

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING MINUTES

Regional Drinking Water Quality Management Plan Groton, Ledyard, Preston, North Stonington, Norwich, Montville, and Waterford, Connecticut Monday, March 31, 2008 Groton Town Hall Annex, 7:00 PM

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. Meeting attendees are listed below.

Name	Affiliation
Jeanine Armstrong Bonin	Milone & MacBroom, Inc.
David Murphy	Milone & MacBroom, Inc.
Jerry Iwan	CT Water Planning Council
Jennifer Pagach	CT DPH
Rick Stevens	Groton Utilities
Mike Murphy	Town of Groton
Deborah Jones	Town of Groton
Lois Geary	Groton Conservation Commission
James Butler	SECCOG
Gregory Leonard	SCWA
Bob Ashworth	Wetlands Commission
David Scott	Town of Groton Wetlands Commission Chair
Barbara Block	Wetlands Agency
Sue Sutherland	Town of Groton Zoning Commission Alt.
Ed Martin	Groton Shellfish Commission
Eunice Sutphen	IWA
Syma Ebbin	Groton Resident
Jim Markow	Noank Cooperative
Paul Bates	Noank Water District
Fredrick Fischer	Groton Open Space Association
Jim Furlong	Groton Open Space Association
Joan Smith	Groton Open Space Association
Eleanor Fischer	Groton Open Space Association
Sydney Van Zandt	Groton Open Space Association
Claiborne Van Zandt	Self
Zell Steever	Noank Resident
Elizabeth Raisbeck	Noank Resident
Bruce Rafferty	Conservation
Rusty Warner	Noank Resident
Deborah Donovan	SECTER
Diane Whitney	Pullman & Comley
M. Young	Unknown

2. Jeanine Armstrong Bonin and David Murphy (Milone & MacBroom, Inc.) presented a PowerPoint slide show introducing the drinking water quality management planning process.

Copies of this presentation are available through Milone & MacBroom, Inc. and will be posted on the project web site.

3. Following the presentation, the meeting was opened for questions and comments.
 - ❑ Jim Markow (Noank Cooperative) expressed the concerns of shell fishermen regarding water quality. Oysters are harvested using the Poquonnock River estuary but they are very sensitive to salinity ranges (it varies from 2 to 30 parts per thousand). The quality and quantity of water spilling over from the terminal reservoir is important.
 - ❑ Ed Martin (Groton Shellfish Commission) reiterated the concerns of shell fishermen regarding water quality. Coliform bacteria can be a problem, especially after heavy rains. Discharge of coliform is a function of both rainfall, and the number of dry days preceding the rainfall event. Less than 14 colonies per 100 ml is required to certify a shellfish bed. Changes to the watershed area should be considered.
 - ❑ Syma Ebbin (Shellfish Taskforce) underscored the concerns regarding water quality impacts to shell fishing. She remarked that watershed controls on water quality are preferable to increased water treatment, as watershed controls will also benefit shell fishing.
 - ❑ Joan Smith (Groton Open Space Association) remarked that the consultant's tasks are twofold: scientific analysis, and the political/economic balancing act. She believes that economic incentives for watershed protection should be established and that low impact development is important. She stated that right-of-way widths of 60 feet are required by Subdivision Regulations but are too wide in her opinion, as the amount of impervious surfaces is unnecessarily large. The trail/greenway from Groton to Preston could provide an opportunity to bolster watershed lands recreation. Finally, Ms. Smith had several comments regarding Groton Utilities dual role as water provider and electricity provider. She believes that the multiple utility presents a conflict, as they must choose between new large electricity customers in the watershed versus keeping these customers out of the watershed. Ms. Smith provided a written statement (listed below under #4); additional commentary can be found in the statement.
 - ❑ Elizabeth Raisbeck (Noank resident) commented that the Vision and Mission are appropriate for the DWQMP. She had several recommendations. First, she remarked that an environmental assessment of the whole basin should be undertaken to identify lands that are critical for protection. Second, the DWQMP project must evaluate strategies for management. The Groton Plan of Conservation & Development should be examined. For example, why is an industrial park proposed along Route 117? She cautioned against out-of-basin transfers and recommended increasing land acquisitions. Ms. Raisbeck provided a written statement (listed below under #4); additional commentary can be found in the statement.

- Jim Furlong (Groton Open Space Association) began his comments with a reference to the Wal-Mart Supercenter proposal, at which time a Wal-Mart representative interceded. Ms. Bonin requested that Mr. Furlong cast his comments in a more generalized framework. He then proceeded to describe the development pressures facing the watershed, from commercial proposals to the Great Brook subdivision. Mr. Furlong emphasized that the DWQMP process needs to result in a plan with "teeth."
- Claiborne VanZandt spoke on behalf of Sidney VanZandt (Groton Open Space Association). Before reading Ms. Van Zandt's statement, he provided an explanation of a University of New Hampshire research laboratory dedicated to measuring water quality in stormwater. The studies from the laboratory have allegedly demonstrated that pervious blacktop and concrete are viable alternatives to impervious surfaces. They are more expensive in the short-term, but possibly less expensive in the long run. He then read Ms. Van Zandt's statement (listed below under #4). As the statement was read into the record verbatim and is appended, it is not repeated herein.
- Sue Sutherland (Zoning Commission Alternate) spoke as a resident of Groton. She noted that the 2003 Connecticut watershed study developed by Aquarion was a good starting point for watershed protection. She also remarked that the DWQMP process was timely as the Zoning Regulation modifications are underway. She recommended that the buildable land definition exclude floodplains and other undevelopable portions of lots and that a full build-out of Groton would be interesting to this process. Ms. Sutherland noted that climate change will affect drought patterns, but the 2007 Southeastern Connecticut Plan of Conservation & Development already states that regional demands will exceed supplies by 2010.
- Rusty Warner (Noank resident) indicated that he is a LEED consultant. He believes that developers are often surprised to learn that low impact development can be a "win-win." In other words, it can lead to environmentally friendly development that is also economically viable. Mr. Warner cautioned that the DWQMP process won't work unless there is follow-through. The project must also focus on continued outreach to homeowners, developers, and so on.
- Paul Bates (Noank Water District Board of Directors) speaking on his own behalf urged this process to consider and recommend stronger development regulations, not more costly treatment. He also supports acquisition of watershed lands. He had two questions that could not be answered at the time of the meeting: (1) what is the fate of MTBE that comes from vehicles on I-95? and (2) Why are the monitoring wells near the landfill not tested? Ms. Bonin indicated that those questions would be pursued in the coming weeks.
- David Scott (Chair, Town of Groton Wetlands Commission) had several questions as well. He asked if anyone knew the source of ground water to the reservoirs, and remarked that it could be coming from outside the basin. He also asked if reservoir drawdown could affect the local water table.

- Joan Smith (Groton Open Space Association) asked if this study would include a build-out analysis of Groton or the watershed. Ms. Bonin remarked that a build-out analysis is not part of this project and could be conducted as part of the water supply plan.
 - Zell Steever (Advisory Committee member) urged Groton Utilities to post the Advisory Committee list on the project web site, so members of the public can locate their designated communications lead.
4. Written statements were collected as follows; these statements are appended to the meetings notes:
- Ms. Joan Smith, Groton Open Space Association
 - Ms. Elizabeth Raisbeck, resident of Noank
 - Ms. Sidney VanZandt, Groton Open Space Association
5. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

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