



WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

May 23, 2024

7:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Present: Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, Matt Mostoller, Mike Geis, Joe Robb, and Dave Boccuti

Chairperson: Joe Robb

Clerk: Ron Parenti

Others in Attendance: QinRui Pang (Town Engineer), Corey York (Director of Public Works), Ellie Anderson (Town Finance Solutions Analyst), Jack Troidl (Woodard & Curran), David Moering (Woodard & Curran), and Kim Kastens

1. Opening

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

2. Regular Business

A. Stormwater Discussion with QinRui Pang – In order to best utilize the time of the attendees who had been invited to discuss stormwater issues, Committee members agreed to take this agenda item out of order.

Corey York initiated the discussion with an overview of current stormwater infrastructure operation and maintenance practices. He noted that the Engineering Department has been using grant money in recent years to fund a more proactive approach to stormwater management. Some of that money was used to fund Woodard & Curran to develop an Asset Management Plan, which was released in 2023. David Moering then provided an overview of that management plan. The following report topics were highlighted.

- The company's inspection of Town's culverts, detention basins, and storm drains to identify priority assets. W&C subsequently developed recommendations for a spending plan to maintain those assets.
- A climate change analysis that predicts future trends in temperature and rainfall. As part of this investigation, a dam hazard analysis was also performed.
- An explanation of the asset risk analysis developed by W&C, which is defined as the product of the likelihood of asset failure and the consequences of a failure.
- The results of the risk analysis, which identified 10 priority culverts and 10 priority detention basins, and 10 priority storm drain pipes that require replacement or rehabilitation.
- Three capital improvement scenarios that are intended to assist the Town in its response to the stormwater infrastructure risk analysis. The first scenario is a status quo plan in which a one high priority is performed every year; the second scenario addresses all of the high priority culverts, detention basins, and drains over a period of a few years; and the third scenario would add proactive maintenance work to the



stormwater system. Spending time periods of 5 and 10 years to complete the required work were considered in this study.

- Recommended funding sources for future projects. These include property taxes, special assessment districts, and the creation of a stormwater utility. Fees could be assessed using a tiered structure or based on impervious area on a property. It was noted that stormwater utilities are widely used in the US to fund infrastructure construction and maintenance. The annual fee that would be assessed to Acton homeowners to fund a stormwater utility is expected to be in the range of \$50 to \$150.

Following Moering's presentation, Ellie Anderson informed the Committee that she supports the creation of a stormwater utility. Corey York expressed a similar opinion.

Questions were subsequently raised by Committee members about the current status of the mapping Town's stormwater network. QinRui replied that most of the network has been mapped, but that this is still a work in progress.

Mike Geis asked a question about the temperature and rainfall projection slides presented by Woodard & Curran, which included large simulated noise fluctuations to illustrate the uncertainty in the future estimates. He argued that this type of projection was not particularly useful. QinRui responded that the DEP is currently developing methods to predict rainfall trends, and is also developing updated stormwater management requirements.

Joe Robb asked Jack Troidl about the status of the hydrogeological modeling for Acton. Troidl noted that there currently is no town-wide model for Acton, but that estimates for new projects are based on localized models. Robb then asked York if the Town had performed a study of the need for a stormwater utility. York replied that this type of study has not been performed, but agreed that such a study would be highly beneficial.

Dave Boccuti questioned Jack Troidl about fee structures used in towns that have a stormwater utility. Troidl provided examples of several types of billing approaches used by towns in New England.

Most of the contributors to this discussion indicated that they would support the formation of a stormwater utility that would be funded by fees imposed on homeowners and business owners; however, Barry Rosen cautioned that there would be resistance to the imposition of an additional fee given the results of the recent override vote. Matt Mostoller stated that the WRAC should take a lead role in developing presentations for the Select Board and Town Meeting to educate Acton residents of the need for improvements to the stormwater infrastructure. He also predicted that the process of creating a stormwater utility in Acton would likely take several years.

A final question was asked by Joe Robb that related to the cost spreadsheet prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Robb indicated that WRAC would be interested in working with the Town's engineering department to complete this spreadsheet, and that the WRAC would assist in promoting the formation of a stormwater utility through public outreach.



- B. Public Remarks/Comments – None
- C. Review Minutes from 2 May 2024 – A motion to approve the minutes for 2 May 2024 was made by Mike Geis and seconded by Barry Rosen. Matt Mostoller, Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, Mike Geis, and Joe Robb voted to approve the minutes.
- D. Any Other New Business – None

3. **Adjournment**

Committee members agreed to hold their next meeting on 2 July 2024 at 7pm to discuss the actions that should be taken by the Committee to assist the Town's Engineering Department in its effort to develop a new stormwater management program. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Barry Rosen and seconded by Matt Mostoller. This motion was approved by Matt Mostoller, Barry Rosen, Ron Parenti, Mike Geis, and Joe Robb at 8:45 pm.

Meeting Chat File

19:35:57 From David Moering to Host and panelists:

Thank you everyone for your time! I have to jump off, but Jack Troidl can share the presentation again if anyone needs to see it.