Minutes of the Water Quality Management Committee, August 1, 2019

Members Present: Steve Leighton, Eric Turkington, John Waterbury, Matt Charette, Tom Duncan. Also present: Ed Leonard; Wright-Pierce, Anastasia Rudenko; GHD, Amy Lowell; Wastewater Superintendent, and several members from the Oyster Pond community.

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


1. Oyster Pond Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) – Update by Ed Leonard, Wright-Pierce

Ed Leonard made a presentation on the current version (July 2019) of the draft CWMP for Oyster Pond. Leonard gave a brief review of the history of the status of Oyster Pond and the determination of the TMDL. He indicated that of the six nitrogen reduction plans initially proposed for the watershed, there have been two plans that are being actively considered – the use of advanced I/A septic systems or connecting to the sewer. Leonard informed the members that the working group has selected Plan 5 (the use of I/A septic systems) with sewering (Plan 1) as a backup plan. Oyster Pond is almost at its maximum buildout with large lots that are far from the current sewer infrastructure which makes the area an ideal candidate for the use of advanced I/A systems capable of maintaining 10 mg N/l effluent concentrations as a means for nitrogen reduction.

Leonard indicated that the Town would need to assume the role of the responsible management entity (RME) to manage the review of system designs, issue permits, coordinate procurement control for better unit system cost, system monitoring and maintenance, septic pumping, record keeping and reporting required by DEP for the 186 proposed advanced I/A systems in the Oyster Pond watershed.

Leonard also indicated the current plan would be a phased approach with Phase 1 being the parcels that are closest to the water in the 10-year ground water travel time zone. It is anticipated that Phase 1 will remove 80% of the required nitrogen to meet the TMDL. The decision on whether to proceed with Phase 2 would be made in 2039 at the earliest (after the completion of Phase 1) to allow for adequate monitoring of the effects of the advanced I/A systems on the overall health of Oyster Pond. He indicated that the initial request for funding either plan would be in 2024.

Leonard presented a cost comparison between the I/A plan and sewering plan which showed similar costs and discussed the next steps of presenting to the Board of Selectmen.

There were several general comments about whether considerations had been made for a major breach of the pond that would prevent Oyster Pond from being a managed system and whether it would be better to open the pond to becoming a saltwater system. It was indicated that this would impact and eliminate the key herring run there.
Other comments made indicated the community members are concerned about the performance potential of the I/A systems in the long term and would like to see some sort of grandfathering included that would prevent homeowners who were required to put in an I/A system from having to make other septic modifications in the future. John Waterbury commented that by the time implementation would begin, there will be a very robust dataset from the Test Center and the West Falmouth I/A project to indicate how dependable the systems are in the longer-term. But ultimately the community will need to make the decision on how to proceed. Comments were made that if sewering were to occur, it would be a grinder pump system that has maintenance components as well and concerns with extended power failures preventing the tank from being pumped.

2. **Review and vote on edits on draft Chapters 5, 11 and 12 of the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) Update**

Kristen Rathjen presented the most current version of Chapters 5, 11 and 12 of the CWMP Update from GHD with their corresponding comments from the committee members.

Several minor comments/edits were suggested for Chapter 5. Matt Charette left the meeting during the discussion on the edits to Chapter 5. Chairman Turkington called a vote to accept Chapter 5 with the suggested changes. Unanimously approved by the four members present.

Several minor comments/edits were suggested for Chapter 11. Chairman Turkington called a vote to accept Chapter 11 with the suggested changes. Unanimously approved by the four members present.

Several minor comments/edits were suggested for Chapter 12. Chairman Turkington called a vote to accept Chapter 12 with the suggested changes. Unanimously approved by the four members present.

3. **Reports of members and staff**

Tom Duncan reported that he attended the Association to Preserve Cape Cod, Falmouth Rod and Gun Club and Town of Falmouth walking tour field trip to the Farley Bog / Childs River restoration sites. Duncan noted that there is a very dramatic change in the water course at the Coonamessett site. He reported that Chris Neill (Woods Hole Research Center) has begun profiling the new river path. Duncan stated that the Farley and Garner Bogs were still in the initial stages of the restoration efforts.

Chairman Turkington reported that he was informed by the Assessor’s office that there were zero applications for deferment for the Little Pond Sewer Service Area Project.

Kristen Rathjen reported that she spoke to both the East Falmouth Village Association and the Davisville Civic Association on water quality issues, concerns and initiatives primarily in Mill Pond and Great Pond. She reported that overall the information was well received, and the community seems to be supportive of the efforts that the committee is making.
John Waterbury reported that he was informed that the Department of Marine and Environmental Services is exploring pursuing a bylaw that would prevent the oyster reef in West Falmouth Harbor from being harvested. Waterbury questioned the members whether they thought this would need to be a Town Meeting warrant. Tom Duncan indicated the Shellfish Advisory Committee has been discussing this issue and doesn't think there needs to be a bylaw to set the regulation.

Chairman Turkington indicated the next meetings would be on Aug 15th and Sept 5th at 3:30pm. He also indicated that the presentation of the Draft CWMP Update will be made to the Selectmen on September 16th during their regular meeting.

4. **Vote minutes of prior meetings (07.18.19)**

   Tom Duncan moved to accept the minutes as presented. Steve Leighton seconded. The four members present unanimously approved the minutes.

5. **Motion to Adjourn – 5:05pm. Unanimous.**

   Minutes submitted by Kristen Rathjen.

**List of Documents**
- Oyster Pond Draft CWMP
- Draft chapters 5, 11 and 12 of the CWMP Update
- Draft minutes of the 07-18-2019 WQMC meeting