Shutesbury Water Resources Committee

Minutes from June 13, 2016 Meeting

**Members Present**:

Paul Lyons, Acting Chair

Mark Rivers

Al Werner

Tim Cook

Nancy McGarigal (Recorder)

**Meeting opened at 7:05 pm**

1. Minutes from April 11, 2016 were approved (May meeting was skipped).
2. Tim Cook has graciously volunteered to be the new Committee Chair for a 1 year term. His term starts with the next meeting.
3. Follow-up from last meeting:

* As noted in the April notes, Paul has contacted DCR/Quabbin officials about AT&T long line which occurs in Shutesbury and on Quabbin lands. They say they will investigate, but he hasn’t heard back from them.
* Mark emailed (?) information about these buried cables to some members that indicates even unsheathed lines (which are common) are not considered an environmental issue.
* An automated weather station has been approved by USGS, but funding is not final. Clif Read from MA DCR is trying to facilitate this for town hall well site #032. An automated weather station would complement the automated water level setup that the USGS has indicated they want to move from the Pelham well to Shutesbury.
* Paul to check with April and Mike to see when best days of week are to meet. The committee may switch to meeting from the 2nd Monday to the 2nd Thursday of each month.

1. Town meeting recap
   * Al gave powerpoint at Town Meeting that summarized the water level changes at the town hall well monitoring site #032. The primary take home message is that the water level is not falling, at least not in the short term. Water levels seem robust and are recovering in spring time. He also talked about the conductivity monitoring and received good feedback from meeting attendees that the information was interesting. A question was raised from a resident about whether cyanide was a concern in Shutesbury. Al responded that it was not naturally occurring, and wasn’t sure what a source could be, and that it was not something being monitored
   * Al will send his powerpoint around to committee members. Also, Al will send the figure he used in presentation with “relative water levels” to Jamie (website assistance)
2. Final decisions on website updates
   * Should be an item at next meeting
3. Monitoring well project and conductivity monitoring updates
   * Al pulled the conductivity loggers from the field. The new ones recorded through a couple big storms. Data has been downloaded. A new conductivity logger has been ordered after realizing one of the new ones was a marine logger. After returning ones borrowed, the town owns one conductivity logger and is in the process of purchasing a second one with year end funds.
   * Al will put the one functioning conductivity logger back into Roaring Brook soon.
   * Al and Paul plan to download the well data loggers within the next week. They will let the other committee members know of the day in case others want to join
4. Future direction and priorities
   * Paul read the committee charter as a reminder of our charge – a focus on quantity and quality of water resources.
   * We discussed how the committee’s work on water quality has been limited and we brainstormed some ideas. We wondered how we could encourage people to do water quality testing and allow us access to the data so we could learn from results. However, a concern was expressed about legal ramifications with disclosure if a water quality issue was discovered. Would the BoH have to be notified? Could there be impacts on property values onsite and adjacent? What if we just asked for results anonymously? Could we effectively analyze results if we didn’t know which household they were from? A decision was made for Al to get permission to talk with the Town’s legal counsel to confirm what information we could request from residents, if we sponsor a water quality testing program, and how we could use the information to analyze and show results.
   * In order to incentivize participation in water quality testing we thought about offering a discounted price (e.g. “half price”) to “100 households”, perhaps subsidized by town funds (e.g. match with 25 to 75% of costs). Or, we could hold a raffle for one “free” test.
   * The committee could get the sample bottles to a central location in town and transport samples to the labs as a service. Access to a refrigerator will be required! Al mentioned that we may be able to use BOH refrigerators I basement of townhall
   * Another idea is to negotiate a reduced fee for water quality testing with one of the laboratories (e.g. Quabbin Analytical Lab or Howard Lab) if we could guarantee a minimum number of households. Tim will contact these two companies to check on whether we could negotiate a deal. We agreed that testing for nitrites and nitrates, and any other contaminants from septic systems, should be included in the package we negotiate.
5. Next meeting: Date and Agenda
   * Next meeting pending a check with Mike and April…potentially Thursday, July 7. Nancy will not be able to attend.
   * A potential agenda item is to look at a full year’s worth of water level data. Need to think about a standardized way of displaying data. Right now Al has the data captured in a spreadsheet that shows “relative changes in water level.” Paul would like to see data displayed such that data points on a figure go up with increase in water levels. Its more intuitive that way.
   * Need to provide Jamie (website assistance) data to put on website.

**Summary of Action Items from Meeting**

1. Paul to check with April and Mike to see when best days of week are to meet
2. Al will send his powerpoint from town meeting around to committee members.
3. Al will send the figure he used in presentation about “relative water levels” to Jamie (website assistance)
4. Al will put the one functioning conductivity logger back into Roaring Brook soon.
5. Al and Paul plan to download the well data loggers within the next week and will let the other committee members know of the day in case others want to join
6. Al will get permission to talk with the Town’s legal counsel to confirm what information we can request from residents, if we sponsor a water quality testing program, and how we could use the information to analyze and show results
7. Tim will contact water quality testing companies to check on whether we could negotiate a discounted price if we could get 100 households to participate.