

COMPREHENSIVE WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

May 5, 2005
Town Hall Meeting Room
Main Street, Chatham, Massachusetts - 4:00 pm

PRESENT:

CAC: Fred Jensen, Bob DePatie, Herb Bernard, Burt Segall, Didi Lovett, Phil Christophe, and Scott Tappan

CAC members not present: Kevin Mikita, John Payson, David MacAdam, Chuck Pollard, John Randall

TAG: Bob Duncanson, Bill Redfield

Others: William Schweizer, Chuck Bartlett

Item 1: Discussion of article in Town Meeting warrant requesting \$350,000 to fund preliminary design of additional wastewater treatment facilities.

Fred Jensen asked Bob Duncanson to outline the warrant article. Bob Duncanson explained that the warrant article seeks \$350,000 to begin design work to expand the existing treatment facility.

There was discussion including:

- Earlier discussion of this item with the CAC would have been appropriate (note, this was reported on at the April 21st meeting).
- The appendix of the Town Warrant discusses payment methodologies. Burt Segall expressed concern about funding mechanisms and equity when various solutions will be used. Bob Duncanson noted that the final mix of sewerage vs. independent systems has not yet been determined, nor has the financial side of the puzzle been solved. The Town Manager and financial staff are beginning to work on conceptual financial plans that include those mentioned in the warrant.
- It is not unusual to pay for water-related clean-up efforts through the general tax rate. Improvement in water quality will benefit everyone.
- The Board of Selectmen will make the ultimate policy decisions regarding funding equity for wastewater improvements. Public hearings will be held and feedback sought from the CAC on this issue. Fred Jensen asked if the CAC could do a preliminary review of proposals prior to presentation to the Board of Selectmen. Bob Duncanson will discuss with this Town Manager.
- Phil Christophe asked what would trigger the expenditure of the \$350,000 requested in this article. Bob Duncanson said that DEP will need to approve our using a phased approach to the problems being addressed through the wastewater management plan. If DEP agrees, we can proceed, but no time frame is known. However, with passage of the article, funding would be available without delay. The request will be made to DEP following approval of the article at Town Meeting.

Bob DePatie made the following motion:

That the CAC vote to endorse the Board of Selectmen's request in Article 9 that the Town appropriate \$350,000 for the purpose of funding the design of the Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion, provided, however, that no funds will be expended unless and until the recommendation of the complete study to expand the existing facility is approved by the State Department of Environmental Protection.

The motion was seconded by Herb Bernard.

Discussion centered on concern about the phrase "of the complete study" which some felt implied that the completed wastewater treatment plan would need to be completed in order to expand these funds. As this was not Bob DePatie's intent, and as it was understood that DEP would need to approve any work done by the Town, the amendment was changed to exclude that phrase.

The amended motion passed unanimously.

Item 2: Discussion of the value used for the septic tank portion of the nitrogen loading to the aquifer from 35 mg/l to 26.25 mg/l.

Bob Duncanson reported that he spoke with Brian Dudley yesterday and no determination has yet been made about this change. He added that the conventional figure to use is 35 mg/l but a lower figure (26.25 mg/l) was used in the Pomponeset study. The question to be answered is which starting number was used – a 25% reduction from what number?

Burt Segall asked about concentrations in the treatment plan influent. Bob Duncanson reported that the year-round average is 40 mg/l with a higher concentration (46) in the summer and a lower concentration (36) in January and February.

Item 3: Discussion of proposed changes to the Town of Chatham Sewer Use Rules and Regulations to be voted on at Town Meeting.

Fred Jensen explained that the intent of the change is to adhere to the "growth neutral" policy. There was discussion about how contiguous properties would be treated. Bob Duncanson noted that the regulations provide interim nitrogen-loading requirements which can be changed in the future and which also include a variance provision to deal with hardship cases.

Fred Jensen made the following motion:

That the CAC vote to endorse the request by the Town's Water and Sewer Commissioners that the Town vote to amend the "Town of Chatham Rules and Regulations of the Sewer Department," adopted under Article 33 of the May 11, 2004 Annual Town Meeting, as set forth in Article 21 of the Warrant for Chatham's Annual town Meeting on May 9, 2005.

The motion was seconded by Burt Segall.

The motion passed unanimously.

Item 4: Discussion of the Draft Barnstable County Cape Cod Wastewater Collaborative.

A presentation was made to the Board of Selectmen regarding the proposed Cape Cod Wastewater Collaborative. There was discussion regarding the advantages and disadvantages of creating a collaborative with other Cape Cod towns. Bill Redfield explained that he did not favor the creation of a collaborative, stating that everything that the collaborative offers can be done by the towns at will without creating another level of government. He noted the value of allowing free enterprise provide the services needed and cited the need to work directly with legislators in seeking broader funding avenues.

Fred Jensen noted that Chatham is ahead of other towns in solving wastewater problems and may not see many benefit from the collaborative.

Concern was expressed about funding for the collaborative and the creation of another governmental agency.

Bob Duncanson said that the County has set aside \$100,000 for the creation of the collaborative. He also stated that the Collaborative would not be a regulatory body, but noted that all major wastewater treatment projects would involve county review as they are considered Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). He added that Chatham already shares with other towns in the county procurement system.

The intent of the Collaborative is to provide focus on wastewater issues on a regional basis.

Scott Tappan asked about the cost to the town. Bob Duncanson reported that there would be no cost and that the Board of Selectmen would appoint someone as a representative to the collaborative. He also stated that it may be possible to utilize some of the Collaborative's services without being a member. The role and function of the organization is still being defined. The County Assembly will ultimately need to vote on the creation of the collaborative.

Bill Schweizer stated that there is an advantage to belonging to the Collaborative as all towns are interconnected with regard to water and sewer issues.

There was brief mention of Chatham's favorable position re. bonding which will be a primary source of funding for wastewater projects.

Bob Duncanson informed the CAC that a blue-ribbon committee is reviewing comments received from many towns. He suggested that specific concerns or questions should be addressed via letter to this committee. A new draft of the proposed ordinance will be available for review; this will be discussed at a future meeting.

Item 5: Update on plans for improving the water quality of Lovers Lake and Stillwater pond.

Bob Duncanson reported that the Town will hire consultants this summer to follow-up on the recommendations of the Nov. 2003 Lake and Pond Assessment. An action plan to meet water quality goals will then be developed. A report is anticipated by the end of this year, with permits in place for work needed by the summer of 2006. Funding for the assessment work (\$40,000) is already in place in the Capital Improvements Budget.

Item 6: Proposed Next Meeting Date: June 16, 2005

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Recorder: Marie Williams