

## WLMAC MEETING NOTES OF JULY 15, 2010

**Present:** John Cipar, Chuck Olmstead, Barry Rosen

**Chairperson:** Barry Rosen

**Call To Order:** 8:15 P.M. EDT on 15 July 2010 at AWD HQ.

### **Old Business:**

1. Accept Minutes: A motion was made by Chuck Olmstead and seconded by John Cipar to accept the minutes of 17 June 2010 as written. The motion was passed unanimously.
2. Congruence of Zone 2's: Barry Rosen brought a new copy of the previously viewed map to the meeting. The large (table size) map was one showing the Town of Acton, many of its streets, neighboring town borders with overlay color plots of the AWD (DEP defined) zone 2 protection areas, the Town of Acton zone 2 protection areas and the Maynard, MA DEP defined zone 2 protection area. *[This map has been filed with the AWD Environmental Compliance Manager in the AWD HQ.]*

The WLMAC examined and discussed the map once again and has agreed that any differences between the DEP defined and Town of Acton defined zone 2 groundwater protection areas are insignificant. The Committee unanimously concluded that no action is necessary with the current definitions to consider requesting that the Town align its protection areas more closely with those defined by the MA DEP. We realize that either the Town of Acton or the MA DEP could redefine the zone 2 protection areas at some time in the future. However, the membership will ask Greta Eckhardt to draft a letter or memo to the AWD Commissioners explaining our examination of the information and our conclusion.

3. Salt Usage Near Acton Water District Wells: This discussion was continued from the previous WLMAC meeting.
  - 3.1. John Cipar explained that in his reading of the EPA web site, the EPA stated that one would need to drink a great deal of water from the vast majority of wells in the USA to obtain the 40 mg dose of salt that is the threshold for a low sodium diet.
  - 3.2. It appears from data reported by the AWD from its most recent testing of the District's wells, that almost all of the wells tested low for salt (sodium) content.
  - 3.3. The opinion of the WLMAC was that the Whitcomb well could have a potential problem as its salt content measured higher than the other wells in the system.
  - 3.4. The WLMAC recommends to the AWD that the Whitcomb well continue to be tested for sodium chloride on a monthly basis through June/July 2011. The committee believes that monthly testing of this well may be able to provide the District with seasonal trending data or may demonstrate that seasonality is not an issue with this well. Furthermore, the committee feels that the cost of monthly

testing of a SINGLE well will not be cost prohibitive. Using the monthly estimated testing costs for salt (\$8K) of all of the District's wells and performing a "back of the envelope" extrapolation to the monthly testing of a single well, yields a 12-month estimate of \$330 to \$350.

- 3.5. Chuck Olmstead will draft a letter to the AWD Commissioners explaining the WLMAC's conclusion and recommendation for the continued testing of the Whitcomb well on a monthly basis for salt content.
4. Maynard Zone 2 Protection Request: The Town of Maynard, MA has requested the Town of Acton to provide protection for the portion of its zone 2 that resides in Acton. Barry Rosen was asked by the WLMAC to obtain more information about this request. Specifically, he was asked if he could minimally speak with Matt Mostoller (AWD Environmental Compliance Manager) to see if Matt could provide any new information on this request. Barry was able to speak with Matt. He also coincidentally had a brief discussion with Doug Halley, Acton Health Director concerning this topic. Barry summarized what he learned as follows:
  - 4.1. Maynard requested that Acton provide protection to a sizeable portion of a Maynard zone 2 that lies within Acton.
  - 4.2. This request did not involve the AWD. However, the previous Environmental Compliance Manager (Jane Ceraso) did tell the Town that it was worthwhile doing and recommended that it be done.
  - 4.3. In Acton, the request goes to the Planning Department as the town has utilized zoning changes to provide groundwater protection in the past. This process does require such a change to be approved at Town Meeting.
  - 4.4. There was some communication between the Planning Director (Roland Bartl) and the Town Manager concerning this request. [Copies were distributed during the meeting and have been filed with minutes at AWD HQ.]
  - 4.5. The Health Department was involved in this process to answer the question of whether the Town should take an action. As the well in question is a bedrock well, there was a question of whether the Town of Acton should afford it the same protection as a sand and gravel well. Doug Halley indicated that one can not be certain whether any of the water entering the Maynard well actually comes from the portion of their zone 2 residing in Acton. Since Acton has utilized zoning changes for groundwater protection which requires Town Meeting approval, Doug felt he would need more information to persuade Town Meeting that this was the right thing to do or not to do.
  - 4.6. Mr. Halley recommended that an outside engineering consultant should be called-in to help the town answer that question. He solicited a proposal for such a study from O'Reilly, Talbot & Okun Associates (a/k/a OTO). Their cost was \$4,000. He proposed that Maynard should pay their fee for the study. [A copy of the OTO proposal to the Health Department was also distributed and has been filed with in the AWD HQ.]
  - 4.7. As far as Barry could tell, Acton has not taken any further action on this and has not proposed to protect the Maynard zone 2 portion residing in Acton.

- 4.8. Barry asked if the membership would prefer to continue the discussion on this topic at the next WLMAC meeting after everyone has had a chance to study the document package that was distributed during the meeting. All present decided that this was a good idea and further discussion on this topic was stopped and is being “held-over” until the next WLMAC meeting.

**New Business:**

1. Commissioner’s Meetings DRI List: The WLMAC began the process of members signing-up to be the DRI (designated responsible individual) to provide minimum attendance coverage of each of the AWD Commissioner’s meetings for the rest of 2010. While the list still requires input from two of the WLMAC members, almost all of the AWD meetings are now covered by at least one WLMAC member. [A copy of the list as it was completed during the meeting is on file at the AWD.]
2. Date of Next WLMAC Meeting: The date/time of the next WLMAC meeting was confirmed by the committee to be held on Thursday, August 19, 2010 beginning at 8:00 P.M. at the AWD HQ.
3. Suggested Topics for WLMAC Discussions: John Cipar suggested to the WLMAC two areas for discussion/investigation that the WLMAC may want to pursue:
  - 3.1. Nitrates in AWD well water may be an area for future discussion. There has already been considerable investigation into high nitrate levels at the School Street well field.
    - 3.1.1. Some topics within this subject area could include: How nitrates affect groundwater and the possible effects of elevated levels of nitrates in the groundwater.
    - 3.1.2. The initial sense of the group was that while this topic is of interest, it may not be an appropriate topic for the WLMAC to research at this time.
    - 3.1.3. The committee felt that at this time, this is more of an operational issue rather than policy. Chris and Matt are aware of the issues and are dealing with the problem.
  - 3.2. AWD Capacity: John introduced another topic of interest – the system capacity to supply water to the rate payers. The WLMAC membership felt that this was a “hot” issue at this time which has now drawn the interest of many people in the AWD service area particularly because of the recent ban on outdoor irrigation. Barry felt that this could be a very broad topic. John agreed and indicated that the committee would need to “...scope it out some more,” before we decided whether and how to investigate it and report on it. The main points of the WLMAC’s discussion on this subject were:
    - 3.2.1. We do not know how much the day-to-day managers are concerned with this area and what their area(s) of concern are.
    - 3.2.2. Capacity could involve possible alliances which could be either short term or long term.

- 3.2.3. How could the AWD meet the need for water? [Consider current and future rate payers.]
- 3.2.4. What should be the scope of our investigation? How broad or narrow do we need to make it to be effective? The committee needs to determine this before proceeding any further.
- 3.2.5. Chuck suggested and the committee totally agreed that this is an extension of our last report to the commissioners. In that report, we did some projections of water need based upon some build-out models and actual water use. We could now be looking at “if and how” this may have changed.
- 3.2.6. It was suggested that this topic be added to the next WLMAC agenda in order for the committee to decide on the area(s) of AWD capacity that it feels should be addressed and can be addressed by the WLMAC.

**Adjournment:**

On a motion to adjourn the meeting made by Chuck Olmstead which was seconded by John Cipar and passed unanimously, the WLMAC meeting was adjourned at 10:00 P.M. EDT.

*Note: All documents that were utilized during this meeting are on file at the AWD HQ. The large format map that was utilized during this meeting is available in the office of the AWD Environmental Compliance Manager.*