



PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING MINUTES

Regional Drinking Water Quality Management Plan Groton, Ledyard, Preston, North Stonington, Norwich, Montville, and Waterford, Connecticut Wednesday, March 19, 2008 Ledyard Senior Center, 6:00 PM

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. Meeting attendees are listed below.

Name	Affiliation
Fred Allyn Jr.	Mayor, Town of Ledyard
Brian Palaia	Town Planner, Town of Ledyard
Mike Cherry	Planning Commission, Town of Ledyard
Linda Davis	Ledyard Town Council
Peter Gardner	Landowner, Town of Ledyard
Ryan McCammon	Ledge Light Health District
Al Dion	Groton Utilities
Jerry Iwan	CT Planning Council
Tom Seidel	SE CT Council of Governments
Gregory Leonard	SCWA
Ed Monahan	SCWA
Tom Wagner	Planner, Town of Waterford
Mariellen French	Town of Groton Zoning Commission
Paulann Sheets	Town of Groton Town Council
Bunny Furlong	Town of Groton Inland Wetlands Agency
Marc Cohen	Rural Water Association
Jeanine Armstrong Bonin	Milone & MacBroom, Inc.

2. Jeanine Armstrong Bonin (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.
- Paulann Sheets (Groton Town Council) suggested that regional minimum standards might be considered for each community.
 - Jerry Iwan (Connecticut Planning Council) provided some background on the genesis of the drinking water quality management planning process, initially developed in Europe. The process is similar to the source water protection process, whereby the federal government did not adopt regulations; but rather placed the process in the hands of the stakeholders. Connecticut's approach is to rely on the communities to develop
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commonalities to protect the watershed; however, there are no preconceived notions. Southeastern Connecticut was selected for funding because it possesses all of the ingredients for a large-scale civil experiment. There may come a time when regulations are the default for communities that have not developed a DWQMP. Nationally, there is a similar program known as *Smart About Water*. The process of moving towards a regional DWQMP started in 2001 as part of Groton Utilities' 100-year anniversary commemoration.

- ❑ Peter Gardner (landowner and developer) noted that treatment and land ownership are elements that should not be overlooked. He noted that the Groton rate payers could purchase the entire watershed as a means of source protection. Further, he believes that memorandums of understanding are costly. Given the excellent existing water quality in the Groton supply, Mr. Gardner questioned the need to undertake the DWQMP process (i.e. If it's not broken, why fix it?).
- ❑ A Town of Groton representative in attendance noted that tremendous development has occurred in the watershed, with associated degradation of the reservoirs.
- ❑ Ed Monahan (SCWA) suggested that where there is a sense of ownership, there is more of a responsibility to protect. He noted that the DWQMP process needs to instill ownership in the member communities. Further, he noted that an objective plan should address the airborne particulates coming off I-95 as they impact water quality.
- ❑ Mike Cherry (Ledyard Planning Commission) inquired about how the Preston public informational meeting (held on March 11, 2008) went. It was reported that the Preston meeting was sparsely attended. Mr. Cherry suggested that the ground water aquifer – not just the watershed – should be considered in the regional plan, as should other future potential supplies and regional connections. Mr. Cherry expressed his opinion that the regional Council of Governments (COG) should administer this program and not Groton Utilities, as there is a political stigma attached to Groton Utilities, with the perception that they are "running the show." Jerry Iwan responded that the enabling legislation specifically directs Groton Utilities to administer this effort. Mr. Cherry stated his belief that not all of the Phase I DWQMP deliverables were met relative to communications, that consensus had not been reached, and that the goals and objectives should be revisited. With regard to local community participation, Mr. Cherry stated that rules and regulations at the local planning board are essential and that safe drinking water is the responsibility of all of the stewards of the watershed. Finally, Mr. Cherry noted that the State Plan of Conservation and Development growth management strategy calls for prevention of pollution and not treatment. Part of this process will require education of the public through web sites, schools, and the like.
- ❑ Linda Davis (Ledyard Town Council) suggested that the nomenclature should be changed to the *Regional Water Supply* as opposed to *the Groton Reservoir*. She also noted that allowing public access to the lands surrounding the reservoirs would garner



significant good will with the townspeople of Ledyard. A discussion ensued relative to the merits and obstacles of allowing passive recreation surrounding water supply reservoirs. There was strong consensus that this should be further evaluated, possibly on a parallel track with the DWQMP. Similarly, the proposed greenway from Long Island Sound to Preston would pass through utility-owned lands near the reservoirs and would need to be coordinated with Groton Utilities as well the other host communities.

- ❑ Mayor Fred Allyn expressed puzzlement with regard to the dichotomy of conversation and meeting notes relative to "minimum standards" versus flexibility to self regulate. These concepts seem at odds. He noted that Ledyard has a significant issue with taxes and the town would welcome development to offset that burden. He stated concern that Groton may have the right to stop development in Ledyard in the future. On a separate track, the State Plan locational map designations have resulted in denial of state funds to extend the town's sewer system – an essential component for development in Ledyard. Finally, Mayor Allyn questioned how the DWQMP would be adopted. Who will be allowed to vote and what exactly does consensus mean in this process? All of these issues will be brought into the DWQMP process.
- ❑ Peter Gardner raised an issue with the recorded watershed map. He believes the map is in error. In the ensuing discussion, the opinion was expressed that the State Plan Locational Guide map needs to better define the watershed area and needs to be consistent with Class I land areas. Additionally, the issue of watershed mapping accuracy will be pursued through the DWQMP process.
- ❑ One meeting participant suggested that the tribal nations should be included as a stakeholder in this process. This is being pursued through the DWQMP Advisory Committee representation.
- ❑ Another meeting participant suggested that if Ledyard agreed not to develop in certain areas, with permanent protection through purchase by the utility, would it not be possible for Ledyard in return to receive royalties through the sale of water by Groton Utilities to other municipalities who do not carry that same burden? Conversely, could the rate structure in Ledyard reflect this type of development sacrifice? These are concepts that will be further addressed through the DWQMP.

4. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.