

Mystic River Watershed Water Quality Subcommittee
Thursday March 19, 2015
1:00 – 2:30 pm

EPA Region 1, Roosevelt Room, 6th Floor
5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA

Meeting Summary
Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute

Action Items

EPA:

- Provide Patrick Herron with the information received on fish sampling procedures.
- Identify communities where successful public education, outreach, and engagement programs or funding mechanisms have been completed and determine a timeline for convening the associated workshops.

Welcome, Introductions, Review Agenda and Objectives

Facilitators from the Consensus Building Institute, Eric Roberts and Griffin Smith, welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda. The purpose of the meeting was to share updates since the last meeting in November 2014, discuss priority strategies needed to meet the needs/interests of the municipalities when developing a Municipal Technical Assistance Program related to MS4, and to establish a timeline and assign responsibilities for implementing the strategies.

Updates and Review of Past Action Items

Group members provided the following brief updates and information about past action items:

- *Dartmouth, Massachusetts Fishing Derby* – The fishing derby was suggested as a potential, low cost method to obtain fish for tissue samples for the fish advisory study being completed with assistance from MyRWA. For 17 years the derby at Cornell pond has provided the EPA with free fish to sample as part of a superfund remedial process. Fish that do not meet the sample size are released. The participant who catches the largest fish is awarded a \$50 cash prize.
- *Federal agency participation in the steering committee and the water quality subcommittee* – Regarding a past action item, Dave Mendlesohn is still at FEMA and could be engaged to help achieve some of the priority actions under the water quality goal. Similarly, Annie Bastoni of the MassDOT will be joining the steering committee and the water quality subcommittee.
- *Mission and Priorities document* – Suggested changes from the last water quality subcommittee meeting were incorporated into the mission and priorities document. After today's discussion additional changes will be incorporated to the updated document.
- *Science Forum* – the Science Forum is scheduled for April 9 at the EPA offices; some members of the water quality subcommittee will be presenting.
- *Meeting with MassPort* – This meeting is in regards to a concern raised at the December Steering Committee (see meeting summaries from June and December 2014) about the use of CAD cells in Chelsea Creek; the meeting is still being organized.

Priority Actions to Meet Municipality Needs Regarding the MS4 Permit

The group reviewed information pertaining to municipal feedback about the MS4 Municipal Technical Assistance Program that the Consensus Building Institute gathered at a municipality subcommittee meeting in November 2014 and through additional outreach to municipal representatives. The feedback from the municipal

representatives generally fell into the categories of technical assistance, information and collaboration, and funding.

Newt Tedder, EPA, commented on the public comments received about the draft MS4 permit and the type of technical assistance the EPA will provide. Approximately 350 people provided roughly 1,700 pages of comments. A contractor will review and categorize the comments, all of which will be made publicly available on the EPA website. After reviewing the comments, EPA will select topics for targeted technical assistance. Newt commented that the technical assistance created by EPA's permit staff will supplement and not duplicate efforts of the Water Quality Subcommittee to provide technical assistance to the municipalities in the Mystic River Watershed.

Participants commented on the challenge of engaging municipalities in preparation for MS4 implementation. They noted that municipalities are not deeply invested in MS4 preparation at this time since the permit is in draft form and there is no sense of urgency; however, municipalities will be more engaged once the permit is finalized. Additionally, it was suggested that the technical assistance needs will depend on the details of the final permit and that as municipalities will recognize the areas where additional technical assistance is needed as they begin to implement the program. The group briefly discussed participation in the water quality subcommittee and the municipal subcommittee. It was noted that many of the lower Mystic River communities did not seem to be engaged. Participants suggested reaching out to the municipalities to see if they are interested in connecting with the group and sharing information.

The group discussed ideas for workshop topics or areas of assistance. Suggested workshop topics included the development of requirements for municipal areas that do not have TMDLs; assistance with achieving chloride reduction; technical assistance for complying with the Phosphorous requirement of the permit in the Mystic Watershed; information about successful IDDE programs; funding mechanisms that will enable communities to generate the revenue needed to implement the MS4 permit on schedule; and public education, outreach and engagement at the community and regional level to build awareness of water quality issues and MS4 requirements. The group directed their focus toward more general assistance that would be applicable to all municipalities prior to permit finalization and seemed to support the ideas of workshops on funding mechanisms and public education, outreach and engagement at the community and regional levels. Regarding the funding mechanisms, some participants noted that municipalities could encounter challenging situations if they wait until the permits are finalized to figure out how they will fund implementation. Participants also noted that public education and outreach information could help municipalities articulate the importance of MS4 and generate the public support for water quality initiatives that would enable the passage of municipal funding mechanisms.

Participants suggested that the format for the workshops could include roundtable discussions and/or presentations from community representatives that have successfully implemented funding mechanisms or completed public outreach, and time for question and answer and group discussion. The presentations could provide an overview of the situation the presenter faced, the remedies that were sought, what was done and how, and the outcomes and lessons learned from the efforts.

EPA will convene internally to identify communities where successful public education, outreach and engagement programs or funding mechanisms have been completed and to determine a timeline and next steps for convening the workshops. It was suggested the meetings could occur in the fall.

Future Agenda Items

Participants suggested that contaminants in Chelsea Creek sediment be a topic of a future Water Quality Subcommittee agenda.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 pm.