

Minutes of Joint Meeting

Route 20 Sewer - Citizen's Advisory Committee and Route 20 - Sewer Steering Committee

Wednesday December 7, 2011

Attendees: Peter Abair, John Baranowsky, Andrew Sullivan, Craig Blake, Kirsten Roopenian, David Duane, Hal Garnick, Jon Danielson, Daniel Kenn and Neil Minkoff Route 20 Sewer-CAC; Joan Carlton, Bob Haarde, Eric Poch, Brian MacNamara, Bill Cossart, and Ted Pasquarello Route 20 Sewer SC.

Approval

Route 20 CAC November 9, 2011 Meeting Minutes with edits were discussed. A motion made, seconded and a unanimous vote to approve minutes as amended occurred.

Assignment

John Baranowsky was assigned as Recording Secretary for this meeting.

Discussion

Craig Blake stated that the purpose of bringing the two committees (Route 20 Sewer CAC and Route 20 Steering Committee) together this evening would be to develop: 1) itemized list of project benefits, and 2) a group list of all stakeholders. The lists would then be matched up to create a benefit/group matrix.

Benefits are greatest when the cost to benefit ratio is relatively small by comparison (to more costly or less beneficial impacts). Members should act for the common good, not only for their group or individually. Ideally, all groups and the Town at large would find sufficient benefits at reasonable costs to get behind and support the project.

Bill Cossart remarked that three allocation methods available are: 1) entire cost burden borne by those in the district, 2) entire cost burden borne by the Town tax roll, or 3) cost allocation to include both those in the district and residents or others outside the district according to an allocation formula.

Craig Blake suggested that there are more than three groups impacted; i.e. residential and commercial property owners inside and outside the proposed Sudbury Sewer District. Craig then presented a slide intended to depict all groups and sub-groups as the project beneficiaries:

The figure showed tiers. At the top level were two boxes for Property Owners within the District and Property Owners Outside.

At the next level down were Commercial and Residential Owners (within and outside)

Below this on the Commercial side were two subgroups 1) large, and 2) small.

Finally, below this was a condition qualifier; OK septic, Recently Repaired, Septic System Currently Failed (for both Large and Small In-District Commercial Property Owners).

Having presented the Owner group list, the joint-committees were asked to begin listing benefits starting with Commercial within District.

Commercial District

Ted Pasquarello stated that as a large commercial property owner he has tremendous building capacity limited by wetlands. His costs for pumping are \$8,000 per year. As his tenants largely comprise warehouse (not retail) usage and are now satisfied, he wondered what benefit would be gained by the sewer while mentioning that he wants to be a good citizen and has tried for years to come up with value scenarios but is not sure.

Daniel Kenn began a discussion on water usage. Craig asked Daniel to hold that thought for later on as he would like to first complete the benefit list by group matrix before moving on.

Craig suggested three cost allocation categories for expenditure need consideration: 1) Build cost, 2) annual operation and maintenance cost, 3) hookup cost.

Andrew Sullivan asked whether property owners would be required to tie-in and if so, should this be considered a benefit? Craig responded by saying it depends, for one dollar surely that would be a bargain, but at some point not so much so. This is the task at hand, to weigh cost against benefit.

Bob Haarde mentioned drinking water quality community-wide and a more vibrant business district as benefits.

Craig mentioned added values to the commercial properties translate into increased tax revenue as a benefit Town-wide.

Bill Cossart stated that the water-quality benefit should not be overplayed at Town Meeting, while stating that he favors the sewer project.

Craig suggested a proactive approach where capital cost expenditure now could result in a favorable return on investment in the future. By way of illustration, he listed Well #7 future water quality problems mitigation as a benefit derived from early sewer construction.

Bob Haarde mentioned that EColi may be a precursor to a failing system.

Both Brian McNamara and Peter Abair felt that the sewer had a broader benefit community wide while Eric Poch felt that the broader economic base was a more overriding benefit as a way to fund Town services.

Suggestions that road improvements (Union Avenue by-pass, Sudbury taking over Route 20, buried utilities) were worthy of consideration, but consensus on these were mixed. Sidewalks were listed positively.

After discussion, Craig Blake asked the joint committee to get back on sewer basics and for the time being put aside road and utility advocacy.

Kirsten Roopenian suggested that a more vibrant upscale community with restaurants would add beneficial value.

Andrew Sullivan suggested that a more stable commercial district as positive.

Eric Poch highlighted that the increased flow capacity to 450,000 gpd within the district offers positive opportunities for redevelopment.

Town-Wide Benefits

Jon Danielson cautioned against a situation which pits one group against another asking what is in the project for residents? He suggested that protecting water supply and cleaning up utilities are positive impacts.

Craig Blake offered the following for this category: protect water supply, reduce taxes by transfer to commercial, general environmental improvements, more coherent Sudbury Center, pedestrian walking and improved traffic. Kirsten Roopenian added job creation to the mix.

Eric Poch described the possibility of a decent Town Village which would redefine Sudbury while bringing a difficult vision to reality in a comfortable, friendly, appealing streetscape through adaptive redevelopment.

Large Commercial Subcategory

Commercial use could expand while less encumbered by State and Federal regulation. Costs to maintain on-site systems will be reduced.

Hal Garnick mentioned that the ability to attract higher quality more upscale mixed-use realty.

Craig mentioned the advantage to property owners not having to worry about failing systems in the future. This could result in increased property values.

Eric also mentioned potential increased property values made possible with mixed-use incentivized, friendly 40B's.

Hal mentioned bigger tenants prefer long term lease arrangements and ability to attract quality tenants.

Small Commercial Properties

These will likely upgrade as driven by market forces should the sewer be built. Building footprints likely expands as the prior constraint is now absent.

David Duane asked the following question. Where is the master plan for capacity build-out? He stated that when his company expanded out of state, he first needed to present justification for the build-out. Why is a similar build-out plan not being undertaken for the Route 20 project?

Residential In-Service Area Subcategory

Few benefits could be articulated. The present owner may sell his property to a developer who contingent upon zoning not yet in place would stand to improve the property through adaptive redevelopment.

Also suggested was that future sewer problems would be removed in cases where problems now exist or are likely imminent.

Commercial Outside District

Only indirect benefits were articulated.

The question of why the district could not be expanded northward was asked. Eric Poch offered that Hop Brook could not be crossed, but others disagreed. "Never say never" was replied.

Neil Minkoff stated that this group may inherently be the most difficult in the matrix to find benefit for.

Daniel Kenn stated that he was willing to pay a share as a security blanket even if he didn't have to connect to the sewer.

Financials were discussed in terms of deductibles, normalized costs over time, possible Federal funding alternatives.

Ted Pasquarello then proposed that the 93 known properties within the district be sent a questionnaire asking each of property owners what they want or would like to see as the project develops. Craig Blake stated that he felt this approach would not be received seriously as the recipient would certainly want to know how much his share of the cost would be and how such costs are to be allocated. As yet this information has not been compiled.

A comment that benefits seemed clearer for retail commercial properties than for non-retail (i.e. Methods Machine, Mill Village) was made.

The benefit-group list matrix discussion concluded.

Capital, Operation and Maintenance, Tie-In Costs, Allocations, Breakdowns

Ted Pasquarello remarked that a likely cost allocation would be 75/25%.

Craig Blake reiterated the three bucket comprised of capital, operations and maintenance, and tie-in further stating that the matter will be taken up at the next CAC meeting.

Hal Garnick remarked that at 2% interest rates are historically low.

Craig asked whether we want to drill down capital costs to verify the Weston and Sampson construction cost estimate. A favorable consensus was not reached on this matter. Craig indicated that these

committees need to come up with the best plan to make it work to bring to the Town to decide. Mention again was made of the three cost centers.

Some discussion took place with respect to sidewalks and utilities as a mega-project. This did not seem to generate much interest.

The Steering Committee will meet on December 15. They plan to talk about cost allocation at that time.

Proposed Groundwater Recharge Volume

David Duane reiterated his request for a business plan to clarify impact of excess wastewater capacity.

Bill Cossart remarked that until recently no excess capacity existed or was envisioned. No suitable-site (within the District) was found. Tie in to East Marlborough or MWRA had been ruled out. This all changed as a result of a very favorable hydro-geologic test taken at Curtis Middle School site (which indicated support for up to 450,000 gallons per day).

Since then, the Town began to consider disposal options well in "excess" of required flow-rate. Bill Cossart also indicated that there was a strong likely-hood that DEP would not permit the full build-out (to 450,000 gpd).

This development raised many questions and if such is the case, the entire planning effort could be at risk. Andrew Sullivan suggested that the CAC web-site link directly to the Route 20 Technical Advisory Group as all three of these groups share common purposes. John Baranowsky mentioned that at the last CAC meeting, Lisa Eggleston began to address some of these issues.

After discussion, it was determined that both Jody Kablack and Lisa Eggleston would be invited to the December 15, 2011 Route 20 Steering Committee Meeting. Furthermore, members of the CAC were encouraged to attend this meeting to take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about past and emerging planning efforts.

At 9:16 P.M. a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Vote passed unanimously.