

Town of Truro
Water Resources Oversight Committee
February 23, 2017 Meeting
Public Safety Building
Minutes

Present: Kevin Kuechler, Maureen Burgess, Shannon Corea, Tracey Rose, Gary Palmer, Pat Pajaron, Robert Almy (by Phone)

Meeting called to order at 4:00 by Mr. Kuechler.

Review public presentation.

Amanda has provided a copy of the public presentation (PowerPoint) with a voice over . The presentation was run through. Amanda recommends that the committee attempt to shorten the presentation by 2 minutes by eliminating redundancy. Kevin will circulate the materials to the WROC for comment/edits.

Comments will be provided to Peter Romanelli. Possible changes include: clarify nitrates/nitrogen up front; septic system pumping is “recommended” every 3 years; identify the location of leach fields and be sure no trees or shrubs grow on top; septic system inspections are done by installers not haulers.

Final production will be done by the Town and will be shown on Channel 18. The committee also supports posting the presentation on the Town websites as an “on demand “ link; the number of “watches” could be counted.

Discuss Draft Water Plan

Mr. Kuechler provided an overview of a draft water plan stressing that this is intended to be a starting point. There are three reasons to have the discussion: 1) get started, 2) develop a common language and 3) educate and persuade. Comments should be provided to Kevin directly in any form; from a process standpoint, other committee members should not be copied. Kevin will digest comments and focus on keeping the document as clear as possible. Pat will help the language use correct terminology.

The approach is deliberately narrow focusing on wastewater (but not fertilizer) as a source of NO₃ and not surface water. The purpose is to be “more stringent” than Title V. Some discussion should be provided as to why the Cape Cod Commission standard is 5 ppm NO₃ rather than 10. (The standard of 5 is a “call to action” to avoid the state standard from being violated.

The committee discussed the relationship between well depth and risk of high NO₃. Due to the likely flow path of recharge some areas of high NO₃ may “drive deeper” as water flows through the groundwater system. Therefore the focus should be on control of “pounds” of Nitrogen load. Generally speaking the data suggest that Eastham’s NO₃ problem is worse than Truro’s. However any NO₃ level over the 1ppm “background” reminds that we are all drinking wastewater to some degree. So the relationship between buildout and density needs to be explained.

The challenge is that the 1995 revisions to septic regulations (Title 5) were to be the panacea, but may not be in Truro. The water plan should set the table to go beyond the 1995 Title V regulations. Ideas such as "cash for clunkers" type approach were discussed. A discussion of how a loan/lien arrangement could defer payment until a property was sold. (Some complications may occur, such as during refinancing of any existing loan.) Other options for funding were discussed.

The committee discussed what areas should be priority for protection. The Pamet valley and village pond were discussed as priorities. Also discussed were the Zone I and Zone II areas around the two Provincetown well fields. Protecting the entire zone II of each wellfield would be a challenge due to their areal extents.

As the process moves forward, an outreach coordinator may be needed to explain whatever program is developed. The initial focus may be to deal with the remaining cesspools. The issue should be vetted by the Board of Health before going to the Planning Board and Selectmen for discussion. A short presentation for the initial informational meetings should be prepared. It will likely end up to be the responsibility of the Board of Health due to the focus on septic systems.

For information, there is apparently internal discussion by DEP on Title V; the direction and possible outcomes are not clear.

Approved
Kevin Kuechler
Kevin Kuechler

