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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

Meeting Minutes

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Sewer Feasibility Committee

Date of Meeting: Thursday, August 22, 2024 - 6:00PM at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

Members Present: Dave Mance (chair), Gail Tiffany, Mike Cichanowski, Chrissy Hawkins of Dufresne Group, Eamon Mulligan, Art Whitman and Chris Ponessi. Also present was Operations Coordinator, Jen Holley.

1. Call to order

The meeting came to order at 6 p.m. Mr. Mance announced that the meeting would cover the report of the consultants on the study area, and next steps.

2. Conflict of Interest statement

3. Presentation and Discussion of "30% Report"

Ms. Hawkins spoke about the report's documenting the need for a community system, which revolves around health, sanitation, and safety concerns; aging infrastructure; and allowing for reasonable growth.

She noted that state regulations allow for replacement of failing systems on small parcels in a so-called "best fit" scenario. It will not permit enlargement of those systems. Most of the parcels in the study area are smaller than half an acre, older than 20 years (90% are grandfathered), and many make use of dry wells. Dry wells are no longer permitted by the state regulations and may not be modified.

Projected wastewater flows are as follows: Estimated Existing Flow (2024) 10,923; Population Trend Increase 1 280' Future Expansion/Growth 2 TBD; Estimated Projected Flow (2040) 11,203. She said she's left the future expansion blank for the time being, in the expectation that the committee will have some thoughts on what goals it might be targeting. Mr. Mance said he thinks their goal is to have excess capacity so as to be able to make use of now-vacant parcels the town owns next to Cole Hall. He said he thinks those few lots that might be large enough to install new systems, should they be desired, should do so on their own lots rather than sending the flows to the new community system. Ms. Tiffany suggested that some existing units might be added-to, but would need to connect to the community system because the parcels are so small to manage the additional flows.

The committee discussed the nature of the soils on the town-owned lands next to Cole Hall. Mr. Ponessi said his team has staked out the test pits in that area. He expects to dig to twelve feet or so. Mr. Ponessi suggested that the committee consider assisting landowners with highly problematic sites such as mound systems on Route 67 near Twitchell Hill Road that are built on high water table soils. Mr. Mance suggested considering the old Eagle Square system to handle the houses near the trout ponds.

Mr. Ponessi and Ms. Haskins said the school is operating at significantly less than capacity.

Mr. Whitman said he's very concerned about Cleveland Avenue; he admitted that the street shouldn't be pumped to the new system, but could those flows be managed elsewhere? Mr. Mance and Mr. Ponessi

wondered whether that area isn't underlain by very bony, fast-draining gravel. Mr. Mance wondered whether that neighborhood might connect to a local community system, a private system, and if so, would it be cheaper than installing conventional or enhanced systems lot by lot. It was noted that such systems require maintenance and oversight that can be easily overlooked. Mr. Mance said he thinks it's important for the town to seek to solve the issues near the trout ponds.

Ms. Haskins asked that if the study area should be expanded, she will need to know soon. Mr. Mulligan pointed out several issues with expanding significantly into the village including setbacks for water to sewer and pipe sizing. Mr. Cichanowski noted that an existing lot on the south side of the Cole Hall parcel and owned by the Town could be used. Various system options were discussed: pumping, gravity, septic tanks on private property vs. none with all liquid piped, and others.

Ms. Haskins said the archaeology for the test pits is done (though more archeology needs to be done). Mr. Ponessi said it will probably be three or four weeks before the test pits are dug.

As for next steps, Mr. Mance suggested the committee meet again after soils are understood. Mr. Ponessi said his team will provide a maximum capacity. The various committees can then manipulate that information according to their needs for, e.g., a community center or new housing.

Ms. Haskins will be responsible for designing the collection system, while Mr. Ponessi's team will be in charge of designing the treatment system at the Cole Hall property.

Ms. Haskins said some towns offer loans or payment provisions to replace failed systems.

4. Other business

5. Review of action items

6. Adjournment

Ms. Tiffany moved to adjourn at 7 p.m. Mr. Cichanowski seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.