

COMPREHENSIVE WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

September 18, 2008 – 4:00 pm
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Offices, Chatham, Massachusetts

PRESENT:

CAC: Phil Christophe, Fred Jensen, John Randall, Burt Segall, John Payson, Didi Lovett, David MacAdam, and John Raye

CAC members not present: Chuck Pollard, and Scott Tappan

TAG: Bob Duncanson, Bill Redfield

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm.
Members introduced themselves to the television audience.

Item 1: Minutes

Minutes of the July 31, 2008 meeting were approved without corrections.

Item 2: Status of Revisions of the Draft Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (DCWMP)

Bob Duncanson reported that Sterns & Wheeler is working on responses to comments on the Draft CWMP/EIR. One issue involves the impact of increased WWTF recharge on the Taylor's Pond/Mill Creek system and DEP has asked for more information. Because of this the Town has requested that additional water quality model scenarios be run and Brian Howes of S Mast will be doing this to determine if the water-quality targets will be met in that area. Results of the model re-runs are expected by the end of October.

Once the revisions are done, the document will be reviewed by the CAC. Any additional modifications will be made and the final document will be submitted to MEPA & CCC.

Bob Duncanson also noted that DEP has asked for more information about cooperation with Harwich. Because work in Harwich has been delayed by the recent delay of the Estuaries Project, it is difficult to provide specific information about how the two towns will collaborate. The TAG is having discussions with DEP about this issue.

Phil Christophe asked about funding for the additional modeling. Bob Duncanson explained that there is still funding available from the Town's contract with U. Mass Dartmouth.

John Payson asked if there was a timetable for finalizing the plan. Bob Duncanson stated that it depends on the speed/timing of the modeling re-runs. It is hoped that the final document will be completed before the end of the year.

Fred Jensen asked about Public Hearings which are likely to be held in early 2009.

Item 3: Updates on other project activities

Muddy Creek:

Bob Duncanson reported that the Pleasant Bay Alliance has received a grant from the Cape Cod Wastewater Collaborative to determine if the conversion of the upper portion of Muddy Creek to fresh water is a viable project. A number of agencies are involved assessing the impacts of converting brackish water to fresh water. The report is expected in mid October. There will be a public information meeting regarding the findings, probably in November.

David MacAdam asked if the public meeting will involve both Chatham and Harwich. Bob Duncanson indicated that both towns would be involved and the public information meeting will likely be sponsored by the Pleasant Bay Alliance.

Fred Jensen asked if this information will be included in the CWWMP. Bob Duncanson said that the timing of the final report will determine whether it is included. The report could be added as an additional appendix.

Lovers Lake and Still Water Pond:

Bob Duncanson reported that the diagnostic feasibility study has been completed and treatment with alum is recommended. The Chatham Conservation Commission must approve this action but did not have a quorum for the previously scheduled hearing. The hearing has been re-scheduled to Oct. 29th at 4 pm. The permitting process has begun and a Environmental Notification Form been filed with MEPA. Both Stillwater Pond and Lovers Lake are "Great Ponds" and are within the Pleasant Bay ACEC. The Town is requesting a waiver from the mandatory environmental impact report requirement for projects within ACECs. In 2004, the State adopted a "generic" environmental impact report for lake and pond management which can be used in lieu of a formal study. This situation meets those criteria so it is hoped that the generic report can be used.

Bob Duncanson also informed the committee that the Town's 319 Grant request to the State was not approved, so there is some question about the adequacy of funding approved at the Town Meeting. \$180,000 is available but it has been estimated that alum treatment for both ponds will cost approximately \$220,000. Until vendor bids are received we will not know if the available funding is adequate.

Because of timing issues (alum treatment is not done in the spring or summer) it is likely that this treatment will be done in fall 2009.

It was noted that similar treatment done to Long Pond in Harwich last year has met with positive results.

Status of Revised TMDL's:

Bob Duncanson reported that the revised report has been reviewed and will be submitted by DEP to EPA after October 1.

Cape Cod Wastewater Collaborative:

State Revolving Fund: Bob Duncanson summarized recent legislative activity which has made it possible for Towns working on “nutrient-related issues” to borrow from the State Revolving Fund (SRF) at a 0% interest rate and also allows “checkerboarding” without the requirement of special legislation.

Phil Christophe asked about the extent of funding available from the SRF. Bob Duncanson indicated that only 35% of the fund can be loaned at 0% in any given year.

DEP will need to develop standards by which to evaluate applications for funding.

There was discussion of “checkerboarding.” Bob Duncanson indicated that traditional “checkerboarding” does not really apply to Chatham as the Town’s treatment plant will have adequate capacity to serve all properties. The most cost-effective way to introduce sewer use is to serve all contiguous properties.

David MacAdam asked if it was appropriate to consider not sewerage all areas, i.e., less populated areas, to save money. Bob Duncanson indicated that Phase I of the plan does not include construction of a collection system in the outer fringe, but added that sewerage of all properties will be considered as a way to finalize any pollution problems and to address the “fairness” issue for all property owners. Other reasons to provide sewer services to all properties include high groundwater and poor soil conditions in certain areas.

John Payson asked about the possibility of individual property owners who have IA systems not hooking up to the sewer. Bob Duncanson indicated that all property owners in Chatham have been identified as needing to hook up to the sewer.

Educational Efforts: A new citizen survey has been conducted by the Collaborative which has produced discouraging results as to the public awareness and understanding of wastewater issues. There will be additional educational efforts in the future.

Funding Sources: The Collaborative continues to look for additional funding sources, especially at the Federal level. Chatham has taken advantage of the Department of Agriculture’s Rural Utilities program, obtaining a \$2.5 million grant and loan for the design of the upgraded treatment plant.

Plans for Public Information re. the CWMP: Bob Duncanson indicated that additional brochures/flyers are planned. The “betterment discussion” will likely be held after the first of the year.

There was brief discussion about financing the plan. Bob Duncanson said that MEPA is not interested in how the project will be financed but only wants to be assured of the Town's commitment to the project. A request for \$30 M to \$50 M will likely be made at next year's Town Meeting to begin design, permitting, bidding and hiring of contractors for the treatment plant expansion.

Item 4: Other Business

Correspondence: Fred Jensen read a letter from Robert Moss of Countryside Drive expressing serious doubts about the Town being able to afford the complete sewer system.

Orleans Blue Pages: Fred Jensen informed the committee of the recent publication of the Orleans Blue Pages, produced by the Orleans Pond Coalition. He indicated that the Friends of Chatham Waterways is beginning efforts to publish a similar book for Chatham. The book is designed to educate the public about water quality issues. Bob Duncanson will provide copies to committee members.

Resignation: Fred Jensen reported that Bob DePatie has submitted a letter of resignation from the Wastewater CAC. There was general agreement that he should be commended for his excellent and dedicated service to the committee for many years.

Item 5: Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Notes by
Marie Williams