

West Cornwall Septic Study Group

January 7th, 2016 at 7pm

Ian Ingersoll's Shop in West Cornwall

Members Present: David Dolinsky (DD), Richard Griggs (RG), Ian Ingersoll (II), Libby Mitchell (LM), Priscilla Pavel (PP), Todd Piker (TP), Jack Preston (JP), Josh Tyson (JT) and Joanne Wojtusiak (JW)
Also present: Gordon Ridgway, Richard Bramley and Karen Bartomioli.

The meeting was called to order at 7pm by GR. He said the BOS want to ensure that WC doesn't just survive, but thrives in the future. He would like to see more activity and vibrancy in WC.

GR reminded the assembled group that they are part of a town appointed group and as such must comply with certain expectations including posting of agendas, meeting notices and minutes and not conducting business outside of such publicly posted meetings. He said we should be guided by this thought: "Do the public business in the public eye."

The charge for the Committee was read and discussed. II asked whether the reference to working with Goman & York was a given or "hard fact"; GR said it was more of a "soft fact". It was also agreed that the specific alternatives and implementation steps would be dictated by the engineers selected and not the Committee.

GR reminded the Committee that the BOS was ready to support their efforts and that septic improvements for WC is one of the 8 long range goals identified by the BOS at a recent meeting.

Todd Piker was quickly named as Chair after being nominated by II and seconded by DD. After some discussion, Libby Mitchell agreed to serve as Vice-Chair despite her already heavy obligations and Joanne Wojtusiak agreed to be Secretary. GR moved that we approve the full slate of officers and there was unanimous agreement.

TP took over the leadership of the meeting and expressed his feeling that we really need to pursue 2 studies. He characterized the first as "visionary" and the other as more of the engineering aspects. He said he feels that the visionary aspect is the key persuasive element and that that needs to be done first. RB said he thought they could be, and need to be, done concurrently.

II expressed reservations about the approach outlined by Steve Dietzko (from Milone & MacBroom) as he felt he came in with a pre-conceived notion about an in ground solution and he would like to see a more open minded approach.

DD related his extensive business experience with 3-Phase Projects. He felt comfortable moving ahead with the Milone & MacBroom Phase 1 proposal as he said it is just a paper trail. The one key part of the Proposal, in his estimation, was #4 – Area-wide Property Search which calls for compiling database information on land ownership, soils, parcel size, slope and natural resources in the area.

After some discussion and because GR stated that it will take some time to arrange for funding, the Committee decided to seek Phase 1 proposals from at least 2 other firms. RG pointed out that we might learn some things from different proposals too.

GR said he is pursuing several funding options and referred to one he discussed at the BOS meeting last night. It is a CT DOT \$2.5 million grant program called "Responsible Growth & Transit Oriented Development". Grant requests must be in by February 4th and GR said he is working with the NWCOG to prepare the grant request.

GR also said that the USDA offers low interest loans (and some grants) for septic improvements and he is looking into those too.

There was some discussion of various engineering firms and what adjoining towns have done and are doing to manage their septic issues. JT shared his knowledge of existing systems in other towns and it was suggested that we might want to contact officials in adjoining towns and learn what they are doing –what works and what they might do differently next time.

JP suggested that he would like to see the Committee look at water issues – not just septic. He said that providing water is typically cheaper than handling sewage. Karen Bartomioli reinforced his point by sharing her knowledge of what had been done in Canaan. GR also expounded on growing interest state-wide on public water supply issues.

Il said he was going around WC talking with folks and asking them whether they are interested in a public septic system. He said he was compiling an email listing so he can get information out to people. LM asked what we are finding out about how people feel. TP said he believes people think it is a complex issue and that any likely solution will be too expensive. PP said she thinks it is crucial that we find the most economical way to solve the water/septic issues in WC. DD said we need to focus on presenting options, not making final decisions.

DD reiterated his point that getting multiple bids for Phase 1 is less important than for Phases 2 and 3 where getting multiple bids will be essential.

Il said he will be following up with Salisbury officials to get more information from them about their septic system.

It was agreed that we will meeting on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 5PM. TP said his goal will be to limit the meetings to 90 minutes. The following dates were agreed to:

February 11th

March 10th

April 14th

May 12th

June 9th

July 14th

August 11th

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Wojtusiak