



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
March 28, 2024
7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Present: Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, Matt Mostoller, and Joe Robb

Chairperson: Joe Robb

Clerk: Ron Parenti

Others in Attendance: Alissa Nicol (Select Board Liaison), David Boccuti, Kim Kastens, and Terra Friedrichs

1. **Opening**

WRAC chair Joe Robb opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

2. **Regular Business**

- A. Public Remarks/Comments – Kim Kastens Informed the Committee that she had written an article for the Acton Exchange about the Water District’s Annual Meeting. She also noted that the Acton Exchange would be switching to a new and improved presentation format in its next issue. Terra Friedrichs asked if the Committee was aware of the battery storage for the solar array at the Gates School and if the WRAC had concerns about the possibility that the fire suppression system for these batteries might include a retardant that contained PFAS materials. Matt Mostoller responded that the Water District has commented on this question, and has recommended that the School District follow the same protocols used by the Water District in the construction of its solar arrays. These recommendations have also been sent to the Board of Health. With regard to the upcoming Town Meeting at which zoning bylaw changes will be discussed, Friedrichs asked if the Committee has an opinion on the need for a comprehensive impact study prior to a consideration of changes to the zoning bylaw. Alissa Nicol advised the Committee that a discussion of this question might be in violation of the Open Meeting Bylaw, as the topic was not included in the posted agenda for the meeting. Friedrichs then urged the WRAC to hold another meeting prior to Town Meeting to formulate an opinion on the need for an impact study. Joe Robb reminded the meeting visitors that the WRAC has chosen to focus its efforts on stormwater management issues, as directed in a prior meeting with the Select Board. Parenti noted that the Committee could vote to change direction and immediately undertake an investigation of the impacts of the proposed zoning changes, but the most that could be accomplished prior to Town Meeting would be to generate a detailed list of WRAC’s concerns.
- B. Review Minutes from 29 February 2024 – A motion to approve the minutes for 29 February 2024 was made by Barry Rosen and seconded by Matt Mostoller. The four members in attendance, Matt Mostoller, Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, and Joe Robb, voted unanimously to approve the minutes.



C. Report on Concord's FinCom Stormwater Discussions – The Concord FinCom held two meetings during the week of 18 March to discuss a Town Meeting article that will ask voters to approve a stormwater enterprise fund. These meetings were attended by Dave Boccuti, Mike Geis, and Ron Parenti, and a summary of those meetings was provided by Boccuti and Parenti. At the first of these meetings, which was held on 19 March, the FinCom discussed changes to the wording of the article following meetings held to obtain public comments, and it was noted that Concord would need to adopt enabling legislation in order to establish an enterprise fund. A more detailed slide presentation was given to the FinCom on 21 March, in which estimates of the annual stormwater infrastructure costs and homeowner fees were given. Annual maintenance costs are estimated to be in the \$1.5M to \$2M range, and residential fees would likely range between \$150 and \$250 annually. Concord is likely to base its fee structure on the area covered by structures and of impervious pavement of a property, and owners with permeable driveways will need to apply for fee abatement. Kim Kastens noted that Concord is currently spending about \$200k for stormwater infrastructure maintenance, so the proposed enterprise fund would allow maintenance spending to be increased by an order of magnitude. In response to a question from Joe Robb about the need for Acton to perform a stormwater infrastructure study, Barry Rosen noted that the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) has already performed such studies for several towns in the region and has developed a cost-estimate spreadsheet that could be used by Town staff. Robb suggested that the Committee contact the Town's Engineer, QinRui Pang, to discuss Acton's current approach to stormwater control, and determine if cost estimates for a more advanced management architecture have been initiated.

D. Suggested Outline for WRAC Stormwater Management Study – At the previous WRAC meeting Committee members agreed to submit suggestions for a stormwater management study outline. Parenti initiated the discussion by presenting a draft outline, which was subsequently reviewed and modified by the other members. The final outline included the following elements.

1. Collect and analyze stormwater management literature
2. Develop an understanding of Acton's current stormwater practices
3. Address the question of the need for a stormwater enterprise fund
4. Develop a Governance Structure
5. Develop recommendations for a stormwater fee structure
6. Present recommendations to Select Board
7. Assist in the development of a Town Meeting article

There was general agreement that the Committee needs to understand the enabling legislation that needs to be adopted to create an enterprise fund, and investigate governance approaches that have been adopted by other towns. Joe Robb discussed the results of a 2020 study performed by Tighe & Bond for the City of Concord, New Hampshire, which addresses many of the questions raised at this meeting. Matt Mostoller recommend that the Committee also review the 2023 Woodard & Curran Asset Management Plan, which includes detailed information about Acton's stormwater system and current expenses.



E. Any Other New Business – None

3. Adjournment

Committee members agreed to hold their next meeting on 2 May 2024 at 7pm. The Committee hopes to meet with QinRui Pang at a future meeting, and the primary agenda topic for the 2 May meeting will be the development of a list of questions regarding Acton's current stormwater maintenance procedures and costs, as well as work that Town staff may have performed to estimate future costs. The meeting with Pang was tentatively scheduled for 16 May. Parenti agreed to contact Andrea Becerra to discuss a date to meet with Pang. At the conclusion of this discussion, a motion to adjourn was made by Barry Rosen and seconded by Matt Mostoller. The four members in attendance, Matt Mostoller, Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, and Joe Robb, all voted to approve the motion to adjourn at 8:45 pm.

Meeting Chat File

19:39:07 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

<https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/46837/2024-Annual-Town-Meeting-Warrant---V2?bidId=>

19:39:23 From Kim Kastens to Host and Panelists:

See article 16