

COMPREHENSIVE WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT  
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

October 25, 2007 – 4:00 pm  
Town Hall Annex Meeting Room  
261 George Ryder Road, West Chatham, Massachusetts

**PRESENT:**

CAC: Phil Christophe, Fred Jensen, Didi Lovett, David MacAdam, Chuck Pollard, John Raye,  
Burt Segall, Scott Tappan and John Payson

CAC members not present: Bob DePatie, John Randall

TAG: Bob Duncanson, Bill Redfield; Nate Weeks and Jeff Gregg of Stearns & Wheler

Others Present: Chuck Bartlett, Bill Schweizer

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm.

**Item 1: Minutes**

Minutes of the September 20, 2007 meeting were approved with one change: the word “on” to be added to line 2, item 2, page 1.

Review of the minutes prompted several questions:

Fred Jensen asked Bob Duncanson to review the meaning of “checkerboarding.” Bob Duncanson provided a brief overview of this method of allocating sewer hookups. Under current Mass. law a property with access to public sewer has a right to connect. “Checkerboarding”, which currently requires a special act of the legislature (a change to state law has been proposed as part of wastewater legislation proposed by the Cape Cod Water Protection Collaborative and Sen. Rob O’Leary), allows a community to deny connections. It has been used in Provincetown where the treatment system did not have sufficient capacity to serve all potential customers, so a system was created whereby properties with the ability to install a Title 5 compliant septic system were prevented from connecting to the municipal sewer. It was also noted that under Mass. law the Board of Health has the ability to order sewer connections.

Fred Jensen asked if John Payson had written a letter to the newspaper as he had proposed to do. He stated that he has not yet written the letter.

**Item 2: Discussion by CAC members of Stearns & Wheler’s responses to the written comments submitted by CAC members regarding the Preliminary Draft of the CWMP.**

Fred Jensen suggested that each member address those questions and responses for which he/she was responsible.

(For purposes of brevity, the questions/concerns expressed by each CAC member will be noted in summary form with the *response and related discussion shown in italics*; page #'s refer to the Oct. 17, 2007 Draft Response to CAC Comments Memorandum)

Phil Christophe: Page 10

- Concerns were expressed about the closing of Cockle Cove Creek in recent years.  
*This had been explained earlier as due to bacterial/wildlife contamination and not related to nitrogen issues.*
- There was a desire to link the study to population figures.  
*Nate Weeks and Jeff Gregg explained that it is too difficult to use population figures due to seasonal fluctuations. Thus the study (and generally all similar scientific work regarding sewer use) is based on water consumption which is a figure that is obtainable through water use records. They explained the refinements to the build-out estimates based on sub-dividable property and zoning information about under-developed properties. Average annual water consumption was used to calculate estimated wastewater generation which is 90% of water consumption. They agreed that additional narrative describing this process could be added to the report.*
- The significance of sewershed/watershed numbers was questioned.  
*There is no significance to the numbers; they are randomly assigned.*

Didi Lovett: page 36

- Methods of providing information to the public were a concern.  
*Bob Duncanson suggested that the CAC devote a meeting to developing public information activities (workshops, brochures, Ch 18, website, etc). There will be an informational brochure which will be mailed to all town residents. It is planned to tie the distribution of this brochure to the submittal of the Draft CWMP to MEPA.*

David MacAdam: page 26

David MacAdam expressed a desire to postpone his comments as he has been away and not had sufficient time to review the Stearns & Wheler responses.

- He did, however, comment on the theme of his comments which was that the document should be designed to convince the public of the value of the plan. He felt that the plan had not been organized in such a way as to lead the reader through the steps to the ultimate conclusion that this is the way to go.  
*Nate Weeks noted that we are now in the final stages of the decision-making process and the report was organized to present all of the material reviewed in reaching the proposed decision. He added that it has been a ten-year process and is a complicated story to tell. As the process unfolds, the CAC plays an important role in validating the thinking put forth by the engineers and consultants. For example, it was easy to screen out use of composting toilets and some of the cluster systems which have been the subject of research done by George Heufelder as they were ineffective and/or cumbersome.*  
*Bob Duncanson noted that the report is not designed for citizen consumption but rather is intended for DEP, MEPA, CCC and EPA review. The purpose of the report is to*

*convince the regulatory agencies that this is a plan that will work and that can be implemented. The report must put forth reasonable timelines and financial plans.*

Chuck Pollard: Page 9

- Information about the review process should be included in the plan.

*There was discussion about the approval process and whether there should be Town Meeting approval for the entire plan. Nate Weeks indicated that in some towns there is a Town Meeting vote on the entire plan; in others the approval is based on town approval of funding steps for the plan. Fred Jensen expressed the view that the public needs to be aware of the scope and entirety of the plan before being asked to support individual phases.*

*Bill Schweizer stated that this is a technical project and the average citizen doesn't want to read the reports. Therefore, the CAC's role is to convince the town that this plan is needed and that it will be successful in improving water quality in the town's estuaries. The financial expenditures will be justified by the resulting improvement in water quality. Someone (town staff) will make a presentation about the project in its entirety and provide information about the various phases and steps of the project.*

*Bill Redfield noted that much of this information has already been disseminated through televised meetings of the CAC and the Board of Selectmen. There is considerable public awareness of the program already.*

*Bob Duncanson asked again that the CAC consider how they would like to proceed with regard to educating the public. Options noted: flyers, workshops, website information, and televised meetings.*

*There was discussion of the CAC supporting/championing the CWMP. Bob Duncanson explained that the TAG will act as spokespeople with the CAC supporting/endorsing the CWMP.*

*Nate Weeks added that the Board of Selectmen is the elected body which will make final decisions regarding the project but the CAC has been asked by them to study and advise, so the CAC will be asked for opinions. The TAG will prepare articles for Town Meeting; the CAC will be asked for recommendations.*

*Fred Jensen expressed continued discomfort with the process which does not require Town Meeting approval of the entire plan. David MacAdam suggested that the CAC could recommend to the Board of Selectmen that the town vote on the entire plan at Town Meeting.*

*Bill Redfield noted that additional information will be communicated to the public as the Town Manager begins to make presentations regarding betterments, tax ramifications, etc.*

*Fred Jensen suggested that the public hearings that will be part of the review process should be televised.*

Burt Segall: page 23

- A re-write of the Executive Summary was suggested to make the report more easily understandable. A lucid description of the entire project is needed, including description of the physical plant, costs, and justifications for the project. Information about health benefits and environmental benefits should be included.

*Fred Jensen suggested that additional information about the “no action” alternative should be included. Taking no action could result in costs exceeding \$300 million in lost property values if water quality continues to deteriorate.*

*Burt Segall added that more narrative should be provided with the tables and information about costs to individual property owners should be included.*

*Bob Duncanson noted that he had included information on recent connection costs in the meeting package.*

*John Raye suggested that a separate “citizen summary” might be the best route to solve this problem. The TAG and Stearns & Wheler are focused on technical information as that is what is required to satisfy the regulatory agencies. A separate summary of a less technical nature would be helpful.*

*Burt Segall stated that the summary needs to include technical information but also justify the project and do so in an understandable way.*

*Fred Jensen asked about the “Value Engineering Review” of the preliminary design of the proposed wastewater treatment facility upgrade/expansion. Bob Duncanson indicated that the review had been completed, a recommendations report received and that town staff and S&W were reviewing the recommendations.*

*There was additional discussion regarding whether the citizens will actually read the report or only the Executive Summary. Opinions varied.*

*Burt Segall reiterated that the Executive Summary is not well organized and contains information not needed there.*

*David MacAdam stated that the Volume 1 of the report will likely be ready by many citizens, so the Executive Summary should “make the case” for the project.*

*Bob Duncanson suggested a separate document to provide information to the public because the CWMP needs to be designed to meet the requirements of the regulatory agencies. There was general consensus that a stand-alone public education/information document would be of value.*

Scott Tappan: Page 11

- Fertilizer use and its impact on nitrogen loading should be not be minimized in the report. *Scott Tappan recommended that the Town take the lead in reducing fertilizing and irrigating of Town property. He also suggested the possibility of including landscaping suggestions with building permits and licensing landscapers.*

*It was noted that these were policy issues which would need to be put forth by the Board of Selectmen. Jeff Gregg questioned whether it would be appropriate to include this type of recommendation in the report.*

*Bob Duncanson stated that these issues should be the topic of future discussion. He also noted that the Pleasant Bay Alliance received a grant from the Cape Cod Water Protection Collaborative to study the fertilizer issue and its management.*

Because of the late hour, it was decided to continue the review at a special meeting to be held on Wednesday, November 7 at 2 pm. Bob Duncanson agreed to find a location for the meeting.

John Payson asked about the DEP peer review which was supposed to have been done earlier. Bob Duncanson stated that this has not yet been completed.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Marie Williams  
Recorder