

West Cornwall Water/Septic Study Group  
April 10, 2018 2017 at 5PM  
at The Hughes Library in West Cornwall

Members Present: David Dolinsky (DD), Richard Griggs (RG), Ian Ingersoll (II), Libby Mitchell (LM), Priscilla Pavel (PP), Todd Piker (TP) and Joanne Wojtusiak (JW); {LM and DD joined at 5:18PM} Also present Ex Officio Members: Gordon Ridgway (GR) and Richard Bramley (RB). Also attending was Stephen McDonnell (SM) from WMC Consulting Engineers and townspeople.

TP called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

TP read the Minutes from the January meeting in order to remind all of previous activity/decisions and to “level set” for all present since we did not meet in February or March.

A motion to accept the Minutes as presented and read was made by RG and seconded by PP; the vote to approve was unanimous.

TP reported that he, GR and SM had met with DEEP regulators, Roland Denny and Ann Straut, and that they had agreed to come out to Cornwall for a meeting so that the Committee and the community can better understand the role of and concerns of these regulators.

TP went on to address the primary focus for the meeting which was Siting and turned the discussion over to SM. SM outlined several sites that may be options for the installation of a system that would have a surface water discharge into the Housatonic River (such a system would have to be NPDES permitted which is a federally regulated permit which is administered in Connecticut at the State level and must be renewed regularly and so can be costly and labor intensive for the Town to maintain over the long term) or a discharge of renovated water into an area (such as the system at Salisbury School) that would require substantially less acreage than the area required for a sub-surface discharge system. The latter system, according to SM, typically requires a 20 acre dilution area and an overall site of 30 acres or so.

SM also said that soil conditions are a paramount concern, not just acreage. Permeability is an issue in terms of whether there is enough or too much; further studies must be conducted to determine the answer to permeability questions. SM said the field north of town that is owned by Northeast Utilities/Eversource is a “tight, but doable” site; it is partially in a floodplain. He estimated that using this site would add approximately \$2,000,000 to the estimated cost because it is about 3,000 feet north of town. SM noted that any decision to move the site (from The Bend location) is going to add to the cost. The town owned gravel bank site (about 32 acres) could be of concern because, although the soil looks “good” according to SM, the site is up-hill from the wells of many residents and it is at least .6 mile away and would require extensive pumping.

JW asked if Mill Brook (which passes through the gravel bank site) wasn't an already polluted body of water; GR said it was not. The so-called Hart property that was referenced by its owner at a recent meeting was discounted after GR said the property itself was unstable; it is also up-hill from some residential wells.

A WC resident noted that community opposition to siting at The Bend was not limited to sound/noise and aesthetic concerns, but was grounded in their belief that this project does not belong in a residential area.

TP noted that the Committee really needs to have specific cost estimates for the various options; SM said he will do that; he also noted that it is unlikely that a small town like Cornwall could absorb the total cost of whatever option we choose and that getting grants will be crucial. When we get closer to making decisions about funding, SM said it may be helpful to be under a Consent Order in order to increase funding from grant sources. GR noted that when the time comes, this project will undoubtedly be the largest bonding issue ever undertaken by the Town. In light of this, GR said it is crucial to understand how many WC residents are interested in participating in this waste water treatment system.

JW asked the Committee to consider an invitation to Mark Lancor, PE of DyMar to any meeting where we are trying to increase public awareness.

Lancor was a consultant to DEEP, directly assisting with the drafting of the regulations within "General Permit to Discharge from Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems Serving Existing Facilities." SM added that he has worked with Mark Lancor and would look forward to working with him again. Lancor can be contacted at: [www.dymarinc.com](http://www.dymarinc.com)

SM said he wanted to clarify the Committee's mis-use of the phrase "septic system"; he said that "septic system" refers to a specific type of leaching field. He said more appropriate language would be "waste water treatment system."

Judy Herkimer thanked the Committee for planning a meeting that will put regulators front and center in this discussion going forward. She expressed her hope that the Committee would urge DEEP to present some of their visual presentations to increase public understanding of the issues. She also urged all involved to seek out other property options that might support a sub-surface solution that could be a more environmentally sensitive solution at a lower long term cost.

TP will contact DEEP regulators as well as TAHD to invite them to our May 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. While the meeting will be open to the public, there was a concern that if we want to encourage widespread community-wide attendance then a longer lead-time might be helpful.

Respectfully Submitted,



Joanne P. Wojtusiak  
Secretary