

TOWN OF STOW
Lower Village Sub-Committee

Minutes of the September 20, 2006, Lower Village Sub-Committee Meeting.

Attendance: Lower Village Committee: Don McPherson; Phil Moseley; Russ Willis; Laura Spear

Planning Board:	Ernie Dodd; Kathleen Willis
Board of Health:	Marcia Rising; Jack Wallace
Board of Selectmen:	Steve Dungan
Dept. of Environmental Protection:	Robert Bostwick (Water) Margo Webber (Wastewater)
Woodard & Curran:	Daniel Garson (Sr. V.P.) Douglas Reed (Sr. V.P.) Richard Kramer (Client Services)
Other public:	Bill Roop; Peter Mills

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 AM.

Introductions were made, then Don McPherson explained why there was interest in communicating with representatives from the DEP.

The Lower Village Committee became aware of problems with water and wastewater in the Lower Village and had voted that water was its first priority. However, there was recognition that both water and wastewater are growing problems in the Lower Village and that there needs to be a district-wide solution to water and wastewater.

Some business owners and managers are interested in finding a solution. Bill Roop, the developer for Meeting House at Stow, said they were putting in a \$300,000-500,000.00 solution for their wastewater problems.

Phil Moseley said he had met with Steve Steinberg, a business owner in the Lower Village and the former Stow Shopping Center owner and updated Steve on what was going on. According to Phil, Steve was adamant about a public wastewater system and that he would give a donation of up to \$500,000.00 to help.

Don said that there may be potential funding for wastewater treatment as well.

Margo Webber of the DEP, responsible for wastewater, said that Meeting House and Linear Retail have to comply with current consent orders for septic and wastewater now. They cannot postpone a solution until the rest of the Lower Village has things in motion, unless it can be done by 12/07. There needs to be shown that money is set aside for a district-wide solution, that progress is being made and that there is commitment for completing a solution.

Robert Bostwick of the DEP, responsible for water, said the same was true for water. For example, Stepping Stones is under a consent order for water. He is amenable to a regional solution; however, he needs a commitment as well.

Each well needs to come into compliance. DEP will continue to move forward with the current consent orders for now.

Laura said there needs to be a holistic approach to the problem. Based on the Master Plan, the Town has been drafting a village zoning bylaw that embraces the development standards that the state has been advocating to develop commercial centers and reduce sprawl. The bylaw was drafted using a state PDF because affordable housing is a component of the plan, as Stow tries to reach its 40B requirements for affordable housing. However, her concern is not just the future plans for the Lower Village. Currently, the largest part of the Town's tax revenue comes from residents, such as those sitting around the table. If the current businesses in Town are experiencing problems today, the non-residential tax base can go away, putting even more burden for public services such as fire, police and school on Town residents. It's a problem that is integral to all aspects of the Town and we need to look at it in the bigger picture.

Margo asked whether the Town has looked into State Revolving Funds? In response, she was told that every business is trying to solve its own problem.

Jack Wallace from the Board of Health said that Linear is getting plans to design a system that can support 38,000 GPD.

The Gymnest [Five Star Gymnastics] may have issues. The Stow House of Pizza wants to expand, particularly its restaurant, but it cannot due to lack of increased well protection.

Steve Dungan, the Board of Selectmen's liaison to the Lower Village Committee, said that immediate problems are more pressing than future problems. However, there is a need for a comprehensive solution that may be done using a combination of public funds and private.

Bill Roop said he is working with the Meeting House Trustees to upgrade their system. Other businesses are also moving individually without consulting their next-door neighbors. He said that Meeting House at Stow, LLC would be willing to contribute funding. The statement was made that perhaps Linear could contribute funding as well.

Bill said that they had drilled a second well for Meeting House that went 400' deep and produced a couple of hundred gallons of water per minute. They have a lot of water available.

Ernie Dodd, Chairman of the Planning Board, said that he and Janet Wheeler, the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, met with Linear, but they were only interested in fixing their own problems. They did not want the liability for a public wastewater system.

Representatives of Woodward and Curran spoke, first introducing themselves. Dan Garson is a planner and works primarily on the permitting side. Doug Reed is an engineer and hydrologist. He looks at locations, facilities and testing. Dick Kramer handles client relationships.

Dan was involved in the Acton project, which just finished. It was a town-wide, comprehensive water and wastewater project.

He said that first Stow would have to start with a concept plan. Then, it would need to line up funding, starting with private funding sources. Then, we would need to do site and technical analysis with

consulting help. The result would be a roadmap of what would be done one year from now, five years from now and so on.

Doug said that it took Acton so long because they first tried a multi-town solution with Maynard. Acton moved quickly when they decided to do it as a town.

Groton is more similar to Stow. It had a downtown area that was very focused. They worked with the DEP for a reduced scope, and it was only a size month effort. The project addressed water and wastewater and they just finished the sewer. The solution was a multi-town solution; they send their wastewater to Pepperell. There was a prior relationship across towns, so this project moved quickly.

Separate water districts were created in Acton and Groton and they worked with them to set them up.

Stow already has public and private wells. Soil data exists and they could look at property owners' data and zoning to determine the anticipated build-out. They would consider environmental setbacks and well heads and determine where they could put feasible areas for water and wastewater.

A public water supply would need two wells for redundancy. A storage tank is an alternative option – this would be needed for sprinklers. The wells ideally would be in different locations, but they could be collocated.

After determining possible locations, there would be field validation. Then, the Town could make decisions about siting a public water supply that assumes it knows where the wells would go. They would review for contamination and environmental concerns, such as wetlands.

Several things are required: approval for the well, approval for authorization to withdraw water, plus permits for building the well with NOI, etc.

You also need to consider wastewater reuse. You could install fixtures that prevent water use or consider uses that don't require potable water, such as fire protection and landscaping. This may be less expensive, because it requires less water and as a result, less wellhead area.

The worst case need for a public water supply would be a 400' radius, which is the largest radius required. This translates into about 12 acres.

Other decisions would need to be made:

- Should the system be sized for fire protection? If you don't need it, you can go with smaller pipes, which is less expensive.
- Look at capacity: 1500 gpm for a couple of hours is required.
- Red Acre Road could be a possibility.

Don asked how should the Committee proceed? Should it issue an RFP?

Phil said he wonders if suitable sites exist for wastewater within Lower Village. Septic also needs to consider stormwater run off.

Peter Mills said that the Kunelius property is the only site. The only other area in Town is the Town Forest, which is conservation land. He thought the intent of conservation land is to conserve land. Peter asked who gave the Lower Village Committee the charter to look into water and septic? Ernie Dodd replied that the Planning Board asked the Lower Village Committee to look into it.

Steve said that he would get this topic on a Board of Selectmen's agenda and include an RFP with consultants to help us through this issue.

DEP input is that there is a spring deadline and that a solid case and commitment has to be shown to the DEP before any construction is done. There needs to be a comprehensive plan for both water and wastewater with timeframes, funding sources and commitments to-date.

Laura said the Lower Village Committee should work with the Board of Selectmen on supporting the project so that both groups aren't doing parallel and duplicate work.

Steve suggested that another Joint Boards discussion could be held to see what to do next.

Robert Bostwick said that the Town should let the DEP know about the steps it is taking to move forward. At the same time, DEP compliance needs to proceed. A comprehensive plan with time frames for both water and wastewater would help.

Don said there is a short window of opportunity for comprehensive sewage. Doug said he could recommend a guide to creating a sewer district. There is funding by the state, the program is for long-term solution and is for a sewer district. Bob Kimball has information, Doug has it and can share it with the committee and the information is on the Internet as well.

Woodward and Curran also offered to help the Town. The Town's contact is Steve Dungan, representing both the Lower Village Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

Laura Spear moved to adjourn. Russ Willis seconded motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned about 10:10 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Costello
Administrative Assistant