Minutes of the Water Quality Management Committee, January 17, 2019


To view video of full meeting, see the following link:

1. Progress report on Falmouth’s aquaculture nitrogen reduction pilot project – Tom Duncan

Chairman Turkington gave a brief background on the Shellfish Advisory Committee’s pilot aquaculture project proposal and spoke to the Water Quality Management Committee’s interest from a nitrogen removal perspective. Several minor suggestions for clarifications in the proposed Request for Qualifications were made by members of the committee.

Chuck Martinsen spoke on the project plan. He stressed the importance of the harvest weigh-in and weigh-out requirements for the season as outlined in the project as being the critical component for tracking nitrogen removal. He stated that the Town of Falmouth has a significant amount of gear, equipment, storage space and knowledge available to bidders if needed. Chuck emphasized that FMES wants to hear from the growers what resources they need to make their project a success.

The proposal was well received by WQMC with nods of approval for support. A formal vote will occur at the next WQMC meeting once the RFQ proposal has been finalized by the Shellfish Advisory Committee. Three ½ acre sites in Eel River are proposed for pilot aquaculture farming in floating gear.

2. Discussion on Selectmen/joint board meeting agenda item 1(b) for January 26, 2019

Chairman Turkington opened discussion for the joint meeting agenda item pertaining to wastewater. Doug Brown inquired whether the WQMC would be commenting on specifics for potential discharge sites. Chairman Turkington felt that would be too lengthy a discussion for the purposes of the joint meeting, but the WQMC plans to devote its February 7th meeting to the topic, starting at 2:30pm.
Chairman Turkington spoke on the point that he felt would be most relevant to the joint meeting that the Town of Falmouth will have to have a new discharge site if it wants to support any future sewering projects.

3. Recommendation on expenditure of state budget earmark ($25k) – discussion and vote

Chairman Turkington referred the members to the distributed list of recommendations for the state earmark funds. Concerns were raised whether only considering I/A's was limiting the approach for determining the best application of the funds. Other suggestions for the funds included stormwater management and approaches to macrophyte management for Mill Pond.

Chairman Turkington suggested holding the discussion over until the next meeting to allow members time to further develop feasible suggestions for the funds. Virginia motioned to table, Matt seconded. Moved. So voted.

4. Update on macrophyte harvest on Mill Pond – Kristen Rathjen

Kristen Rathjen presented a generalized cost estimate scenario for both macrophyte harvesting and hydoraking provided by an outside vendor. The presentation covered example costs to manage the 5 acres of Mill Pond closest to Rt 28. It was mentioned that the vendor also provided additional approaches to be used in combination with harvesting and hydoraking for macrophyte management that need to be explored. It was discussed that a single approach may not provide the maximum desired outcomes. Additional concerns were raised whether cutting the plants will aid in odor control or have the potential to increase the odor problem. Follow-up on odor control and alternate management approaches will be pursued.

Virginia gave an update on the progress of permitting the proposed detention pond upstream of Mill Pond. The currently proposed size for the detention pond would require wetland replication under the Wetlands Protection Act. A question was raised whether the work being done in the Coonamessett River Basin could be applied for the wetland replication requirement. Follow-up is required to determine whether replication needs to occur in the same watershed. Also, follow-up with Brian Howes and Amber Unruh on whether a detention pond of <5000 square feet would a useful option.
5. Reports of members and staff

Virginia reminded members that the next WQMC meeting on February 7th would begin at 2:30pm instead of 3:30pm. The main item on the agenda will be a presentation by GHD on discharge site options.

6. Vote minutes of prior meetings (12.20.18)

One suggestion for an addition was made to the minutes. Matt Charette moved the minutes as amended. Tom seconded. So voted.

7. Motion to Adjourn - 4:58pm. Unanimous.

Minutes submitted by Kristen Rathjen.