



MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 30, 2019
REHOBOTH WATER COMMISSION

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Rehoboth Water Commission was held at Dunkin Donuts, 227 Winthrop St. and called to order at 7:15 pm.

ATTENDEES

Members: Joseph Nunes, Edwin Ballard, Patricia Vadnais, Thomas Nicholson and Katie Eyer

GUEST

John Hermance

MINUTES

Motion: Tish Vadnais made a motion to approve the minutes of February 11, 2019

Motion 2nd: Tom Nicholson

ELECTION OF 2019 WATER COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

Motion: Tish Vadnais made a motion to elect a new chairman

Motion 2nd: Tom Nicholson

Unanimously approved

Motion: Ted Ballard made a motion to nominate Joe Nunes as Water Commission Chairman

Motion 2nd: Tish Vadnais

Unanimously approved

Motion: Tish Vadnais made a motion to nominate Katie Eyer as Water Commission Clerk

Motion 2nd: Joe Nunes

Unanimously approved

GROUNDWATER PROTECTION DISTRICT EXPANSION

Joe Nunes – tried to call Ed Bertozzi but did not reach him. He wanted to discuss the process of expanding the Groundwater Protection District to include the whole town of Rehoboth. Why are we doing this? What is driving this to be done? Joe needs to have a firm understanding in order for the Water Commission to back this.

Ted Ballard – the issue won't come up until the fall town meeting.

Joe Nunes – doesn't have a full understanding of the issue and reintroduces the point that Tish Vadnais made previously about the people, farms, etc. who are currently not in the protection district.

Tish Vadnais – believes that the point is to better protect our groundwater

Ted Ballard – Ed Bertozzi made the proposal to expand the protection district in August because he was concerned that only 2/3 of town is currently protected. This is because of the high water table in S. Rehoboth, the river, and the surrounding watershed.

Joe Nunes – wants to know what we will be protecting.

Tom Nicholson – Sand and gravel aquifers are what are currently being protected because of a 1978 study for the possibility of a public water supply. That is why our zones are what they are. The other 1/3 of town contains bedrock wells. Now, if we want to protect all wells, we make all of town the protection area. It puts controls on development.

Ted Ballard – This is a responsibility of the planning board because it requires a change in the bylaw dialogue. Ed Bertozzi is meeting with town counsel to make sure the language is legally correct. The point of the change: the groundwater protection district, as currently set up, deals with protecting groundwater to recharge the aquifer. The non-protected area is high ground, but when it rains, water runs from high ground into the protected areas. There are no rules in the areas outside of the current protection zone now.

Joe Nunes – wants to know if the committee understands to the point where it can explain what it all means. He also brings up the need for hazardous materials to be overseen.

Ted Ballard – Ed Bertozzi did a study about businesses in town, where they are, etc. The planning board has been monitoring them. They have also been reviewing administrative dialogue and rules of the whole bylaw to determine if they want to make changes. The planning board voted to separate the two issues (the groundwater protection district expansion and the bylaw changes) and there will have to be public hearings. Then the Board of Selectmen will have to give permission to put the issue on the agenda of the town meeting.

Jack Hermance – wants to know what Joe Nunes will say if asked. We will be protecting all wells and groundwater from surface pollution so the entire town is protected. You want your

neighbors to protect your well, and you will protect your neighbors' wells. The community needs to decide the level of protection.

GOALS FOR 2019

Joe Nunes – as a committee, he wants to finish one thing that we start. What would the committee like to accomplish?

Tish Vadnais – would like to see the mapping committee and board of health work together to accomplish mapping goals (new and old wells).

Tom Nicholson – wonders about the status of the hydrofracking questionnaire. He wants to implement the protocol. It is an information sheet and a log sheet. Many drillers hydrofrack first thing now.

Tish Vadnais – the planning board is looking at hydrofracking rules.

Ted Ballard – what about adding a point about monitoring abutting wells? There are two cases of neighboring wells being affected by hydrofracking.

Tish Vadnais – wants to see the water commission work with the planning board on the bylaws and groundwater protection district.

Joe Nunes – going forward, we will try to accomplish these two things (hydrofracking protocol and progress with wells)

Ted Ballard – proposes that we take the hydrofracking sheet to the board of health meeting on June 4.

Tom Nicholson – wants to talk to Rachel Smith and try to go directly to Karl Drown.

Motion: Tish Vadnais made a motion to give Tom Nicholson the authority to go to the board of health with his hydrofracking questionnaire.

Motion 2nd: Katie Eyer

Unanimously approved

Joe Nunes – estimated timeline for Tom Nicholson to accomplish this? He will try to be done by July 1.

OTHER DISCUSSION

Ted Ballard – there is a mapping committee that deals only with maps. There is currently only one issue, and that is the groundwater protection district. The selectmen appointed this committee two and a half years ago. There were representatives from eight committees or boards. Currently, Ted Ballard represents the water commission, Bill Costa the planning

board, Karl Drown the board of health, Bob Materne the conservation commission, and Steve Silva the ZBA. It hasn't met for a year and a half. The water resources map is going to that committee.

ACTION ITEMS

Tom Nicholson will go forward with the hydrofracking questionnaire.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Motion made by Tish Vadnais to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

Motion 2nd: Tom Nicholson

Respectfully Submitted,

Katie Eyer
Rehoboth Water Commissioner
Clerk