

Sudbury Ponds & Waterways Committee Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2009 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., Flynn Building

Attendees: Susan Crane, Chair; Alan Bascom; David Blohm; Steve (Gabe) Gabeler; Robert Hershfield; Ted Klein; Frank Lyons; Mary Addonizio

Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes for November 16, 2009 were approved.

Signatures for the Annual Report

PWC members present at the November meeting signed their names for inclusion in the annual report.

Hop Brook

Frank Lyons stated that Marlborough was granted a seven month extension, over the original schedule, to upgrade the Marlboro Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plan, which discharges into Hop Brook. There are about four years left to the schedule.

Frank also stated that the Organization for the Assabet River (OAR) is appealing the ruling by federal and state agencies to allow Marlborough's Westerly Wastewater Treatment Plant to increase its discharge into the Assabet River. (See article below.)

By Evan Lips/Daily News staff

MetroWest Daily News

Posted Dec 04, 2009 @ 01:12 AM

Source: <http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/news/x29008403/Agencies-OK-increase-in-wastewater-plants-discharge>

MARLBOROUGH —

After state and federal agencies approved plans to allow Marlborough's Westerly Wastewater Treatment Plant to increase its discharge into the Assabet River, one environmental group is considering filing an appeal.

In exchange for increasing the discharge, the city agreed to lower the outflow of phosphorus into the river. Marlborough shares the Westerly plant with Northborough.

The Organization for the Assabet River, a group committed to the waterway's preservation, believes the ruling represents a step backward.

"We are certainly considering filing an appeal," said the group's Director Alison Field-Juma. "The river already has problems with pollution - this will only prevent restoration of river water quality by making future phosphorus load reductions more expensive and more difficult to achieve."

Phosphorus was identified in a 2004 state Department of Environmental Protection report as the key to plant life growth. During warm months, the growth of algae -

determined to be fueled by an increased phosphorus level - robs the river of oxygen, threatening the river's health.

Phosphorus is contained in dish detergents and industrial cleaners. Recent federal legislation has limited the amount of phosphorus that can be contained in detergents, said Doran Crouse, assistant commissioner of Marlborough's Department of Public Works.

"Allowing them to modify the original permit sets a bad precedent," Field-Juma said. But Crouse is confident the increase in water discharge from 2.89 million gallons per day to 4.15 million gallons will actually be beneficial.

"A computer model showed us the additional outflow will be...helping to move more water down the river," said Crouse. "You have to remember that we earned this permit modification by agreeing to lower not only phosphorus discharge, but the outflow of other metal pollutants as well."

Massachusetts DEP spokesman Joe Ferson confirmed the modification permit's details.

"In 2007, we determined that the Marlborough plant needed additional discharge since it is shared with Northborough," said Ferson, referring to an inter-municipal agreement.

"The deal is the plant is required to lower the amount of phosphorus released." Upgrades to the treatment plant are expected to cost the city roughly \$40 million.

The upgrades are designed to keep phosphorus discharges to 0.1 milligrams per-liter of effluent year-round. Currently, the plant's permit allows phosphorus discharge of 1.0 milligrams per liter from November through March and 0.1 milligrams per liter from April through Oct.

Field-Juma said she is wary of the new technology that will reportedly lower phosphorus discharge, but Crouse disagreed.

"This is state-of-the art water filtration technology," he said. "We hope to have the construction work contracted out by February and from then the process is expected to take over a year."

But Field-Juma thinks there are better ways to reduce phosphorus flow to the river. "Discharging into the river just happens to be the least expensive," she said. "The town of Acton uses a sand bed method where the phosphorus is filtered by the soil."

"The old way of doing things does not work well for our water resources."

On that point, Field-Juma and Crouse are in agreement.

"The old days of flushing a toilet and having everything disappear with no ill effects are gone," Crouse said.

Topo Maps Locations

Gabe contacted Libby Herland, Project Leader Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex. She is interested in displaying one of the "floating" watershed maps. He also contacted Adam Miller at the Nobscot Scout Reservation about possibly displaying one of the watershed maps. Adam said that he will look for a good location for it and get back to Gabe.

The map in the Goodnow Library has been repositioned and looks good.

Master Plan

The rest of the meeting was devoted to finalizing the Master plan.

Not all of the appendices are complete, and are works in progress.

We hope to have the Master Plan ready for review in January by the following committees and people: Town Planning, Open Space, Park and Recreation, Conservation, Historical District Commission, and Bill Place. We hope to have it ready for the Town Selectmen by February 2010.

Susan will create an acknowledgment page for the Master Plan noting all past members and significant contributors.

Ted's Mandlebrot

Everyone loved Ted Klein's Mandelbrot!

Next Meeting Dates

- Tuesday, 1/19/2010
- Tuesday, 2/23/2010

Meeting Adjourned at 9:00pm