

Groton Sewer Commission  
Regular Meeting of the  
Board of Sewer Commissioners  
Tuesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Virtual Meeting using Zoom

**Minutes**

Present are Chairman Jim Gmeiner, Vice Chairman Michael Bouchard, Clerk Thomas Orcutt, Business Manager Lauren Crory, Town Manager Mark Haddad, Bob Rafferty and Tyler Schmidt from Environmental Partners.

Mr. Gmeiner called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. He stated that we are being recorded and everyone introduced themselves.

**Consider Lost Lake Sewer Allotment**

Mr. Gmeiner spoke regarding the letter Mr. Schmidt wrote regarding the Lost Lake Sewer allocation. It summarized the details regarding extending the Groton Water system to the high school. The town would need to apply for an ITA for an insignificance determination by giving up the Lost Lake Sewer allocation. The entire town of Groton needs to be under a certain threshold per day so will need to give up the Lost Lake allocation (through amendment) to free up the flow for the Groton system extension to the High School. The current flow is at 40,500 gpd and the high school extension should not create more than 28,500 gpd which is a total of 69,000 and would be below the 73,000 threshold.

Mr. Gmeiner asked if the Lost Lake allocation can be used for anything other than Lost Lake Sewer and Mr. Schmidt said it would require a full application to change the use. Mr. Rafferty said they changed the regulations in 2018 and it used to be 1 million gpd and now its 73,000 per day. Since the rules are much more stringent now, Mr. Rafferty does not see the allocation being used for anything else in the Four Corners area. Mr. Haddad asked if this is the only way to get the insignificance determination and Mr. Schmidt said this is a complicated issue and could be possibly be resolved another way, but after speaking with the DCR this is the fastest way.

Mr. Haddad went to the Dunstable Selectboard last night to discuss the details of the Groton extension. Mr. Schmidt added that the irrigation is exempt from Interbasin Transfer because it stays in Groton. Mr. Haddad said that Groton would offset the increased cost to Dunstable so they would remain whole. They did not vote to sign the IMA yet for legal services to figure out how they pay back the

town. They are having further discussion. He is hoping to schedule another meeting with them. Mr. Haddad doesn't think we will ever sewer Lost Lake. Mr. Gmeiner said our actual flows are a lot less than our allocation in the Four Corners area. Mr. Haddad said he does not see any issue giving it up, regardless, of which connection is made.

Mr. Bouchard asked if its possible to reserve some of the Lost Lake Allocation and give up the rest. Mr. Schmidt said that Four Corners is using about 12,000 gpd and 40,500 gpd is reserved for Four Corners. Mr. Schmidt said there is an extra 5,000 gallons they could try to adding to Four Corners but he was given direction that when dealing with the DCR we do not want to deal with trades in order to move things more quickly.

Mr. Gmeiner asked what will happen if we give it up and then we don't end up going with the Groton Solution, could we still apply for more usage later on. Mr. Schmidt said you would be able to apply for more later on. An allowance would be available up to the 73,000 gpd cap. Mr. Schmidt asked if they can guarantee the new volume will be approved after the forfeiture and they cannot.

Mr. Orcutt asked about the allocation for Four Corners and Mr. Rafferty said that Shaw's, Dunkins old lot, the Ixtapa lot, Package Store, and New England Power Company are the original allocation. Mr. Haddad said the remaining corner would need to be voted in. Mr. Orcutt said if a 40B comes in they may be required to sewer it. Mr. Orcutt said there are undeveloped properties on the Shaw's corner but still thinks there will be enough. Mr. Gmeiner asked if the fifth corner could legally force us to bring sewer to a 40B. He believes this was addressed and they cannot force it.

Mr. Orcutt confirmed you would need permission from the DCR to include the fifth corner in the district. Mr. Schmidt said the request for the 28,500 gpd includes connecting everyone in the Kemp St/Groton St Dunstable loop. Mr. Haddad asked Mr. Schmidt to send him the Tighe & Bond map of the plume.

**Mr. Orcutt made a motion to approve the letter written by the Town Manager to be sent to the DCR, Mr. Gmeiner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.**

### **Discuss regulations regarding change of use**

Mr. Gmeiner is comfortable with the regulations for new construction on raw land. Mr. Gmeiner is unsure if someone is building new spaces on existing property, the regulations may not be clear. Mr. Bouchard confirmed he is saying the options would be to charge by building space or by building flow. Mr. Gmeiner agreed. Mr. Bouchard asked what about two separate building spaces or two combined building spaces and how connection fees affect the support of the system. Mr. Gmeiner believes the effect on the system is based more on the flows rather than the building spaces. For example, if a three-bedroom home on a three-bedroom septic was made into three one-bedroom apartments, they would not need to change the septic system. Mr. Gmeiner suggested looking at other town's regulations regarding this. Mr. Bouchard said we will need to differentiate between in law apartments and new buildings.

Mr. Orcutt said 11 Lowell Rd needs to come in front of the Board for change of use. He has already negotiated a water connection fee but he needs to come in front of sewer. Mr. Orcutt thinks it is a lower use now. Mrs. Livezey will get him on the next agenda in September.

### **Review sewer application**

Mr. Bouchard will send out his revision.

### **Pepperell IMA**

Mr. Gmeiner has not reviewed the IMA comments yet. Mr. Orcutt said they accepted about 90% of our changes. He also stated that our flows are more than 25% so our invoices are going to up.

### **Indoor Grinder Pumps**

Mr. Orcutt does not think the Sewer Department should allow any indoor grinder pumps. Mr. Gmeiner thought this was the rule and didn't see anything in the regulations. Mr. Bouchard said that even though it is unwise, he is not sure why we should force them to have an outdoor pump. Mr. Orcutt added that the outdoor pump is much easier to service. Mr. Gmeiner said the regulation should say something along the lines of Groton sewer connections following Pepperell regulations except for this, where grinder pumps should be external only and could be waived in certain circumstances. Mr. Orcutt thinks the special circumstances need to come in front of the Board. Mr. Gmeiner said we need to post a hearing before revising any regulations.

### **201 Boston Road – Update**

No updates.

### **500 Main Street – Groton Farms**

No updates.

### **Review I&I**

Mr. Gmeiner said a lot of the I/I in the video looked very clean. Mr. Bouchard asked if that was inflow and Mr. Gmeiner said it may have been.

### **Review Nod Road Pump Station and Flow evaluation**

Mr. Gmeiner has not reviewed yet. Mr. Bouchard did read it and it appears that we could install a permanent bypass. Mr. Bouchard said it sounds useful. Mr. Gmeiner said it sounds like a good idea to send it to Pepperell so that Pepperell can look at this.

### **Expansion Limits**

No updates.

### **FY22 & FY23 Budget**

Mrs. Crory reviewed the free cash estimates of \$633,000 for Center Sewer and \$404,000 for Four Corners Sewer. Mr. Bouchard asked how regulation changes may affect connection fee revenue and it could bring down this income. Mrs. Crory suggested budgeting new connection fees versus change of use connection fees if the regulations are changed.

### **Other Business: Bills, Minutes, etc.**

Next Meeting is August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023.

Mr. Gmeiner made a motion to adjourn at 3:13pm, Mr. Bouchard seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Crory