

Lost Lake Watershed Advisory Committee (LLWAC)

Town of Groton, Groton, MA 01450 978-448-1111

Meeting Minutes - November 6, 2014

At Town Hall

(All) Present: Mark Deuger, Susan Horowitz BOH), Tom Orcutt (Groton Water Dept.), John Petropoulos (BOS), Arthur Prest (Finance Comm.), Michael Rosa

Recorder: Stephen Legge

Call to Order: Chairman Prest called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.

Prest asked that future meetings begin at 7:00 PM. All agreed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Rosa moved to accept draft minutes for the October 23rd, 2014, meeting. Horowitz seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously, with Rosa abstaining.

Horowitz moved to accept draft minutes for the October 16th, 2014 meeting. Rosa seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously, with Rosa abstaining.

Town Meeting Article

Town Meeting approved the LLWAC article for \$15,000 outside consulting funding last week. However, it has also been learned that the \$17,000 approved by an earlier Town Meeting is no longer available to the committee because it had been approved for the predecessor Lost Lake Sewer Advisory Committee, according to town counsel. That money would have to be re-purposed by Spring (2015) Town meeting in order to be available for the present committee's spending.

Discussion on How to Proceed Forward with Planning

Deuger said we need to find more people in town to join the committee who have technical expertise and can contribute.

Horowitz commented she likes Art's "Situational Analysis" (Rev. 3, passed out at the last meeting). She recommends giving this to companies/consultants who might be interested in joining the discussion.

Prest stated that efforts are underway to have Jane Pierce (Mass DEP?), come in to talk with us. She was involved in writing the "Massachusetts Non-Point Source Pollution Manual".

Prest also said that a Town of Groton planning study done in 1982 by Dufresne-Henry suggests that weed growth in the lake is driven by phosphate levels in the lake. This study is a rather large one (many pages). One conclusion was that if phosphates are below 30 ppb there are no problems with weed growth, and if levels exceed 100 ppb one can be assured of problems. More recently published studies indicate that total phosphate levels below 20 ppb should not cause major weed problems but any level above 30 ppb would cause weed and algae problems.

Some work done in the past to study fecal coliform (e.g., E. coli) levels around the lake(s) shoreline was discussed. Mention of usage in the Dufresne-Henry of a "septic snooper", some sort of testing approach which was not identified in the Dufresne-Henry report. There are issues with the availability of this information (whose information is it?), and there was mention of possible Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requirements to obtain the data held by the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health (NABOH). Test results by the NABOH done in 2014 reportedly found no evidence of E. coli on Sargisson Beach or Baby Beach. Test results done in 2013 found E. coli only at Sargisson Beach. It was stated that there are no septic systems located near Sargisson Beach and that the test results could have been the result of animal feces having been washed into the lake after a major thunder storm.

Petropoulos commented he is wondering why the committee is not pursuing more aggressively the idea of issuing a Request for Information to a broad audience of possible technical consultants. Petropoulos offered to approach the Town Manager to get an RFI draft together for the committee to look at. He stated that this would be no extra work for the committee and could possibly result in the offering of much valuable information to the committee by outsiders. It was ascertained that other on-going ideas and plans could continue ahead without being held up by the process of drafting, accepting and issuing the proposed RFI.

It was concluded that the committee should adopt an informal goal to get the RFI out in two weeks time (by 11/20), assess interested reactions and meet with those willing to talk by the end of February 2015. At that point decisions can be made about what to do next.

Petropoulos moved that the committee allow Horowitz to file a FOIA request for all E. coli testing data of interest. Rosa seconded. Motion approved on a 5-1 vote, Orcutt voting against.

Deuger questioned why the 1982 Dufresne-Henry study is relevant to our work right now.

Other Topics:

Alex Woodle was invited to join the committee; he declined, however. Petropoulos offered to put out an advertisement for interest in membership on the talkaboutGroton website.

Orcutt asked if there might be some good candidates on the faculties of Groton School and Lawrence Academy. He also mentioned that a number of student groups have gone out to the lakes in town and collected data on one subject or another over the years. There may be something of interest for us.

Prest is concerned about the Massachusetts's DEP recent action to significantly upgrade the water quality rating for Martin's Pond Brook to a 2 (had been a 5 earlier). He questions the appropriateness of the finding. This would also adversely affect our ability to obtain 319 grant funding to study problems related to the brook's water quality.

Prest also questioned how Harvard's Bare Hill Pond can have a state approved TMDL for phosphates (TMDL means Total Maximum Daily Load) when there is no state-wide approved number. Deuger stated that the reason is that each waterway has its own TMDL, specific to its circumstances. Deuger said that he would see what he can find out about the DEP's action regarding Martin's Pond Brook and see if we can get more information regarding TMDL for phosphate in Harvard's Bare Hill Pond.

Adjournment:

Horowitz moved to adjourn, Prest seconded. Unanimous agreement. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

**** The next meeting will be in two weeks on Thursday, November 20th ****