



BARNSTABLE
Water Resources



**Town of Barnstable
Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan
Ad Hoc Committee**

Meeting Minutes

Date: November 18, 2024

Location: James H. Crocker Jr. Hearing Room, Town Hall, Second Floor

The meeting will be televised live via Xfinity Channel 8 or high definition Channel 1072. It may also be accessed via the Government Access Channel live stream on the Town of Barnstable's website:

<http://streaming85.townofbarnstable.us/CablecastPublicSite/watch/1?channel=1>

Committee Members Present:

Scott Horsley, Chair; Brian Hughes, Vice Chair; Tom Cambareri; Zee Crocker; Rob O'Leary; Louise O'Neil; Butch Roberts; Glenn Snell; Kris Clark, Town Council; Paul Neary, Town Council

Committee Members Absent:

Gordon Starr, Town Council

Others in Attendance:

Dan Santos, Director, Department of Public Works; Rob Steen, Assistant Director, Department of Public Works; Griffin Beaudoin, Town Engineer, Department of Public Works; Amber Unruh, Special Projects Manager, Department of Public Works; Michelle Trask, Director's Executive Administrative Assistant, Department of Public Works; Chris Gadd, Communications Assistant, Department of Public Works.

Agenda:

Call to Order

Scott Horsley, Chair, called the November 18, 2024 meeting of the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) Ad Hoc Committee to order at 6:01 PM. The meeting of the CWMP Ad Hoc Committee was held in person in the James H. Crocker Jr. Hearing Room, Town Hall.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Scott Horsley, Chair, moves to discuss the October 22, 2024 meeting minutes. Hearing no requested edits, Brian Hughes, Vice Chair, moves to approve the minutes. Tom Cambareri seconds. The committee unanimously approves the October 22, 2024 meeting minutes.

Administrative Items

a) Committee Email

Scott Horsley, Chair, notes that an email has been set up for the committee. He requests that Chris Gadd, Communications Assistant, Department of Public Works, provide the committee with additional information. Chris informs the committee that the email, BarnstableCWMP@town.barnstable.ma.us, is posted on the Ad Hoc Committee page on BarnstableWaterResources.Com. There has not been much traffic to it yet as it has not been publicized much.

Scott inquires how Chris plans to utilize the email. Chris responds that as the committee continues, the email can be used for collection of public comments related to the CWMP.

b) Next Meeting

Scott Horsley, Chair, opens the discussion by noting the results of a poll that was sent out about meeting time preferences. Scott proposes three meeting dates in line with the results of the poll and, after some discussion, it is decided that the next meeting will be held on Monday, December 16, from 5-7PM.

Review of Homework/Q&A Session

Scott Horsley, Chair, opens the discussion by asking for any questions the committee members may have after watching the videos assigned at the last meeting.

- a) Butch Roberts notes that there is no mention of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the CWMP and wonders how new rulings may impact the Plan. Griffin Beaudoin, Town Engineer, Department of Public Works, responds that the buildout projections were made in conjunction with the Planning & Development Department. This was done prior to the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Passing and should be revisited with the ordinance having been passed. Based on initial conversations, ADUs will not impact too significantly the provided projections. Scott Horsley adds that the ADU law takes effect in February 2025 and can be added to a future meeting topic.

Zee Crocker adds on to the ADU conversation, indicating his staff [at the Barnstable Clean Water Coalition] looked at each parcel by how many bedrooms were on the parcel, and compared to the size of the parcel. Using this data, a target was computed of how many ADUs might be allowed. This information is being compiled and can be shared with the committee when available.

- b) Tom Cambareri inquired about the availability of sewer layout information to residents. Rob Steen, Assistant Director, Department of Public Works, responded that on BarnstableWaterResources.Com, many layouts are already available for projects that are in the near future. On the assessor's website there is a property lookup tool that will indicate which phase of the CWMP a property is in. Phases two and three are not designed out at this point, so no design would be available. Griffin responds that the CWMP contains figures and schematic designs that were developed at the time and show a general sense of where pipes may go. As design advances, these schematics are updated as needed and provided to contractors for the bidding/construction process. Construction documents have not been posted to the website but can be considered. As residents call with questions about their specific property, the DPW provides the information to them.

Tom expanded on the question, inquiring about when a grinder pump is determined as necessary and how residents can be prepared. Rob responded that, in addition to the previous information, as the DPW continues through each project, a better sense of when grinder pumps are needed is gathered and communicated to property owners. Griffin responds that, as designs are finalized, the DPW identifies properties likely needing grinder pumps. Once a contractor is in place, property owners receive communication that their property is along the project route, the anticipated timeline of connection, a request for existing plumbing information and, if applicable, a supplemental letter explaining the possible need for a grinder pump. This communication occurs after the 90% design plans are available, typically 6-9 months before construction begins.

- c) Glenn Snell does not have a question, but comments that the videos are very informative and had no idea how advanced the town is.
- d) Councilor Clark inquires about what happens when a property is for sale, and who bears the responsibility of installing the sewer connection. Griffin responds that this is a private matter between the buyer and the real estate agent. If the property has already received a notice to connect it may be a different approach.

Councilor Clark further asks if it is advisable to send a letter to local real estate agents informing them of the expected responsibility of sharing the information. Rob responds that Kelly Collopy, Communications Manager, Department of Public Works, has met with several realty groups about the matter. We receive emails and calls from real estate agents about specific properties and address them as they come in. The DPW has not informed or advised that either party would be responsible for gathering the information, and there is uncertainty if that is something that we, as a government entity, would want to pursue. We have informed the real estate entities; it is up to them to inform potential buyers about future sewerage opportunities. Councilor Neary notes that Massachusetts is a caveat emptor state, so it is "buyer beware".

- e) Councilor Neary inquires about the infrastructure being installed in front of a home and who is doing the construction. Rob explains that the Town does the work to the edge of the right-of-way. From the right-of-way to the home is the responsibility of the property owner. DPW provides assistance in the form of an approved contractor list and inspection of the installation.
- f) Councilor Neary raises a concern about the number of projects occurring simultaneously and the staffing of the DPW. The committee should look at cost-saving synergies as prices continue to increase year-over-year. Rob responds that, while the DPW is not staffed to the point where it would like to be, it is staffed. These staff fall into one of two pods, those returning because of family connections on the Cape and those who are younger and have been through DPW programs such as internships, developing their interests to want to return to Barnstable and become fully employed. There are enough senior & mid-level employees to mentor younger generations. Because of the number of Professional Engineers (P.E.) on staff, we can develop our own P.E.s and show growth & development in the field. We would love to have more staff, but the people we have now are doing well and working hard. Staffing levels are not ideal, but also not to be disparaged.
- g) Councilor Neary inquires if the DPW anticipates staffing is adequate for the next five years to continue rolling out the CWMP. Griffin responds that the DPW anticipates continued opportunities. Operating budget requests include additional people each year and will likely continue. Certainly, new people are needed but at least in the next few years we should be where we need to be.
- h) Brian Hughes, Vice Chair, inquires about the accuracy of the [MEP] model and how much sewerage is needed versus innovative/alternative (I/A) technologies. Rob responds that the MEP model was peer reviewed in 2008, and it was found that the model is not perfect but is as good as it's going to get when predicting the future. The MEP model is the tool of record so we must conform to it. We have run the model several times looking at different scenarios. If anything, the model is underpredicting and we should aim to do more than what is required by the model. Our energy should be spent looking at ways to work with and around the model and supplement it to move forward.
- i) Brian also inquires about septic systems that have been grandfathered in, and how much unsewered properties contribute to the nitrogen load as compared to the outflow from the treatment plant. Griffin responds that specific data would need to be compiled, but the data is available. Having not looked at the specific area recently, a ballpark estimate is unavailable. Approximately 18 months ago, 20% of properties remained unsewered. The Health Division has been diligent in contacting unconnected properties and getting them to connect. Rob adds that there is a nuance to the CWMP, with the DPW administering and managing the CWMP, the jurisdiction for septic systems and connections lies with the Board of Health. If there were to be a recommendation, it would have to go before the Board of Health. Griffin adds that the Board of Health requires

connections within six months of being told to connect. There are some exceptions, but it is stricter than prior policy.

- j) Scott Horsley, Chair, asks when the improvements resulting from the CWMP may be seen and if it's possible to predict when we may see changes in the estuary. There is a lag time because of groundwater. Rob responds that because of the lag, the plan may underpredict what is needed to do. There is load coming to us through groundwater that we have not seen.

Scott notes that the GIS capabilities in town, along with United States Geological Survey (USGS) modeling, seem like they would be able to support some form of modeling that could show an estimated time when we see results. Is this possible and does it make sense. Griffin responds that it is possible to map travel time utilizing USGS modeling. To integrate this into the MEP modeling is more complicated but can be discussed. Dan Santos, Director, Department of Public Works, adds that the request makes sense, but the problem comes from an attempt to refine inputs with an unrefined model. The model for travel time is an average for the area. The only way to get more precise data is with soil borings and further data analysis which is a significant effort and cost. In areas of the Cape, such as Joint Base Cape Cod, refinements have been conducted. Scott notes that he previously spoke with Tim McCobb at the USGS who indicated additional refinement would be available soon, possibly making an estimate doable. Dan responds that if there is a way to do this activity in a timely and cost-effective way than we can look into it.

Scott indicates that the timing of when results are seen should be a factor in the committee's decision-making process. In past presentations, I/A systems being installed along the shoreline, with relatively quick travel times, are indicated as being beneficial. Dan notes that the timing of the impact is not how the CWMP is regulated, it is only about removing nitrogen from the entire area, not at specific monitoring stations (for example). Any additional nitrogen removed from the ground sooner is better. If there are ways to get at that it will benefit the community. Scott agrees, but there is a factor that people in Town are interested in the timing element.

- k) Scott also asks about the hierarchy of goals between lakes, drinking water, and estuaries. While the regulatory element focuses on the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) of estuaries, could there be a hierarchy? Ideally, they would be treated equally but it is not the goal of the plan and would be expensive. Rob responds that the prioritization is meeting the regulatory requirements of TMDLs. In that process, other issues are being addressed such as the Shubael Pond Alum Treatment. These issues grow into larger discussions about where sewers are planned and whether additional areas are needed. Meeting the TMDL regulatory requirement is a minimum. There are ways built into the plan that enable us to go above and beyond the basic requirements, including interim solutions. There is no priority off the table.

- l) Scott also inquires about the reuse of drinking water through indirect or direct sources, and whether going into a reuse situation is typically done in areas without enough water. The driver appears to be an abundance of wastewater. Rob responds that it's not a question of too much wastewater versus a lack of water, it's just having too much water. Water is a carrying agent and waste products can be removed from the water. We currently do indirect potable reuse from the effluent at the Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) traveling by groundwater to drinking wells across 20-40 years. The conversation should be about water resources and what we do with it. Water coming out of the WPCF is better than raw water, and it does not make sense to put it back into the ground, which would pollute it, just to take it back out and treat it again. The treatment standard, after possible PFAS regulations, is essentially distilled water. The plant being built produces a water product that is better than what is pulled out of the ground. We have enough water for today but need to find ways to build up a redundancy in the water supply chain. We don't have the luxury to be wasteful of a resource and not at least consider what to do with it. Scott understands and notes this as a potential meeting topic.

Tom Cambareri adds on to the discussion on groundwater travel times, noting the MEP approach is defined by the USGS model. Within the model there are defined time-of-travel bands. Anything more fine-tuned may not be required to get a sense of timing. Encourages looking at more details pertaining to the time of travel and modeling.

- m) Tom discusses the question of resources and the economics of reverse osmosis at the Water Pollution Control Facility, as it is a "hefty" jump and looks forward to discussion on the matter. Scott notes that there is plenty of information on the cost of the project, but additional information on the benefits of the project could be helpful. As a committee, we should strive to enhance what is already in place for the CWMP and work to go above and beyond.

Zee Crocker adds that so much of the discussion revolves around cost and time. He is enthusiastic about potential opportunities for I/A systems, which he acknowledges is not quite ready yet. The question of cost may be able to be split in the discussion of distributed treatments. Power is a fungible asset, and access to it can affect the conversation. Zee notes a report being released soon from the USGS on Cape Cod Rivers, which play a crucial role in the conversation at hand.

Scott Horsley, Chair, closes the question-and-answer session by noting that the committee can always ask more questions as they arise.

Looking Forward

Scott Horsley, Chair, opens the discussion by asking for potential future meetings topics. Ideas brought up by the committee are:

- a) Innovative/Alternative (I/A) Technology

Scott notes that I/A technology is a large component of what the committee can consider adding to the plan.

b) Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

Scott notes the timeliness of the discussion and can discuss about how ADUs can fit into the CWMP.

c) 0% financing and affiliation with growth potential within the sewer district

Scott notes the potential concern for unwanted growth within town because of sewer projects.

d) Zoning

Zee Crocker notes that while Zoning is slightly beyond where the committee may be going, the Town has to address zoning and wastewater. Rob O'Leary agrees with Zee and questions the DPW staff of what is within the mission of the committee.

Rob Steen responds that zoning may be relevant as a management mechanism dealing with future growth nitrogen load. Zoning can be a part of the conversation but must be tied to wastewater.

Scott notes that other municipalities with sewer have changed their zoning. Rob notes that Title 5 has been used as de facto zoning. The DPW has been very clear that once the CWMP is implemented, de facto zoning will go away.

Dan Santos adds that the Town has a groundwater protection overlay district for the reason of controlling nitrogen. This district limits what can be done to properties. It is appropriate to look at zoning and make recommendations.

e) Cost

Councilor Neary notes an ever-present concern about cost. At some point in this committee's activity, it would be beneficial to review and develop plans related to cost, especially possible tax overrides. We all know what the goals are, but how do we get residents to embrace the plan?

Rob Steen notes that the committee can invite Mark Milne, Director, Finance Division, to a future meeting to discuss the financial plan. The DPW can provide information about where costs are currently. Rob notes that all projects so far have been on-time and on-budget.

Rob also notes that the committee can invite the Planning & Development Department to discuss aspects such as ADUs and Zoning.

Brian Hughes, Vice Chair, notes that the CWMP says to be cognizant of funding. At the last meeting it was noted to not focus too much on funding. How do we balance them? Rob responds that Mark Milne is managing the financial plan. The DPW provides the technical solutions, which are then estimated out and sent to Mark Milne to build into a model. The DPW is not able to provide much expertise on

whether certain financial approaches would need to be taken. Brian notes that he anticipates the committee looking at the financing more.

Scott Horsley, Chair, suggests holding off on discussing financing as the committee may be adding elements to the CWMP. Bringing Mark Milne in front of the committee is a good idea but we should hold off for a few meetings.

Scott is inclined to discuss I/A technologies at the next meeting, utilizing Zee Crocker to give a presentation. Rob Steen agrees with Scott, noting that when the plan was first developed five years ago, I/A technology was not as advanced as it is now. It has changed significantly since then. There should certainly be a discussion about bringing nitrogen I/A systems into the plan. At the end of the day, everything is a recommendation brought to the Town Council. The DPW is here to advocate and recommend policies to Town Council.

Scott notes a discussion with the Board of Health, and their interest in these policies. Rob recommends a meeting to understand the technology, then meet with the Board of Health to find out their thoughts regarding mandates.

Scott inquires if Zee Crocker is willing to present at the next meeting for 20-30 minutes. Zee responds that he is.

Zee notes that there is good visibility to look at the future of I/A and potential costs. Discussions should be had with DPW about where in the system these technologies make the most sense.

Rob Steen notes that the CWMP has always understood what technology is available. While the overall approach is to do traditional sewer, if I/A technology can be installed “at risk” and shown to MassDEP to have an impact, it will make phase three easier. Phase three is purposefully far out because of the potential updates to technology, as the area will be the most difficult and expensive to install sewer. Griffin notes that phase three has the longest groundwater travel time.

Councilor Neary notes that when the CWMP was first introduced, water quality was not a component. With the introduction of possible legislation regarding PFAS/PFOA, he is all for the upgrades to the Water Pollution Control Facility.

Scott Horsley, Chair, wraps up the discussion by recommending the Town Planner to discuss ADUs. He inquires if anyone on the committee knows anyone involved with the ADU legislation at the state level. Councilor Clark notes she has spoken with Jim Kupfer, Director, Planning & Development Department, Town of Barnstable, who is working on integrating the ADU legislation with existing elements in the Town. The DPW will work on organizing Mr. Kupfer to present at a future meeting.

Homework

Scott notes there is no homework assigned and inquires if there is anything that Zee would like to have the committee do prior to his presentation. Zee responded that he will review and get back to the Chairs. Rob Steen notes that if the committee has not done so already, finish the homework that was previously assigned.

Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

Councilor Clark inquires if it would be beneficial to visit the I/A demonstration area at Joint Base Cape Cod (JBCC), potentially as a group. Chris Gadd notes that a group visit as a committee would need to be posted as a special meeting and no policy decisions made. Griffin adds that the Town Attorney's office prefers an abundance of caution for special meetings.

Scott notes it may be possible to coordinate with Brian Baumgaertel, Director, Massachusetts Alternative Septic System Test Center to get a guided tour.

Zee Crocker notes that Responsible Management Entities (RME) are important to the conversation, and it's important to determine the pieces of the puzzle and how everything works together.

Scott inquires with the committee about their preference for visiting the I/A demonstration at JBCC, sooner rather than later. After some discussion, it was determined to first have Zee present, then discuss a visit to JBCC.

Adjournment

Councilor Clark moves to adjourn the meeting. Brian Hughes, Vice Chair, second. The committee voted unanimously. The meeting is adjourned at 7:23 PM.

Next Meeting: Monday, December 16, 2024 at 5:00 PM

Respectfully submitted by Christopher Gadd, Communications Assistant, Barnstable Department of Public Works