

Plymouth Carver Aquifer Advisory Committee Minutes

Meeting held: November 13, 2008, 2:30 pm; Carver Town Hall, lower level meeting room 4.

Minutes prepared by Robb Johnson

Present: Sarah Hewins (Carver rep./Committee Chair); Maureen Thomas (Kingston alternate); Ed Pacewicz (Wareham rep.); Marge Teitelbaum (Wareham alternate.); Tricia Cassady (Middleboro alternate); Robb Johnson (TNC/Committee Clerk); Oliver Durrell (Plymouth alternate); Ted DuMolin (Wareham Open Space Committee); Brian Wick (CCCGA, Plympton Planning Board); Bill Napolitano (SRPEEDD); Robin Carver (AD Makepeace); Dave Gould (Plymouth representative); Jack Hunter (Carver Town Planner); Dick Ward (Carver Selectman); Judy Ward (Carver resident); Bob Conway (Carver Conservation Commission & Carver Agriculture Commission); Casey Shetterly (TNC); Russell Lovaas (Carver Conservation Commission)

Absent: Committee Representatives from Bourne, Plympton

Meeting called to order at 2:35.

| Agenda Item | Key Discussion points | Next Steps |
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| 1. Review Minutes from Sept 11, 2008 and notes from Oct. 9 th | Notes from Oct. meeting acknowledged. Because Oct. meeting had no quorum, no minutes were taken and no formal approval of the notes was made. | |
| 2. Presentation by Jeff Osuch, Fairhaven Town Administrator, long-time rep. on MRVAAC | Jeff gave history of founding of Mattapoissett River Valley Aquifer Advisory Committee (MRVAAC). Around 1980, three towns (Mattapoissett, Fairhaven and Marion) drawing water from the Mattapoissett River and Basin, amid tensions about water supply and exporting of water. Rochester also at the table, though they don't their own water supply, because they have a big part of watershed land area. (A fifth town in the watershed, Achushnet, chose not to participate). Three of the towns wanted to develop new wells, but DEP Commissioner said four towns had to hire a consultant to study safe yield before any new withdrawals would receive DEP permits. Four towns drafted and signed an MOU in 1983 – giving each town certain representatives and an equal vote. Engineering firm Whitman and Hanson hired to do the study – each town appropriated funds for the study, and an Aquifer Advisory Committee was formed, made of three reps. from each town, and each town an equal vote regardless of size. As the group continued to meet, Bill Napolitano from SRPEED got involved to help do additional studies. Eventually, the group focused on land use as a threat to future watershed health. Special legislation filed and eventually passed to give Advisory Committee right to review all developments (even small ANRs) for comment prior to local permitting. 30 days to Comment – though often return comment is less time than that. Comments aren't binding, but are forwarded to local boards for consideration prior to their deliberations. At the beginning, planning boards were somewhat resistant, but eventually cooperated. In one case, the Advisory Committee was successful in stopping a development from being inappropriately permitted in wetlands. | None. |

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| | <p>The legislation also authorized imposition of up to \$.01 per UNIT on public water withdrawals -- fee to go to the Advisory Committee for purpose of purchasing land within the watershed (to be held by respective Towns) for open space protection. Fee started out at a ¼ cent, but is now at its max. of 1 cent. Right now is collecting about \$40K per year. Funds can also be used for studies and engineering related to the river or future water supplies.</p> <p>Eventually completed an Aquifer Action Plan, and a plan for where future water supplies should be developed. Created a water district, even though it was recognized that some towns would benefit more from than others. Allows for cooperative planning and implementation of infrastructure projects.</p> <p>Due to findings of certain contaminants (iron and manganese), the three towns recently got together and built a state of the art shared treatment plant, and all lines to connect 8 wells. Got a State SRF loan. Even Rochester voted to support – even though they don’t currently have PWS. Agreement gives them ability to buy into it in the future – at same ratio the other three towns are paying now. Ratios of capital and interest payments is set based on respective share of how much their using it Project is operating nicely now – has had ancillary benefit of making it possible to share water supplies to respond to seasonal variability and local shortages. (So Marion can limit its water bans and Fairhaven can rely less on New Bedford in times of shortage, and Mattapoissett has ability to sell excess water to other towns.) Essentially created a looping system so that resources can be fed in different directions to respond to emergencies and disruptions such as fire or pipe breakage. Has also positioned them well to collectively respond to new regs. That may come down from State/federal govt.</p> <p>Concerned about how stormwater and septic impacts on water supply (nutrients, contaminants).</p> <p>Have been somewhat under the radar – not too controversial. Average citizen probably not very aware of it.</p> <p>Possible benefits of the MOU they created: serves to create an operating structure.</p> <p>Re: cooperative land acquisition, someone will propose a project – those closer to well heads are given higher priority. Outside groups (like CBB) may bring in acquisition ideas. Amount of land in basin not equal – so land acquisition has all been in Mattapoissett and Rochester. Have acquired about 12 parcels thus far. Projects transferred to Rochester even though Rochester doesn’t pay into fund.</p> <p>The review and comment role has been one of the most valuable roles... Have created a subcommittee to handle that. Relatively low volume of cases – once every other month these days. (A much smaller land area than PCA.)</p> <p>Re: reasons for cooperation – Jeff drew analogies of inter-municipal cooperation agreements for public safety. Though originated with DEP “gun to the head”, benefits of cooperation have kept the thing going. If folks have questions, they can call Jeff at Fairhaven Town Hall @ 508-979-4023 or 508-979-4104.</p> | |
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| <p>3. New business: Request re: public meeting and response letter from Chair</p> | <p>Sarah received a letter from Linda Rinta inquiring as to whether the PCAAC was misrepresented at Wareham Town Meeting on Oct. 28th.</p> <p>Sarah has a draft response, which members took time to read before commenting. After limited discussion, motion was made to support sending the letter to Linda Rinta. Motion passed 3 – 1 – 1. Ed objected to the way this mattered was handled.</p> <p>There followed some discussion about importance of a sound process of securing formal endorsements from PCAAC before there are representations of support -- Endorsements definitely possible but should be based on a vote of the Committee.</p> | |
| <p>Comment about Jeff Osuch's presentation</p> | <p>Dick Ward commented his concern about pursuing a legislative approach, as was taken in Mattapoisett. He recalled Carver had some reluctance to get involved in the Committee in the beginning because of a legislative approach.</p> | |
| <p>4. Next meeting: December 11th, 2:30 – 4:30</p> | <p>Proposed agenda:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and approve minutes 2. TBA. | |
| | <p>Meeting adjourned at 4:20.</p> | |