

WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Location: Town Hall, DPW office

Date: December 12, 2023, 6:30 PM



Members present:

1. Bruce Arbonies, Chair
2. Emily Simmer, Secretary
3. Kristen Jamski
4. Peter Weafer
5. Joanne Wyckoff

Members absent:

1. Jacqueline Bohn

Others present:

Kevin Cafferty, Scituate DPW Director

Freya Schlegel, town resident and former WRC member

Call to order

Water System Updates

This Thursday at the planning board meeting the final WTP design will be presented and hopefully approved. Continuing to look into reasons for water discoloration at well 17 – switching up processes and may need to add a carbon vessel. In January they are scheduled to replace the carbon in the current WTP. Reservoir expansion project is moving along – there was a progress report from Tetrattech that indicates that various components are in a variety of states of completion ranging from 80-96% complete. The new water line is in place on 3A and the paving is close to being finished. Staffing-wise the distribution crew is full but they are still down 1 operator.

Desalination Subcommittee Update

The group met on 11/27 via zoom with the MIT people who are starting a company to deliver the desal technology they have developed. They have the process figured out but the issue is scaling – they are working with 1000 liters/hour (264 gallons), but would need to be significantly scaled up for municipal use. Because there are so many regulatory issues with trying to produce potable drinking water, they are focused on using this technology for non-potable uses such as irrigation, gray water, car/boat washing, etc. They are designing this to be portable. Energy use is significantly less than other desal technologies because it uses electric polarization to separate impurities vs pushing large amounts of water through a physical screen. Also uses fewer chemicals. There are still some concerns about longevity – want to be sure that the maintenance would be manageable and that the equipment would last.

Rain Barrel update

4/6 confirmed for our pickup date, 11am – 3pm. We will need many hands to help. In February we should start getting the word out – planning fliers, emails, Facebook posts, etc.

It was suggested that maybe local Boy Scouts troops would buy some extra barrels and possibly provide delivery and installation for residents who can't install themselves (a question was asked about this at September's public info session. Frank Snow from the Conservation Commission is a contact – Joanne will give Emily contact info and Emily will reach out.

Open Discussion

Joanne suggested we have a BMP document for water catchment – including ideas for drought resistant plantings, etc. She has noticed at Con Com meetings that developers are being asked to include water catchment technology and thought we could help provide additional and less traditional options. Perhaps working with the planning board to get ideas, starting with the stormwater bylaw. Cisterns would be ideal! Joanne will dig into this – maybe Karen, our town planner, could come to one of our meetings.

Liaison Updates

Kristen-EDC – their primary goal to increase visitation and thereby revenue for the town. Kristen is hoping to route some of our conservation info to businesses. EDC is working on a marketing plan to increase visitation.

Pete-SBC's Sustainability Working Group – water catchment has been mentioned and the group is in favor of using it only if it can be done outside the building. They don't seem to think they have a need for water but most buildings have some kind of landscaping that will need ongoing watering and maintenance.

Joanne – attended ZBA's last meeting because Bruce was at Planning. There was discussion about the new WTP roof.

Bruce – attended Planning instead of Joanne – some discussion on the new WTP site, construction vs permanent site work. Need approval for a 3 ft height variance needed to house equipment properly in a 2 story set up, required to reduce the overall footprint of the plant. Final approval postponed to the next meeting. Bruce asked about runoff in the construction phase v catchment because of the pitch of the slope above reservoir. Contractors need to hire their own engineer to design for "de-watering."

Approve minutes

October minutes approved unanimously.

Next meeting set for 1/16, 6:30pm at Town Hall.

Adjourn