

WMAC Meeting Minutes, May 21, 2015

Attendees: David Crosby - Chair, Anne Carney, David Hearne, Lealdon Langley, Paul Lauenstein – Vice Chair, Rory McGregor – Secretary, Chris Pimentel

Guest: Eric Hooper, Superintendent - Sharon DPW

1. Minutes from the March 19 meeting were approved as amended.
2. Eric reviewed the history of the Commonwealth's Water Management Act. Sharon's current permit for pumping ground water has come out of the Sustainable Water Management Initiative (SWMI) completed last year. The Safe Yield determined by SWMI for the entire Neponset Basin is 21.7 MGD; the Safe Yield determined by SWMI for entire Taunton Basin is 134.3 MGPD. The former has actual use of 8.3 MGD; the latter 67.9 MGD. The baseline conditions for Sharon's new withdrawal permit are 1.18 MGD from the Neponset basin, and 0.56 MGD from the Taunton basin; our current actual use is 0.8 MGD from Neponset, and 0.48 MGD from Taunton.

Sharon is classified as a Category 5 town for purpose of determining the water pumping permit. This is the worst case category on a scale of 1 to 5, and reflects a combination of sustainability issues related to Habitat Alteration and Groundwater Depletion. One obvious issue for Sharon is reduced stream flows in the month of August. Water pumping withdrawals in August and runoff from impervious surfaces in Sharon have the greatest impact on our designation as Category 5.

The question for Sharon is whether to pursue water withdrawals from MWRA through a connection via Norwood, develop a new well at Canton Street, negotiate with Sharon Memorial Park to use their well, or refurbish Well #6 (in the Taunton Basin) in order to enhance our town's water system flexibility. Records show that Sharon pumps around 1.1 MGD out of the Neponset Basin in August. It's difficult for the town to reduce this number without transitioning to MWRA water. The 0.48 MGD that Sharon currently pumps from the Taunton watershed is close to the new permit limit for the Taunton basin, which could preclude significant increases in withdrawals from Well #6.

The cost for the emergency connection to MWRA at Tiot Street is around \$2M in capital expense for infrastructure. A permit, membership fee, and pipeline for withdrawing MWRA water for regular use every summer would incur a much larger capital cost in addition to the cost of the water.

3. Eric will put together a draft policy on irrigation systems for next meeting and circulate it for our review prior to the meeting. Items that will be addressed:
 - a) Develop a list of residences and businesses in Sharon with automatic irrigation systems, and start the registration process for irrigation systems this year.
 - b) Implement the enforcement process for compliance with minimum performance standards next year.
 - c) Consider a certification procedure for irrigation systems. For example, private contractors currently inspect lawn irrigation systems for backflow prevention, leaks, spray nozzle aim, appropriate programming of the system controller, functioning of rain gauge or soil moisture detector, etc. An inspection in springtime ensures efficient water use during the summer irrigation season. The irrigation system should be winterized in the fall. The idea of the Water Department or some other entity training and certifying lawn irrigation professionals has been discussed; the Commonwealth may eventually take action on this issue. One approach is to require owners of automatic irrigation systems to obtain an

annual permit from the town, based on proof that the system had been inspected by lawn irrigation professionals.

4. Eric reviewed Water Department activities during April. Rainfall is down 4 inches from normal weather patterns at this time of year. Weston & Sampson has been commissioned to identify and prioritize projects in the Water Master Plan that will be needed over the next 20 years and update their costs. Total contract cost is \$60,000.

The Water Department will work with the company known as WaterSmart. They provide educational information integrated with monthly water bills that support initiatives to encourage water conservation. We will explore how they can work with MUNIS, our current billing service provider, to integrate their services into the residential bill paying system.

6. The next meeting will be Thursday June 18 at 7:30 pm at the Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Rory McGregor