

Lost Lake Watershed Advisory Committee (LLWAC)

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

Meeting Minutes - August 20, 2015

At Legion Hall

Present: Mark Deuger, Susan Horowitz (BOH), John Petropoulos (BOS), Arthur Prest (Finance Comm.), Alex Woodle

Not present: Tom Orcutt (Groton Water Dept.), Michael Rosa

Recorder: Stephen Legge

Visitors: Timothy Givern (sp?), Nitsch Engineering; Owen Hutchins, Normandeau Associates; Pio Lombardo, Lombardo Associates; Steve Roy, ESS Group, Inc.

Call to Order: Chairman Prest called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to offer an opportunity to those companies interested in bidding the issued Request for Proposals a chance to ask questions of the committee.

The committee members introduced themselves, and the four visitors stated their names and companies.

Prest said work would be awarded for 2016, and added discussion would be welcome on how bidding companies can help the committee in its quest to win grant money from the state.

Mr. Lombardo: What budget is being set for this work? Prest answered \$32,000 is available now and a majority of funding is expected from state grants. Petropoulos added we may go back to the town for more money if necessary and justified.

Mr. Roy: Regarding the use of local volunteers on the project, how many would there be, and what days and hours might they be available? Prest answered the Groton Lakes Association has 200 members and some number of them are likely willing to help, primarily nights and weekends; some number of test kits are also available for use.

Petropoulos commented we have in town two private schools, Groton School and Lawrence Academy, with whom the town has close and cooperative relationships. The local public high school may also have students possibly interested in participating.

Committee members, in turn, proceeded to offer their personal views on what important aspects for the project requested should be considered.

Prest: the goal of this project is to find out what is going wrong in our watershed; where are excess nutrients/substances coming from. There are a good number of possible sources in the watershed that may be contributing to the problem, and some may be significant. There is also a significant amount of erosion around the lake. To what extent is that contributing to problems

with water quality? Another interesting observation made recently is that a farmer has measured phosphates in his soil when he has applied none for many years.

Woodle: He is impressed with a project in the local area where storm water management structures were installed around a pond with significant positive results. He also cautioned potential bidders to consider carefully how different the two lakes in the watershed (Knops Pond and Lost Lake) are and how their characteristics may affect outcomes. Finally, he asked if sediments on the bottoms of the lakes are important, noting that Lost Lake has an average depth of only six feet.

Deuger: He wants to see a functional watershed management plan which measures, monitors and effectively manages problems, whatever they may be. He also commented, we don't know much about ground water conditions.

Petropoulos: He wants to see a lack of presumption about what problems there may be. Use good science and methods to see if there really is a problem. Once a problem(s) has been identified, how do we most effectively address the problem(s)? An important part of the work for the consultant is to work with us to tell the community that we have a convincing case, and not just a big pile of data.

Horowitz: She is the longest standing member of the committee and its predecessors - she wants to see public health protected. She would like a limnologist involved in the work. The watershed is the focus, not just the lakes themselves.

Prest: Excess E.coli has been an issue recently. Sargisson Beach, a town swimming area, was closed last week for this reason. Prest has personally observed lumps of blue-green algae and a great deal of filamentous algae in parts of the lakes.

Mr. Hutchins: Regarding the 1989 Baystate Study, what do we not like about them? Woodle said they were actually very good and comprehensive studies. The problem is now they are "old". Since that time many homes on the lakes have been winterized and are inhabited year-round. There have also been some major changes in agricultural management practices. It is believed by some that a significant amount of phosphates is coming into the lakes via Martins Pond Brook and an unnamed stream. So, we may be facing a new watershed situation.

Petropoulos added, our problem was the town did not want to invest \$13 million on a sewer system, whose need was based on out-of-date data from a 1989 study.

Deuger and Hutchins commented we also need to take seasonality into account with our measurements.

Hutchins said, there seems to be two concerns, lakes water quality and public health, which may be interpreted to mean effects on private wells. Horowitz responded, the Nashoba Board of Health feels private wells are generally good. Their representatives have not been a big proponent of the new sewer.

Deuger clarified, only the lakes is not the main focus, rather the watershed is the main focus and we need to understand what is happening to ground water.

Prest claims 99% of residents on the lakes are willing to have their wells tested. Deuger said, be careful! Do not assume that a limited sample of water well quality will give us an unbiased measure of ground water quality.

Prest commented that typically Lost Lake has lowered its levels by 30 inches every fall. However, this has had a history of failure to produce any worthwhile results.

Mr. Lombardo: Proposals are due September 10th – when will the award be made? Prest said funding from the state is targeted for January 2016. The Committee will attempt to identify its favored consultant in the fall months and make an award in late January 2016, after the funding picture is clear. Prest confirmed proposals should be submitted with grant funding support information (??). Companies' success attaining grant funds should be addressed.

Prest asked if there were any further questions. There were no more. He thanked attendees and dismissed them from the meeting at 7:59 PM.

There was some discussion of the next meeting date.

Adjournment:

Petropoulos moved the meeting be adjourned. Horowitz seconded. The meeting was adjourned with unanimous consent at 8:11 PM.

**** The next meeting is expected to be scheduled sometime in mid to late September, after RFP responses have been received. ****