

Ossipee Aquifer Steering Committee
Work Session
Thursday October 22, 2009
10am-12pm GMCG Office
Minutes

Present:

Blair Folts, GMCG Executive Director
Paul Davis, Local farmer/business owner
Kate Davis, Local farmer/beekeeper/business owner
Mark McKonkey, State Rep./business owner/Ossipee
Kamal Nath, Effingham Conservation Commission
Bob Morency, RCAP Solutions/Ossipee
Willie Farnum, Tamworth BOS
David Little, Tamworth Planning Board
John Shipman, Ossipee Watershed Coalition/Freedom
Tara Schroeder, GMCG Program Director

Ordinance work update and timeline from reps: Introductions were followed by an update from John about the recent LRPC presentation by Erica and John to the Freedom Planning Board in September. John stated that he has been pushing for the PB to work on the aquifer ordinance this year because he feels that the majority of members would support the effort. Concerns arose about how quickly PB and BOS members would be able to get on board, and that there needs to be more education and clarification about definitions in the template ordinance. John has mixed feelings about the process, and does not want to push the ordinance through if it would fail at town meeting because people don't know enough about it and it doesn't get all of the PB/BOS support, and then is shelved for the next few years. Towns have too many other things on their plates between work force/elderly housing, social services, etc.

Kamal described his experience with the wetlands ordinance drafting for Effingham, which was given to the PB two years ago. He feels that if there is one individual to block the ordinance on PB/BOS/town, don't go for it; if there's no one against it, it should be approved. Mark M. seconded this opinion. John asked the group if they had a sense of whether or not people understood the link between economics and the environment, and the benefits of such an ordinance. Blair mentioned that Walter Bailey from Maine would be a great speaker to inspire others to support drinking water protection ordinance work in the Ossipee Watershed; he just won an award for his efforts creating an ordinance for Parsonsfield which kept Nestle from setting up a bottling plant there recently.

Willie suggested that the watershed towns adopt similar ordinances for consistency, and that the ordinances shouldn't change too much from town to town to offer consistent levels of protection for shared water resources (ie. same definitions across the watershed). Blair stated that it is important for towns to own the ordinance and tweak it to their needs. The group

then discussed the long range picture and whether or not the group would be better off to be congealed and all present the ordinances at the same time. The group agreed that there is value in operating as a watershed community. David suggested that the group couldn't do education and outreach until the ordinance language had been drafted and definitions, and boundaries from the overlay had been determined.

John and Bob brought up the fact that Madison just created an aquifer protection ordinance not too long ago, and that this could be used and the language could be used as a foundation for the ordinance drafting, along with the state's, and that perhaps because this ordinance has already been adopted, other towns will be more likely to follow suit. Bob suggested plucking the main concepts from Madison's ordinance to frontload the draft ordinance for towns, and John added that the group should look at Madison's ordinance to see how they settle boundary disputes, site specific uses, prohibited uses, etc.

Mark stated that politically, the issue of groundwater crosses both party lines at the state level so long as there is a focus on conservation issues and staying out of the withdrawal issue. He agreed that one person can ruin a proposed ordinance's chances for adoption and all of the group's hard work. He suggested that more outreach would be necessary to garner support, and that the grant should be extended. He suggested the PTO and Freedom Community Club as important groups to contact and engage in this process. He also recommended identifying properties that would likely be impacted by the ordinance and stumbling blocks for ordinance adoption early on, and bring these folks into the fold early.

Tara referred the group to the agenda and some questions to consider as the group moves forward with general outreach and education about drinking water protection as it also continues to work on drafting ordinance language and create overlay districts. Some of the group's suggestions follow the various questions raised in italics.

Goals & Targets for 2009-2011 for Public Outreach & Education Campaign

*Who do we need to reach to be successful in your town?

BOS, businesses, PB, folks to be impacted or have potential issues with the ordinance boundaries. One on one connections should be made w/ town officials. There will likely be a variety of levels of involvement and support, as with Bob's experience with the Waukegan Watershed group. This group should go to the PB's to get input on prohibited uses, overlays. There should be a rep. from each PB at these meetings in the future. It is difficult to say – in one case, the BOS was formally in support of something, on the other hand, as individuals they were in opposition. Knowing who your objectors will be is important; identify landowners/overlay with tax map and ask for their input...a letter stating "you are in primary recharge...this is what the ordinance means for you..." There won't be too many businesses and homeowners in primary recharge in each town.

*What points should be emphasized and what do you anticipate will need clarification or special attention?

Economy tied to clean water should be emphasized. There needs to be education of what the ordinance will mean on the ground. Consistency is important.

*What is the best way to reach this group? (Meetings, workshops, presentations, press releases, posters, tv/video, radio, internet, etc.)

Send flyers (LRPC/groundwater definitions/aquifer fact sheet) out first before the ordinance is introduced. There needs to be regular articles in the newspapers.

*When is the best time to do outreach to this group?

One year of education needed; don't "ram it down" their throats; there needs to be time to melt current ordinances in place with new state template. Erica will be presenting to individual town PBs & BOSs in January and February of 2010 about the ordinance work and to solicit feedback from these groups.

*Who is/are the best person/people to answer questions, rally support, and keep a pulse on your town?

Town Displays: The group then discussed the idea of town displays for each town hall and maybe some other locations, including libraries, businesses, etc. The displays would have a map of the watershed and the aquifer, some watershed information, facts to link clean water with the economy, photos, and a place to hold BMP and drinking water brochures. David suggested identifying potential businesses as sponsors, and then mapping those who depend upon clean water and maybe using their logos on the display - a sort of business coalition for clean water. John suggested having the NH Lakes economic study of NH's surface waters brochure available as well. Kamal thought that there should be a specific map for each town blown up but within the entire watershed. John mentioned that the size of the display is important - they would need to be smaller for town stores.

Business Coalition for Clean Water: A discussion ensued about the idea of the Business Coalition for Clean Water idea, with local farmers/brewers and beekeepers Kate and Paul encouraging this concept. They moved to Effingham to start their business, and the primary reason they moved here was because of the well-known clean water. Paul stated they want to have a positive educational effect and change the image of what it is that he does (microbrewery), and that it is in their best interest to follow BMPs and to be on the cutting edge of sustainable practices. He and Kate are willing to hold educational forums, coffee hours and events to promote aquifer protection and education about BMPs.

The group discussed identifying two businesses from each town that are dependent on clean water (hotels, B&Bs, campgrounds, restaurants, etc.) and coming back to the group with a list of these. Once businesses for all six towns have been identified, then the group could work with them, invite them to meetings, and the businesses could present at chamber of commerce meetings to build the coalition. Avril stated she may be able to help create the map for this project as she is proficient with GIS. Bob stated that there is a lot of grant money out there for businesses to be green, and there are movements going on locally to bring businesses who want to be sustainable together, such as the Sustainability Network, MWV Green Team, GALA and Sustainable Tamworth. Avril and Paul are willing to do a newsletter/newspaper article to promote awareness based on their story and the idea of businesses creating a coalition to protect clean water.

Road Salt Workshop & BMP Projects: Tara discussed the importance of the upcoming November 5th Road Salt BMP Workshop for towns and other source water protection work that is going on in the Watershed. NH DES, T2 UNH, NH DOT, UNH Natural Resources Dept. will be presenting with Steve Whitman facilitating, and the group is asked to inform town road agents, town selectmen, contractors, DOT workers to ensure participation to make sure the right people attend. John stated that he had approached Freedom's road agent Scott Brooks about the workshop. Willie stated that too much salt is spread because of fear of liability, pressure from citizens. Education for residents about alternatives, saving taxes, etc. needs to happen to change expectations. Lakes Region TAC should be contacted as well as public works people to inform them about the meeting. Kamal stated that he requested porous pavement and low salting on 153 by the Ossipee River, but NH DOT turned down the request. The process to get signage, lower salting, etc. is a long process – you have to go through District 3 road agent, have forms signed by BOS, road agent, fire department, etc. before sending to NH DOT for consideration. The group discussed identifying at the upcoming meeting areas where GMCG has data of salt impacting streams/waterways and working from there on any alterations to winter road maintenance/salting, signage, etc.

Tara then alerted the group about the Province Lake BMP demo project November 4th and that GMCG is looking for other BMP project nominations from the Watershed (lack of response from towns, PCSs, businesses from survey sent in August).

Last Thoughts on Outreach Materials & Template Ordinance:

*Any questions, comments, changes to Aquifer Fact Sheet, Memo, Q&A's, or other materials
The group took home copies of outreach materials. Willie had a question on the salt survey for town officials and Kamal had some suggestions for the memo.

*Any questions about the updated draft ordinance

There was concern about exempting private landowners from the ordinance guidelines; Kamal felt that this defeats the whole purpose if people are still dumping oil right into the ground on their own property. He felt all individuals should be included under the ordinance. Blair suggested that perhaps private landowners have to go through a review process similar to SRCC's review process for development and activity within the Saco River corridor if they are in primary recharge or by wetlands/surface waters. The group discussed the importance of enforcement and that perhaps this is the reason why private landowners are not included under the ordinance – there is no way to enforce the guidelines. John mentioned that it will be important to engage code enforcement officers in the process of writing and adopting the ordinances as their role in enforcement of the guidelines will be crucial to its success. (Mark suggested that tax map overlay be also made and that group contact land owners over important aquifer land FIRST so that they would buy into the project and understand its impact on them as landowners.)

The group discussed approaches of presenting to PBs and BOSs or to the entire watershed as well. There needs to be a person from each PB to recruit, discuss, debate, etc. the ordinance,

and it was suggested that Erica and a local business person present at PBs in April. Another suggestion was to have a public meeting in Jan/Feb to brainstorm next steps in a forum led by Steve Whitman. In the end, it was decided that a combined approach of first presenting to town boards individually, then to the entire community would be best.