

Wastewater Task Force Meeting – November 18, 2008

## **DRAFT**

Attendees:

Jeff Adams  
Alan Cathcart  
Toby Kramer  
Paul Mahoney  
Kent Nichols (Weston and Sampson)  
Elena Proakis Ellis  
Marcia Rasmussen  
Richard Reine  
Laurie Toscano (Weston and Sampson)  
Fred Watriss  
Chris Whelan  
Jeff Wieand

### **Public Comments**

There were none.

### **Review – Draft Wastewater Task Force Report**

The committee agreed that it was their intent to have a working draft copy of this report available for the Board of Selectman's meeting on December 1. Draft reports were distributed to the committee, and edits will be made based on their input prior to distribution to the BOS.

### **Briefing by Kent Nichols**

Kent noted that the Executive Summary and Outline had previously been distributed to the committee at the last meeting. The task force was in general agreement with the structure proposed. As the intention of the report is to help quantify some of the wastewater needs related to planning in the Town of Concord, it includes a great deal of planning detail. Laurie Toscano and Taintor Associates worked closely with Marcia Rasmussen's office to develop assumptions related to some of the types of development that may take place over the planning period. A lot of detail involved in that planning discussion has not been included in the report due to the sheer quantity of tables and data considered, but the majority of backup information is included in the report's Attachments.

Marcia explained that she believes it is important that the message which needs to be conveyed relating to the planning portion of the document is clear. It should be made clear that it was not just the Village Overlay Report that was used as the guiding planning document for this work but all reports, including the CLRP and PPHP as well as information obtained from various developers. She felt this part of the report needs to be re-written, providing a good explanation of the assumptions made.

Alan reinforced that the document distributed was in draft form and shared that it was understood that committee and all staff input had not yet been incorporated into the document.

Kent explained that the report includes a Statement of Goals, speaking about what the role of the Task Force has been. A quick introduction into the background materials is also included. Simply, wastewater capacity constraints exist and implications as to future development need to be understood. The Chapter identified as “Quantifying Wastewater Needs” is intended to quantify this.

He went on to summarize that the planning focus was placed in three specific areas of Town which all have fairly unique character: The West Concord area analysis included the largest number of properties; the other two, Concord Center and Thoreau Street, are very small focus areas. He noted this translated to projected flows ranging from 100,000 gallons per day (in the West Concord area) down to the tens of thousands of gallons per day in the other two areas. The preliminary flow from the three focus areas alone is a little over 200,000 gallons per day of wastewater capacity. This number is preliminary however and being refined based on new data currently being analyzed. Title 5 flows are utilized for planning consistency, although Title 5 flows are not used at the Wastewater Treatment Plant to determine permitted capacity. Instead, an annual rolling average of the actual flow through the plant is used. Using Title 5 for the planning analysis builds in a significant level of conservatism in the flow estimates.

At the request of the committee, staff made an attempt to contact many of the larger wastewater users, some of whom own properties located outside of the focus areas described above. It was reported that we have not heard back from all, however, the numbers included in the report are based on direct feedback received to date. Laurie explained that numbers are specific for each of the lots, detailing what each current owner hopes to do with particular properties. There are about 40 parcels considered to be large users – increased flow has been generated for about one half of those areas, which is about 110,000 gallons per day. Most of the largest users have been captured. For those large users who did not provide feedback (approximately 20 parcels), Taintor Associates was to complete a build-out analysis by the end of the week so that Laurie could then generate associated flow values. Kent cautioned that flow values that are expected to change significantly within the draft report have been highlighted in red.

When added together the flow number is expected to be a significant number, upwards of 400,000 gallons per day. This flow number includes build-out for the three village center

focus areas, as well as some allowances for parcels of specific large users. Capacity to accommodate the future sewer phases would be in addition to these flows.

Richard Reine explained that the majority of flow for the future phases (about 90,000 gallons) can likely not be taken out through I/I. So in order to move forward with the future phases, this flow must be included in the quantification of needs. These areas include the Cambridge Turnpike, Lexington Road area, some pockets in West Concord, as well as some other small neighborhoods. Also, residential infill and infill outside the planning focus areas has not been included in these numbers. Laurie will develop an estimate of potential infill to include in total flow number.

Kent stated that the total would probably be brought up to over 400,000 gallons per day once accounting for these additional flows. The last part of the report talks about the next steps - what the options are for dealing with this situation. Kent provided a brief overview of some of the short-term and long-term wastewater management options which are detailed in the draft report.

One option noted was the “No Action – No Build” alternative. This would include some environmental challenges and mean the town will lose the opportunity to work on projects that they would like to have happen in addition to other potential consequences such as legal challenges, consent orders and permit exceedances.

Trying to make better use of the existing infrastructure was another alternative - specifically, taking a look at the existing plant to see if there is additional capacity that could be used with permit modifications. The limitation on the plant today is on the permitted discharge capacity. A permit to increase the flow to the river or some of the flow from the plant to groundwater discharge could be explored.

The potential to build additional infrastructure is another option – either small package plants to treat neighborhood flows in the range of 10,000 to 50,000 gallons per day, or one satellite plant for the town. One additional plant might be easier because of the challenges associated with residents not wanting wastewater facilities in their neighborhoods.

There are existing facilities that private property owners have that potentially could be partnered with the town, or various facilities could partner with one another. Regional facilities could also be explored. MCI has a plant, but they have not been receptive to using it to handle wastewater from other sources in town. Also, when developers are required to construct new plants, partnerships could be entered into with the town for the facility to handle additional flows.

The Water Division already has a great water conservation program. Developers are presently encouraged to pursue conservation in their designs. While additional opportunities, such as reuse, can be explored as part of any future alternative, a full reuse distribution system would involve a whole new pipe network in the streets and replumbing of private properties. More conventional reuse options, such as landscape

irrigation using treated wastewater, tend to provide only provide seasonal relief in New England. While this helps with an annual rolling average of wastewater effluent, during the winter months, groundwater discharge locations still need to be sized to accommodate the full plant flow. While it was acknowledged that there are certainly challenges, these are some of the things that should be looked at closely to create a complete analysis of all the alternatives.

At the end of the process, if additional capacity is created, putting together the controls to take that capacity and use it in a productive way would be necessary.

Chris Whelan stated that the cost of each of these alternatives is important to ascertain.

Kent explained that the technical analysis should be completed prior to determining the cost. It might take a few months to develop these analyses. Feedback from key entities such as the EPA and DEP could take as long as three to four months. Getting out to sites, digging test pits, and looking at the geophysical conditions should be done in the spring. An analysis of all the options would probably be a 6-9 month process.

Richard Reine suggested that the next step would be to obtain a consensus from the Town for the need for additional capacity and at what level (GPD). This task force needs to agree upon a volume that can be recommended. This volume could then be brought forward to Town Meeting, and authorization to move forward with various alternative analyses, with its associated funding could be put forth. A short or mid term solution could be implemented with the initial approval such as permit modifications at the treatment plant while a longer term plan is being developed. The big question is whether the Town supports creating additional capacity.

It was suggested that one of the results of the study would be to create a list of sites that would be of interest. Staff expressed that this would be difficult to do at this point.

It was again discussed that a draft report would be presented to the Board of Selectmen on December 1. Marcia would compile comments on the draft report relating to planning activities and Elena would be provided with all other comments. Chris suggested that there may be an additional draft, since there is not a great deal of time to collect comments.

Paul Mahoney agreed to provide a 5 minute briefing on December 1<sup>st</sup> to open the discussion with the BOS and present the draft report to the Board of Selectmen. This would be followed by a 15 minutes presentation by Weston and Sampson and wrap up by the Town Manager. A citizen committee member needs to briefly describe this proposed warrant article at the Town Meeting Preparation Meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Fred Watriss and Jeff Adams will provide this briefing as well as future presentations leading up to Town Meeting.

Paul Mahoney suggested that a document be prepared that would summarize the issues with a little more clarity as part of the Executive Summary - perhaps a chart, showing the

sources of the additional flow (village centers, large users and existing sewer expansion). These would be totaled up on a simple chart to show the bottom line number. Bullet points of the various options could follow this section, to provide clarity.

### **Town Meeting Warrant Article(s) – BOS Presentation**

Chris Whelan drafted an original pair of articles. Rich suggested that perhaps these two articles be condensed into one. Chris explained that presentation of two separate articles should be considered to present the voters with a choice. He wants to make sure that voters understand that if they do nothing, they have chosen Option B.

Alan explained that Weston and Sampson is developing the scope of the alternatives analysis to come up with budget numbers. \$100,000 is there as a place holder at this time but may be increased or decreased depending on the scope and budget. Chris went on to explain that the enterprise fund typically pays for the initial start up costs and that contribution is later factored in if the project is approved as the rate payers portion. Elena noted that in this case, the proposed funding source is the Sewer Improvement Fund, which is funded by new connections to the sewer, rather than sewer rates.

Rich explained that if the first motion is approved and capacity is agreed upon, and the alternatives analysis begins to be explored, the Public Works Commission would look into these alternatives and the costs for each. If it is not approved, and there is no desire for increased capacity, then it becomes a Planning initiative involving growth controls, etc. Staff suggested that their understanding of a moratorium is that the regulators need to see some end to it. Some discussion was held and questions were raised if regulators view planning growth controls as a valid reason to lift a moratorium.

The inclusion of water conservation and reuse is an important piece to include in the first warrant article which authorizes additional capacity to be created, as well as utilizing planning tools. Those planning tools have to be in place after implementation of increased capacity, so there is some control in place.

Town Counsel has recommended that 10% of the residential capacity should be set aside for affordable housing, in order to successfully argue against additional 40B projects.

Fred Watriss suggested some verbiage that Planning, Public Works and the Selectmen will allocate a sewer resource to different types of uses in town to satisfy long range plan requirements.

### **Future Wastewater Capacity – Volume Quantification**

Rich stated that at the December 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, a discussion about volume and findings can be presented – the task force is not ready to fill in the number of gallons.

The next Task Force scheduled meeting is on Tuesday, December 2.