

West Cornwall Water/Septic Study Group
Hughes Library in West Cornwall
May 8, 2018

Members Present: David Dolinsky (DD), Richard Griggs (RG), Ian Ingersoll (II), Priscilla Pavel (PP), Todd Piker (TP) and Joanne Wojtusiak (JW); Absent: Libby Mitchell (LM). Also present Ex Officio Members: Gordon Ridgway (GR) and Richard Bramley (RB).

Invited Guests: Cathy Weber, TAHD Sanitarian, Tom Stansfield, Deputy Director of Health at TAHD and Ann A. Straut, Sanitary Engineer #3 for Municipal Waste Water at CT DEEP and Stephen McDonnell, WMC Consulting Engineers.

There was a large public turnout.

A video of the entire proceeding is available at: <https://youtu.be/Wh5ooVeEzFQ>
<cid:part1.43B1D509.54AE381C@optonline.net>

TP called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

A motion to accept the Minutes from the January 9, 2018 meeting was made by PP and seconded by II and passed unanimously.

TP welcomed all and said that the questions submitted by the public had been shared with the invited guests to give them an opportunity to research and prepare their responses. TP said he hoped to keep the focus on the WMC proposal and he urged all to strive to maintain “a positive focus.”

TP’s first question, “Have you (either TAHD or DEEP) pressured the town of Cornwall to do something about the wastewater situation in West Cornwall?” was answered by each of the three regulators with a single word response: No! No! No!

TAHD made it clear that they only react to situations that are either brought to their attention or which become obvious because they are visible or smell. They also stressed that they have never forced a homeowner out of their home over wastewater problems saying that they have always found a way to deal with problems; they did acknowledge that the solutions could be expensive. In slightly different, but similar language, the DEEP spokesperson said that the State is reactive rather than proactive on these issues and that they look to local leaders to determine what they want for their own towns and cities. They also reminded the audience that this proposal was funded through a grant intended to aid economic development in West Cornwall rather than focus on water pollution issues.

The invited guests, “our local regulators”, answered a number of specific questions that clarified the audience’s understanding about issues including:

- Innovative Alternative Systems – CT has not opted to approve most of them while Rhode Island has moved aggressively to use them.

- Use of holding tanks – they would be under State purview, but are prone to abuse and problems
- Reliability of so-called “package septic system” as proposed – historically they are very reliable
- What additional data do we need to move ahead – the data presented is sufficient for an economic development project, but they suggested that a Phase 1 and Phase 2 (shovel in the ground) study should be done on The Bend site because it is a former industrial site..
- Would they have any specific suggestions for an alternative to this proposal – they stated that as regulators they depend on the contracted engineering or consulting firms to put forth the proposals
- Is West Cornwall under any Consent Order or other injunction – the answer was no.

Those wishing to gain a more complete understanding of this nearly 90 minute meeting are urged to review the video noted at the top of these Minutes.

TP thanked the invited guests and the audience for their attendance and attention.

Next meeting set for June 19th at 5 PM at the Hughes Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:22PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Joanne Wojtusiak

Committee Secretary