note: This will occur until equilibrium is reached.]*
6. John stated that according to the USGS report that all of us read, the largest point sources of salt in our groundwater come from the use of salt on our roadways followed by the salt used in water softeners. Therefore, it's important for us to consider that the road salt utilized in Acton may be the main point source of salt that is contributing to the salinity in our well water.

7. After considerable discussion, the WLMAC membership concluded that we need to meet with the AWD Commissioners, explain our thinking and ask them some questions.
 - a. The WLMAC is concerned that the annual measurements conducted show high levels of salinity in a number of Acton's wells.
 - b. The WLMAC does not have enough data from these measurements to be able to reach an opinion as to whether road salt in Acton is influencing the salinity level of several of these wells.
 - c. If we were able to obtain more data which would require more frequent testing of several of the AWD wells (likely Clapp-Whitcomb, Conant 1 & 2 and Kennedy-Marshall), we would have a better chance of rendering an educated opinion to the AWD.
 - d. Would the AWD increase the frequency of salinity testing of several of the Acton wells? *[Recorder's Note: We did discuss monthly testing but we did not settle on the frequency. The cost of this testing was not known so it is possible that an increase to monthly salinity testing may prove to be too expensive. Less frequent (alternate months) might possibly be an alternative.]*
 - e. If more testing were done and the WLMAC's analysis of the data indicated that road salting in Acton could be adversely affecting the salt concentration in one or more of the District's wells, would the commissioners be willing to take an action to ask the Town of Acton and/or the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to reduce the use of road salt on certain areas of road within the Town of Acton?
8. ACTION ITEM: Barry was asked if he would investigate who maintains (plows and salts) the areas of road near:
 - a. Conant 1 & 2: Route 27 and Route 2A (Main Street and Great Road)
 - b. Kennedy-Marshall: Route 27 (Main Street)
 - c. Clapp-Whitcomb: Route 111 (Massachusetts Avenue)

WLMAC Wish List: Items on which we will work

1. The committee is now working on the Item #2-b from the list created in the WLMAC minutes of 25 February 2010. The WLMAC will present/ask questions to the AWD at its next opportunity.
2. Item #2-c is whether the Town of Acton's zone 2 list should be congruent with that utilized by the AWD (DEP defined). Before the committee can recommend anything to the commissioners, the WLMAC wants to understand how all of these zones look.
 - a. Greta explained that her impression is that the town's Zoning Overlay Districts were created as recharge protection areas with the information available over thirty years ago, and they probably have not changed since then. The Zone 2 areas that are currently shown on Acton Water District maps presumably have been updated according to MA DEP data, and are therefore more scientifically accurate.

- b. ACTION ITEM: Barry was asked by the committee if he could ask the people in Town Hall who created the GIS overlay map showing the MS4 outfalls and the AWD Zone 2's for him if they would help create some other maps. Specifically the WLMAC would like to see superimposed on the existing map:
 - i. Town of Acton Zone 2's
 - ii. Is it possible to add the location of the AWD wells? [John Cipar will ask the AWD if that GIS database is available. If not, he will ask if the locations (latitude and longitude) of the points are available.]

NEXT SCHEDULED WLMAC MEETING: Thursday, May 20, 2010

Adjournment:

Chuck Olmstead made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by John Cipar. The motion to adjourn was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 PM EDT on April 15, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry R. Rosen