

WLMAC MEETING NOTES OF AUGUST 19, 2010

Present: Chuck Olmstead, Paul Malchodi, John Cipar*, Greta Eckhardt*, Barry Rosen (* indicates late arrival)

Guest: Matt Mostoller [Mr. Mostoller accepted the invitation of the WLMAC to assist us in some of our discussions.]

Chairperson: Barry Rosen

Call To Order: 8:15 PM EDT on 19 August 2010 at AWD HQ.

Old Business:

1. Accept Minutes: A motion was made by Chuck Olmstead and seconded by Paul Malchodi to accept the minutes of 15 July 2010 as written. The motion was passed by a vote of 2 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention.
2. Change Order of Meeting: Barry asked the Committee if we could change the order of the agenda by dealing with any items involving Mr. Mostoller first so that Mr. Mostoller could have the option of leaving the meeting after those discussions. There were no objections to doing so. Matt commented that he would stay for the entire meeting or as long as he could.
3. Salt Content in Wells: This was a follow-up discussion that had been tabled at the previous meeting so that Mr. Mostoller could explain his response to Chuck's letter. The WLMAC had asked that this well be sampled monthly or bi-monthly if monthly was not possible. The goal was to obtain a year of trending data in an effort to learn whether the salt content in the well was seasonally related or constant.
 - 3.1. Matt explained that the Whitcomb well does not run very much. In fact, it generally does not run at all during the winter and it has just been "turned-off" which should reduce the yellowish water being experienced in West Acton. The AWD had been receiving a number of yellow water phone calls. Matt felt that the well is not run often enough to obtain reliable salt content data. In fact, the more it is run, the more likely it is for the water coloration (from organic solids) to increase.
 - 3.2. In response to a question on relocating the well, Matt explained that it could be a costly venture to move it to a spot that might not exhibit the organic color. It's current location is grandfathered so any movement might result in going through a new well permitting process.
 - 3.3. Chuck Olmstead then stated with the infrequent use of the well, it was not possible to obtain any sort of seasonal trending information from analyzing water samples from this well. Chuck suggested to the WLMAC that this topic be tabled until some time in the future when we find a need to further analyze this well or any of the other District wells for salt content trending.
 - 3.4. John Cipar felt that based upon the latest analysis and his readings from the EPA, we do not seem to have a problem with salinity at this time. "There is no immediate problem."

- 3.5. Greta Eckhardt asked Matt if salt [in the water] can interact with other components to form acids which may then react and cause problems such as the water coloration. She remarked that she is no chemist but seems to remember this from her coursework. Matt replied that he believed that this may be the case but that he should be able to determine the answer for Greta.
- 3.6. Matt explained that the salt content in that well could also be higher because the well had been dormant for a period of time. He also believed that it is likely that since that well (Whitcomb) is not close to the roadway and the AWD does not utilize salt on its driveways or parking areas, the source of the salt may come from the nearby Boxboro condominium. It is a probable user of salt for its road and parking area treatment in the winter.
- 3.7. Since Boxboro was mentioned, Paul took a moment to explain the Boxboro “history” as he knew it back to the time when Boxboro asked Acton to supply water to some of its addresses.
- 3.8. *A motion to table further discussion and take no further action on this topic was made by Chuck Olmstead and seconded by Greta Eckhardt. The motion passed unanimously.*
4. Maynard Request for Zone 2 Protection by the Town of Acton: This discussion was continued from the previous WLMAC meeting to allow the committee members time to review the materials provided at the last meeting and to request that Matthew Mostoller (Environmental Compliance Manager of the AWD) attend this session and provide the committee with insight and comments relevant to this topic.
 - 4.1. The membership reviewed the large map showing the Town of Acton zone 2 protection areas, the AWD/DEP zone 2 protection areas and the Maynard/DEP defined zone 2 protection area, part of which resides within the Town of Acton.
 - 4.2. Barry provided a brief review of the history of this issue to get the discussion back up-to-speed. [See minutes of 15 July 2010.]
 - 4.3. In answer to a question from Barry, Matt explained that the Maynard zone 2 for the bedrock well in question was defined through a process between Maynard and the DEP. It is usually a “back and forth” iteration with both parties agreeing to the newly defined zone 2 protection area.
 - 4.4. Mr. Mostoller responded to a question regarding whether the AWD felt any need to support the Maynard request by explaining that Jane Ceraso (AWD) had exchanged memos with Roland Bartl (Town Planning Office) stating that it was her opinion that Acton should rezone the Maynard zone 2 within Acton to provide protection to it. It was Matt’s belief that the Maynard request came from their Public Works Director to Acton’s Planning Director (staff to staff).
 - 4.5. Matt also stated that Westford, Concord and Sudbury have provided protection for Acton zone 2’s that reside within their towns. In the case of Sudbury, it was done immediately after the request was made.
 - 4.6. Barry read from the WLMAC minutes of 17 June 2010 to review the first three reasons that the WLMAC felt the Maynard request should be honored:

- 4.6.1. Fosters good relationships with other towns.
- 4.6.2. Encourages reciprocation by other towns.
- 4.6.3. Fosters a spirit of cooperation.
- 4.6.4. While there were two additional “technical” reasons listed by the Committee, the membership felt that the first three were reason enough to grant the request.
- 4.7. John Cipar summed things up by stating that one town protecting the water supply zone 2 of another town was “...just good stewardship” and needed to be done.
- 4.8. In answer to a question, Barry read/reviewed some of the email communications (previously distributed) between Roland Bartl and Jane Ceraso to the Committee. It seemed clear to us that there seemed to be different opinions and different agendas. A key concern of the Planning Manager that surfaced a number of times was that of why a town should have to pay to protect the water resources of another town which the State said should be done—the unfunded mandate idea.
- 4.9. The WLMAC discussed this issue further and concluded that based upon the merits of 4.6 (above), the Maynard request should be supported. Further, the Committee felt that to gain the visibility that was needed, we should recommend to the Commissioners that there be communication between the two boards rather than between staff members of the Town and the AWD.
- 4.10. *Paul Malchodi introduced a motion requesting that the WLMAC recommend that the commissioners of the AWD write a letter to the Acton Town Board of Selectman asking them to take action to support the granting of the adjacent Town of Maynard’s request for a zone 2 water protection area within the Town of Acton in order to foster improved long term cooperation between towns. The motion was seconded by Chuck Olmstead. The motion passed unanimously.*
- 4.11. The committee then requested that a future agenda should include time for a review and discussion of the Town of Acton Overlay Protection Bylaws that protect our water supply. It was also suggested that the latest SWAP report be obtained and discussed by the committee. [Barry will add this to a future agenda.]
5. Paul asked Matt if he could explain (now or later) the protocols utilized to maintain district water pressure. [It was a curiosity question.]
6. DRI listing for AWD Commissioner’s Meetings: The WLMAC members are committed to have at least one WLMAC member be present at each of the AWD Commissioner’s meetings. The DRI will report back to the rest of the WLMAC at the next WLMAC meeting.
 - 6.1. Most of the meetings have volunteers for one or more members to be the DRI for that meeting date.

- 6.2. Barry will email the list out to the entire WLMAC membership so that any individuals who can still volunteer to attend “uncovered” meetings have the opportunity to sign-up.

New Business:

7. System Capacity: The WLMAC decided at the last meeting to examine AWD system capacity as an extension of our last written report to the Commissioners on possible District expansion. The committee wants to set the scope/bounds of any additional work.
 - 7.1. Paul believes that there is a communication problem. People hear mixed messages. E.g. “We have plenty of water.” “Wait, we have to impose water usage restrictions.” They are hearing that we are running out of water. This may not be a capacity issue.
 - 7.2. Greta: Maybe there is not enough water for expansion.
 - 7.3. Paul did not think that this was the case because the 40-B’s would reach their capacity in Acton and the high density expansion would then be limited.
 - 7.4. Barry recalled some of the rough projections that were made in our last report. For some of the possible business expansion modeling we utilized the actual water usage numbers of the Nagog Park commercial area which happens to be about 1/3 the size of the Town’s “technical district” zoned area. We also looked at the MAPC and MISER population projections for Acton. There was an aggressive, middle ground and conservative projection. We used the middle growth projection.
 - 7.5. John asked Matt: How much water could we pump at rates of X, Y and Z and what would be the consequence (if any) at each of these rates?
 - 7.6. Greta: It appears that the periodic incremental increase in yearly withdrawal rates allowed by DEP essentially serve as an experiment. As long as no detrimental effects are observed after a given increase, a further increase may be allowed in a future year. Given the complexity of groundwater flow, this may be the only safe way to assess the long-term capacity of the local aquifer.
 - 7.7. Paul felt that we had a great deal to talk about on just this topic and asked that it be placed on the next meeting’s agenda.
8. Next WLMAC Meeting: The next meeting of the WLMAC will be held on Thursday, September 16, 2010 beginning at 8:00 PM in the AWD HQ building.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Chuck Olmstead and seconded by John Cipar. The motion was passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM.

Note: Documents that were utilized at this meeting are on file at the AWD HQ. The map that was used is available in the office of the AWD Environmental Compliance Manager.