

**Mystic River Watershed Municipal Subcommittee**  
**Thursday, July 29, 2010, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm**  
**Reading Public Library, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**  
**64 Middlesex Avenue, Reading, MA**

**Begin Meeting, Review Agenda, Introduction**

The next meeting of this group will be on October 28<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 – 1:30 in Winchester.

**Municipal Subcommittee & Representation**

Municipal Subcommittee Purpose

It might be beneficial to draft a short list of local municipal level projects to help reinforce why this subcommittee is critical. This might be something we can hand to the board of selectmen to show how municipal actions are critical to the watershed as a whole.

What do we want to accomplish here (goals and objectives?). The original understanding is that the group would focus on MS4 and water quality rather than on planning. Is open space really in the prevue of planning people, etc?

Development usually involves sewer upgrades and municipalities will be aware of upcoming projects that might provide and opportunity for open space.

Steering committee plans to discuss both technical and planning ideas. The committee needs to rely on municipalities to get information to towns. This subcommittee may decide that MS4 is the hot issue and will spend time addressing requirements and issues.

The municipal group would like to focus on stormwater and water quality (not open space). There aren't many structures being torn down and there is little opportunity for large tracts to create open space. Stormwater and MS4 regulations can be used to take care of water quality.

In Woburn, open space is a critical component of land make-up. Open space is a policy decision. Those policy decisions are outside of this group. Jay Corey can bring information back from the community, but open space presentations might be best made to those making policy decisions.

Medford – The municipal group is a good forum for to share stormwater regulations with eachother so that they can be brought back to those making decisions in the communities.

Winchester – been working on flood mitigation project which speaks to coordinating regulation.

There is a lot of commonality between the municipal group and the science committee.

The municipal subcommittee has indirect representation on the Steering Committee. Municipalities are supposed to be informing the two representatives to bring issues up to the steering committee. What would the two municipal representatives be bringing back?

This group should focus on its own priorities. The MS4 permit is under discussion by water quality advocates. It is important for municipal officials and leaders to have information that they can share. The municipal representative will bring that information forward to the Steering Committee.

Ideally, the Steering Committee will examine what needs to be done to improve water quality. That discussion will be grounded through a check with municipal officials to ensure that what is being proposed can really happen and that it makes sense with DPW and town engineers.

Informed representatives attend the Steering Committee meetings and when discussions come up, these representatives can chime in. It provides an alternative to informal discussions or no discussions about important issues that have big impact on improvements of water quality.

At the most recent Steering Committee meeting, the group was discussing its goals. This subcommittee helps to determine whether the goals set by the Steering Committee are feasible and realistic.

It seems that this subcommittee is reactionary to the steering committee, but information can go both ways. The group should be looking at two different tasks –

1. reaction to steering committee -- Reps should come to us about what they are kicking around at steering committee level.
2. proactive approach -- listen to what communities are doing and bring that to the steering committee.

The two representatives should report back to the municipalities about what is going on at the Steering Committee.

Is fishable, swimmable, boatable by 2025 a realistic date and goal for municipalities?

- PO42-500 was the original CWA in 1972. Woburn did drainage bond for \$6.8M and there still isn't a final MS4 permit. A lot of munis are trying to stay ahead of the envelope and trying to be proactive but with no resources this cannot be done easily.

We need to set some mutually achievable goals to try to make some changes and get some resources.

The objective for this subcommittee is to identify collective issues and to try to prioritize some solutions. EPA's Regional Administrator wants to work through the Steering Committee. We would like to create momentum and traction. If we look at solutions and

test them out thru municipal subcommittee, we can find out what makes sense and hopefully deploy national funds to this area.

How is water quality defined?

- It is broadly defined to include industrial pollutants and stormwater. EPA is looking at the whole suite of pollution.

We need cities and towns to come forward with plans for clean water quality. If everyone tackled this problem of a reasonable objective and goal, what would it be?

- Woburn has 600 overflows, many of which are private. There are 15 tributary areas with high bacteria levels. The town is cleaning and tv-ing areas. At the end, they hope to get bacteria levels down to legal thresholds and then move upstream. The town is looking to add ordinances and is looking at doing this within 5 years. The MS4 permit is driving this.

The goal of this subcommittee should be a topic for a future meeting. Between now and next meeting everyone should come up with some ideas of what the goals should be for discussion.

- Without funding the goals are not realistic.

The municipalities are critical to making a realistic goal. The Steering Committee cannot come up with something realistic without this group.

The Town of Reading has stormwater enterprise. It costs \$40/household and the town manager does not want it to go any higher. Reading had good resources, but the rebound in other cities and towns to regain state funding may take 3-5 years. The state isn't rebounding, and many cities and towns are still going downhill.

The stormwater utility is a good subject. Medford did a study and decided it was not feasible in their city. As permit implementation costs go up, then utilities might be a good discussion. George can present on his enterprise at the next meeting.

### Representation

- Andy DeSantis would still like to be representative from the lower watershed for Chelsea, MA.
- Beth Rudolph of Winchester is still willing to maintain representative role for the upper watershed.
- George Zambouras of Reading will continue to chair the subcommittee.
- Representation will re-voted on an annual basis.

### **Open Space Presentation and Discussion**

#### Steering Committee Open Space Group Report-out

Municipalities can be involved and helpful to this effort. We need to see how this fits with municipal open space planning. Municipalities can help by supplying resources to replicate this in other communities – someone with knowledge of the town and trail

system. The municipalities should share their priorities with this group so they can be in synch.

Brownfields (BF) are more of an issue in the lower watershed. It is clear that some connections between trails are missing and some improvements could make connections easier. The open space group had a presentation by EPA's BF program at the last meeting to discuss restoration of BFs and acquisition of properties.

There is a project where Tuft's Boathouse and River's Edge developments are. There is substantial revitalization as the Telecom Parcel. Is there value in updating our understand of connections and open space?

Should this mapping project be expanded to the whole watershed? If so, the group will need local contacts to help. These contacts are people who know everything about each stretch of water in the watershed. If this pilot was expanded to the entire watershed, it would improve our understanding of the watershed and could eventually be download to a watershed-wide platform.

This project was fairly easy and too only a few weeks. In that time, we learned a lot about these specific segments (Somerville, Charlestown, Everett), such as connectivity, and open space available.

When thinking about BF revitalization, we need to be cognizant about risk assessment.

Through the DEP program, new owners can be innocent parties and have protection from liability.

When the Open Space pilot project idea was brought back to the steering committee, groups thought it would be good to lay the WQ data on these maps as well. Use WQ as an identity factor for what is a priority at these sites.

We would like to use this kind of mapping for future projects. Mayors, etc. are starting to see that the healthy and cleaned up river is an attractive tool. You can enhance the whole frontage of the river and there can be spin-off benefits.

Medford – It might be useful to identify what potential improvements might be and how to incorporate LID ideas so that if/when pathways are made they can be done with sustainability in mind. Some parcels are owned by the T, so it might be important to include them in the discussions so that they can think about adopting LID improvements.

- MBTA might be interested in being in the conversation with regard to orange line bridge and giving up some land.

This project was done at very low cost and with few resources. It was done very quickly so that it can be replicated in other communities.

There are places to explore further: Aberjona Pathway, Cambridge, and Belmont. In Woburn there are stretches that could be done. There are also areas between big box stores, but most of the area is privately owned homes.

### **Continued Stormwater Discussion, MS4 Requirements, and shared efforts and common watershed interests**

EPA is in the process of reviewing the comments to the draft MS4 permit and is drafting responses to them. The comments are all listed on our website. We expect the permit to be finalized roughly by the end of the calendar year. The NH permit is a little bit ahead of the MA permit.

During last meeting there was discussion about meeting requirements to MS4 and regional collaboration and/or joint purchases. Joan Blaustein spoke with Martin Pillsbury (MAPC) about how the agency can help with the outreach and educational component.

- SuAsCo (Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Watershed) has put together public education and outreach materials where participation and involvement morphed it into a subscription service. Municipalities can sign up per year to receive materials that will meet public outreach and education to meet components of the permit
- There are discounts available when communities order together by organizing joint subscriptions for the materials.

Another idea is to collaborate on stormwater ordinances and bylaws. There are models available but working with them requires one-on-one tweaking.

EPA is looking at stormwater bylaws and LID pieces in terms of providing technical assistance tools. The agency looked at impervious cover in a community and is developing a series of technical tools that communities can use to walk thru creating ordinances. We are trying to do a few communities throughout the state. We have been looking at public outreach and we've seen the SuAsCo stuff.

### **Announcements:**

- Sat Aug 7<sup>th</sup> – Mystic River Festival by La Comunidad in Everett.
- MyRWA received grant for WQ monitoring and analysis for the next few years.
  - Hot spot and find it/fix it.
  - Want to make resources available to municipalities
  - Part of program is to respond to municipal officials. – if problem is discovered and want to find out what is going on.
  - Will have capacity to do testing and analysis at a location.
  - Want to make it available to municipalities if it's of use.
- Please let the community know if you are out sampling in their town.

### **Follow-ups and Wrap Up**

- EPA will send links to the open space maps
- EPA will send links to the MS4 permit comments

**Attendance List:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Email</b>
Glenn Clancy	Town of Belmont	gclancy@belmont-ma.org
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