

MEETING MINUTES

Wastewater Community Partnership – Dennis, Harwich, and Yarmouth

Date: July 21, 2017
Time: 9:00 AM
Location: Dennis Town Hall
Attendees: Diane Chamberlain, MaryAnne Gibbs, Paul McCormick, Elizabeth Sullivan, John Terrio – Town of Dennis
Larry Ballantine, Christopher Clark, Michael MacAskill – Town of Harwich
Christopher Dwelley, Mark Forest, Daniel Knapik – Town of Yarmouth
Kara Johnston, David Young – CDM Smith
Lee Azinheira, Michael Yunits – MFN Regional Wastewater District
Ryan Mann – Friends of Bass River

Meeting Notes:

MFN Overview (Presentation by David Young, Lee Azinheira, and Michael Yunits)

- Original Mansfield plant received federal funding. The two other towns did not join initially in 1980s due to cost concerns.
- An Annual Payment to Norton (APN) is made by the District (all three members pay). The APN starts at \$200,000 and increases \$10,000 per year and is then tied to the consumer price index. Norton hosts the treatment plant and all effluent recharge.
- Discussion of flow neutrality and the required Land Use Controls to meet zero interest SRF Loan requirements. Flow projections for each town include a buildout value in them. Each town manages to their own flow capacity limit. Mansfield and Norton require a town vote for changing flow allocations to different areas in town.
- Each MFN town manages their own collection system. Mansfield uses sewer enterprise funds (which helps pay for capital improvement projects within the collection system).
- The geographic delineation of the District is the 3 towns. Each town can decide to allocate their flow to neighboring towns, but they must stay within their flow limits (therefore they are giving up some of their own capacity). The District will always only contain the three towns.
- Norton's water/sewer commission is a separately elected board. Same in Foxborough.
- Q: Who has been appointed to the MFN Commission?
 - Mansfield: 1 Town Manager; 1 Water/Sewer Commissioner (Selectman); 1 Former DPW Office Manager
 - Foxborough: 1 Water/Sewer Commissioner; 1 Town Engineer
 - Norton: 1 Town Manager, 1 Water/Sewer Commissioner
- Norton does not use betterments. \$11,000 charged for homes to connect + hookup construction cost.
- Mansfield started using the tax base, then switched to sewer enterprise fund.
- Q: How do we convince the towns to form a District?
 - Mansfield residents understood the cost savings benefit of working together.

- Norton realized the benefit of economy of scale and that the basic infrastructure would be the same. Developments were mentioned as an advantage (town centers, etc.)
- Q: Did real estate entities support?
 - Yes, particularly for redevelopment in economic areas. Also, sewerage was good for town buildings (schools, Housing Authority, etc.).
- Q: How would you recommend selling to residents?
 - Price of a septic system replacement is much greater than sewer hookup fee.
- Septic loan program can be used to loan funds to residents for sewer hookup fee.
- Each community in MFN sets a different price structure for hook-up cost (not an MFN issue).
- Wastewater Governance Structure at MFN communities:
 - Mansfield: The five Selectmen are also the Water/Sewer Commissioners and each of the Sewer, Water and Highway Departments report to the DPW Director
 - Foxborough: Three elected Water and Sewer Commissioners oversee the policy issues of the department but water and sewer department superintendent and staff report to DPW Director
 - Norton: Water/Sewer Superintendent reports to Town Manager and the three elected Water/Sewer Commissioners manage the water/sewer programs, operations, rates, etc.
- A specialty lawyer was hired to draft legislation which authorized the formation of the MFN District.
- Dave will send copy of legislation to DHY (Acts of 2010).
- Q: Is there a stigma associated with Norton hosting the WWTF and effluent recharge?
 - No, the plant and recharge are mostly out of sight from residents and located near industrial areas.
- Public Relations Discussion. Chamber of Commerce got involved in Norton.
- MFN Key Points:
 - Economic Development, sewerage downtown
 - Savings from treating lakes for excessive nutrients
 - NPDES Permit got more stringent, better to tackle it as a District than on your own
 - Increased capacity at the WWTF
 - More economical to do it as a group
 - Cost Effectiveness: Title 5 maintenance and replacement vs. sewer

Communications Discussion

- Issue press releases through Town Managers regarding DHY wastewater discussions
- Add communications message to future meeting agendas
- Creating a website for DHY should be considered further along in the process
- Add press points to each meeting minutes (to be performed by CDM Smith)
- Selectmen representatives to DHY will update their individual towns at BOS meetings

Community Compact

- Dennis and Harwich signing this week
- DHY plans to re-apply for grant after officially compact community members

Next Topics

- Special Legislation Review

- Town Updates: Internal Governance Structure
- Town Updates: Internal Finance Structure
- Town Updates: General Wastewater Discussion
- Draft Agreement
- Backwards work calendar to determine deadlines leading to spring 2019 town meetings.

Future Meetings

- To be held on 3rd Friday of each month at 9AM at Dennis Town Hall
- Next meeting on August 18th at 9 AM.

Meeting Summary:

- The working group members from Dennis, Harwich, and Yarmouth (DHY) met on July 21, 2017 to discuss options for community partnership in wastewater. The towns continue to meet in order to find a cost-effective solution to the nutrients problem in Cape Cod waterways and to save the water quality in the watersheds of all three communities.
- A presentation was given by David Young of CDM Smith, along with Lee Azinheira (Mansfield DPW Director) and Mike Yunits (Norton Town Manager) to discuss the experience of Mansfield, Foxborough, and Norton in forming a wastewater district – MFN Regional Wastewater District formed in 2014.
- The presentation included a discussion of the legislation passed in order to form a district, town lessons learned during negotiations, flow distribution among the District members, wastewater governance structure in each town, and MFN Commission members from each community.
- The DHY working group will continue to meet monthly in order to further discuss a community partnership option for the three towns to cost effectively find a wastewater solution to their shared watersheds..