

Minutes of the April 3, 2014 Meeting
Warwick City Council Sewer Review Commission

THE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS. FOR COMPLETE MEETING AUDIO MINUTES GO TO:

http://www.warwickri.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=196:sewer-review-commission&id=1264:sewer-review-commission

Meeting was called to order by Councilman Ed Ladouceur, Chairman at 8:17 AM in the conference room at the Warwick Sewer Authority.

Commission members present:

Councilman Ed Ladouceur, Chairman

Representative Frank Ferri, District 22

James Boyd, RI Coastal Resources Management Council

Angelo Liberti, RI Department of Environmental Management

Michelle Komar, Chairman's Citizen Appointment

Topher Hamblett, Save The Bay

Janine Burke, WSA Executive Director (WSA Chairman's Designee)

Members not present: Councilman Joe Gallucci, Vice Chairman, Mark Carruolo, Mayor's Chief of Staff, Peter Ginaitt, Warwick Sewer Authority Board, David Picozzi, City of Warwick Department of Public Works Director, Doug Harris, Narragansett Indian Tribe, Senator William Walaska, District 30, Ernie Zmyslinski, City of Warwick Finance Director, Aaron Guckian, Warwick Sewer Authority Board

Also present: William Russo, Advisor to Committee

10 Minute Open Microphone Session

Roger Durand: Reported that he attended and testified at the Senate Environment Committee's hearing. He said the DEM Director had referred to the Warwick Sewer Review Commission and said that Angelo Liberti was on the Commission for technical advice. He said he was very concerned. He said Jim Boyd was controlling the meetings and that the representatives from CRMC, DEM and Save the Bay should abstain from voting. He said he plans to speak at the City Council meeting on the enabling legislation. He said no one is talking about cost and he was concerned that it is not being discussed. He referred to the pre-2000 on-site wastewater treatment systems the Commission is looking to eliminate. He said there are no state requirements like this. He referred to the letter from Ms. Burke to residents to Governor Francis Farms which was unenforceable with no appeal procedures. He said there needs to be standards City-wide. He said this was all about revenues for the WSA. He characterized the Commission's work as "special legislation" for Ward 5. He referred to the 20 year deferments for new septic systems included in the draft changes and asked where the money is coming from. He said he walked the wards and had 750 signatures which he will present to the General Assembly. He spoke to the composition of the Commission as being "stacked".

Jim Boyajian: Said he spoke for 30 minutes at the General Assembly hearing and did not get shut off. He said the Commission should do the same with public comment.

Don Fife: Spoke of the WSA's 21,000 customers and how "in the field" he did not meet anyone happy with their sewer bills. He said people wanted to disconnect and that 90% or more of the people are upset with their bills. He referred to an 80 year old woman "Fran" he had met at a function the previous evening. He questioned the statement that sewers increased real estate value and said he would not buy a house with sewers.

Gene Nadeau: Referred to Gaspee Point and grinder pump costs at \$2,500 per pump plus \$2,500 to connect which equals \$5,000 and does not include the assessment. He said that anyone being forced to connect is a hardship.

March 31st Minutes

Ms. Komar provided comments/corrections to the minutes and the amendments were accepted.

Action: Motion to approve the March 31st minutes, as amended

Moved by: Representative Ferri

Seconded by: Topher Hamblett

Motion passes (unanimous)

April 2nd Minutes

The minutes from the previous day's meeting had not yet been drafted.

Discussion – Grinder Pumps

Ms. Komar said she wants the WSA to pay for the second grinder pump. She asked about past repair and replacement data. The Chair said he was going to address this after the enabling legislation was done.

Discussion – Cesspool and Septic System Inspection Guidelines

None.

Discussion in Regards to Enabling Legislation

Discussion resumed using an updated working document dated 4/3/2014.

The group worked on the definition of "sewer service connection" at Line 83.

The group resumed discussions on Section 2.17. Ms. Komar said the timeline for phasing in sewer connections for cesspools and septic systems doesn't make sense and asked about the implications for areas of the City where sewers will not be provided. There was a lot of discussion on this section of the enabling and the trigger dates for sewer connections. In addition to Subsection B 1, Ms. Komar was opposed to Subsections B 2, 3, and 4. Mr. Boyd suggested being prepared with alternative provisions. The penalty provisions at Lines 610 and 611 which apply to the deadlines outlined in numbers 1 through 4, were moved to the end of that section. Line 621 was made consistent with the other sections and changed to sewer service provided "on or after January 1, 2020".

In addition to the hardship waivers authorized in Subsection D, the group added language requiring the WSA to establish incentive programs for sewer connections.

The group also discussed an effective date for the legislation and deadlines for the WSA to promulgate regulations responsive to the enabling legislation changes.

The next Commission meeting dates were scheduled for April 4th at 12:30 PM (previously scheduled) at the offices of the Warwick Sewer Authority.

Councilman Ladouceur adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:45 AM.