

## **WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, March 14, 2023**

7:00 PM

Small Conference Room, Scituate Library



#### **Call to order**

##### **Members present:**

Bruce Arbonies, Chair

Jacqueline Bohn

Freya Schlegel

Emily Simmer

##### **Others present:**

Kat Kelley, Scituate Water Department

Samantha Woods, NSRWA (North & South Rivers Watershed Association)

#### **Water System Updates**

- There was a huge main break at Otis/Turner Roads that caused low pressure and brown water from sediment that got stirred up. Break was fixed in ~6 hours. There were lots of complaint calls. Water was pretty much back to normal by Monday.
- Manganese contactor project is happening with digging scheduled to begin Monday 3/20 and be completed by the end of April. Flushing will start this week. Water dept wanted to wait on flushing until manganese contactor project complete but concerned that water level could be too low by then to flush as aggressively as we want – best to flush now when water is plentiful. Contactor will be used in new plant when it is done, and we can use at current plant for additional filtration now.
- Well 17 water is looking a lot better. Tighe & Bond inspector is coming soon to help troubleshoot because while better it's still not the quality we want.
- Reservoir is a half inch above full.

#### **NSRWA Update – Samantha Woods**

- Shared a slideshow that outlined how the org has been working with the town to model/predict drought conditions and help us meet the streamflow targets that are part of our withdrawal permit. NSRWA has been working with Scituate on this for 17 years. This is especially important during fish migration which is in May as well as September-October to ensure there is ample water going over fish ladders. Sam asked Kat if she thought the SCADA recordings are still accurate – Kat said they may not be but that they are measured daily by hand and she will share the data with Sam.
- Water ban is supposed to be put in place before streamflow gets cut off but that's not always happening so we need to work on that communication with the town. The streamflow release plan was based on scientific modeling from the major drought back in the 1960s.
- When water ban goes into place we save at least 200,000 gallons per day.
- 49% reservoir and 20% rule is what we should be following, as to when we should institute the water ban. Sometimes operational issues interfere. Fish ladder needs to be open by April 1. This didn't happen last year.
- Once the fish get up to the upper reservoir they can't get back down because the ladder dries out before they can return to the lower reservoir later in the season. The reservoir enhancement would be a great help to the fish if we can get that approved and completed. We are supposed to have a larger spillway for

flood control at the dam anyway and that's where the idea to raise it came from – if we have to replace it anyway we might as well increase capacity at the same time – will help the fish as well as supply extra water for the town so we don't end up in a situation like we did in 2016 when we almost ran out of water. One of the holdups in the reservoir project is that we are waiting on the waiver for the wetland relocation.

### **Rain Barrel Event Update & Planning**

- We are in good shape for pickup day but would help to have some young, energetic volunteers as well. Sam said she'll reach out to the NSRWA volunteer network.
- We just need to focus on communications for now – making sure we get the word out through all channels.
- Jim Boudreau is mentioning our Rain Barrel promotion in his weekly Monday updates.

### **WRC Liaison Updates**

Freya – Planning Board

- Working with Becky to transition that role
- 525 Country Way subdivision was on the agenda – Becky had sent a letter mentioning that this area was in the water protection district bylaw
- There is concern from the planning board that the Pier 44 park project and all that will be involved in bringing that to fruition is too much. There are concerns about parking being inadequate to serve the needs of the facility, traffic, flooding, landscaping, etc. We are hoping if there are plantings they can be watered with rainwater captured on site.

Jackie – BOH – no update

Emily – new elementary school project – no update (no new meetings have happened but one coming up soon).

Bruce – ZBA – projects in water protection districts:

- Near Laurelwood on a road that is partly in Norwell and partly in Scituate, proposing to subdivide the land in between into 3 lots and add catchment basins.
- A 55-unit building near the N Scituate MBTA station.

Bruce also spoke with Andrew G (Select Board liaison) about the rain catchment field test project and other things in the works, including rebate forms.

### **2023 WRC Priorities**

Tabled for future discussion

### **Approve February minutes**

Approved unanimously

### **Open discussion**

Next meeting Wed, April 12 at 7pm.

### **Adjourn**