

Lost Lake Watershed Advisory Committee (LLWAC)

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

Meeting Minutes - October 27, 2015

At Town Hall

Present: Mark Deuger, Susan Horowitz (BOH), Tom Orcutt (Groton Water Dept.), Arthur Prest (Finance Comm.), Alex Woodle

Not present: John Petropoulos (BOS), Michael Rosa

Recorder: Stephen Legge

Visitors: Henry Amistadi (resident of Lost Lake area), Savas Danos – on speaker phone (formerly GM of Littleton Electric Light and Water), Bob Pine (environmental consultant & resident of Groton)

Call to Order: Chairman Prest called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

Prest explained that both Bob Pine and Sava Danos would offer their review and evaluation of the two RFP responses submitted by Lombardo Associates and ESS at this meeting. Mr. Danos will participate in the meeting by telephone conference due to his being out of town.

Savas Danos' Review of Two RFP Responses to the Committee:

Mr. Danos is a limnologist with a Masters Degree from the University of Wisconsin Madison. He submitted a three page letter summarizing his review. Mr. Danos explained he has had extensive experience with both firms being evaluated tonight. The following verbal presentation mirrored the letter.

Lombardo has focused on phosphates as the primary nutrient of interest in the analysis of the Lost Lake watershed. Mr. Danos is concerned that nitrates may also be a significant substance of interest as well.

Woodle asked, don't wells at varying depths give a better picture of what is going on with ground water? Are seepage tests good and worth doing?

Mr. Danos said while seepage tests are not as permanent or specific as to data output when compared to wells, they are far less expensive and will give more data useful to us. This is because a greater number of test points will help indicate whether or not there is something present and significant to test further with a well.

Horowitz: How do we evaluate differences in price between the two proposals? Mr. Danos responded, ask each responder to indicate how many hours are dedicated to each task and subtask, and to also break it down by level of professional. This will reveal more about how much work will actually go into the various tasks and give a more informative comparison.

Horowitz: Because Lombardo is an engineer, are we missing out on something if we walk away from them? Mr. Danos replied, Our RFP does not ask for solutions to problems, but rather focuses on identification and quantification of problems (technical evaluation). Choose the responder who most closely aligns its proposal to what we want, at this point in time.

Visitor Mr. Amistadi: He is concerned that Lombardo is not looking at sediments on the bottom of Lost Lake. Visitor Mr. Pine said Lombardo does address sediment analysis.

Bob Pine's Review of Two RFP Responses to the Committee:

Mr. Pine disagrees with Mr. Danos' comments about the relative importance of nitrate testing. He feels it is a well established fact that phosphate levels are what count for lake quality. He explained that phosphates coming from septic systems tend to attenuate and travel less far and less fast through ground water due to the filtering effect of soil which binds them up. So, bad septic systems may still not be a problem for the lake if they are not too close to the lake. This can be different, however, if a lot of phosphates come out of a system and there is a constant flow over time. Then the soil reaches a limit of how much it can filter.

Mr. Pine said a big piece of missing data is the direction of flow for ground water in various locations? If it is northward, septic effluents traveling through ground water may bypass Lost Lake and instead flow into Cow Pond Brook which is downstream of the lake and at a lower elevation. Neither of the two proposals seems to address this issue.

Mr. Pine said he had very little or no direct experience with either proposing firm. Mr. Pine's conclusion is that the Lombardo team members are the better scientists, but both firms are well qualified. He does not feel we would be wrong to hire either one.

Discussion of the Proposals and Reviews by Misters Pine and Danos:

Prest passed out a spreadsheet summarizing prices broken out by task for all four proposals received by the Committee.

Deuger: We are getting too mired down in details. Our job now is to choose a consultant, and negotiate the details later.

Visitor Mr. Amistadi: He has compared all the proposals item by item, and concludes that ESS offers to do more of each type of sampling than the others.

Mr. Danos reiterated Mr. Pine's earlier point that where phosphate loads are heavy and continuous, the soil eventually loses its capacity to bind and attenuate.

At 8:21 Mr. Danos left the meeting (phone link terminated).

Chairman Prest asked Mr. Amistadi to do more work on the quoted prices evaluation by breaking out costs for individual tasks. Prest will assist.

Mr. Prest commented there are about 9.1 miles of shoreline on Lost Lake, and 150 houses along that shoreline. Mr. Prest asked how can we possibly get a statistically valid result of ground water issues with only three test wells as proposed by Lombardo? Mr. Pine said that he guesses (but does not know) that a certain number of houses, and perhaps many, have their effluent flowing in ground water away from Lost Lake and not toward it.

Approval of Minutes:

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of October 14, 2015 be approved. The minutes were approved as amended, unanimously.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned with unanimous consent at 8:41 PM.

**** There are at the present time, no further meetings scheduled ****