

Special Meeting
Water Commission Minutes
9/27/2021

Members Present in person: none

Members by Zoom: Bard Hill, David Sander, Fran Huntoon, June Heston

Absent:

Staff Present in person: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Linda Parent, Town Clerk;

Staff Present by Zoom: Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Kendall Chamberlain, Water & Sewer Superintendent

Others Present in person: the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15

Others Present by Zoom: Brian Hehir, Rod West, Peter Brown

Called to Order: 6:00 PM

1. Welcome by David

Public Comment-

A. Kendall reported that there was a port-a-let too close to the water supply over the weekend, that there was no leakage he was aware of, and zone around well is about 200'. He suggested that when events are planned that organizers be told where to place port-a-lets. Kathy responded that the event in question was not one approved by the Town and thought the organizer could be contacted directly with the information for future event planning. Bard thought an agreement about where to place and where not to place port-a-lets could be done with the Historical Society.

B. Connie Van Eeghen said the Housing Committee was working on affordable housing and supported the proposed expansion thinking it would support the cause and provide opportunity for housing in general.

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda- none

3. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a. Discussion of capacity of proposed Gateway sewer system to handle more properties than are included in the current scope

Josh reported:

- that after speaking the engineer, he would need more information on what properties would be included to determine what to size the pipe
- that the inclusion of water could be done more quickly than originally thought by the engineer, but the Commission had not been interested so no request was made

Discussion included:

- that Bard said that this discussion has been going on for six (6) years and started with water and over time the expansion was made smaller, he did not want to go back and forth. -

- that June thought water was going to be considered and getting more information would be helpful
- that Jay asked if there would be a cost savings if water was done at the same time. Bard responded that there would need to be two (2) trenches, ten (10) feet apart and that he thought there was going to be a vote to expand the district and once there was the ability, then decide where, when and what would be done. Kendall said that he did not think there would be cost savings to do both at the same time and there was a question about what route water would take. David asked if in terms of expandability, there be any difference for water in each of the phases. Kendall replied water expansion is easier than sewer, unlike wastewater once you have a line you can continue it.
- that Bard asked if there would be a vote for the expansion of both water and sewer to have the legal authority for them but would not necessarily expand unless it was something that was wanted. He said the Reap's have had interest for a couple of years, that Phase 1 will happen as an expansion either on Route 2 or over the hill. If the vote fails their plan would be probably be over the hill and how to handle anyone that wanted to join after them would need to be addressed.
- that Peter Brown, owner of the mobile home park, said there was enough capacity at his sewer plant and fresh water that he does not need the expansion. He could not afford the infrastructure costs of the expansion and hoped that would be taken into consideration. That the residents at the mobile home park are low income and he is concerned about the cost and social impact. Peter said that Ravi Venkataraman, the Town Planner, has asked him to expand the park and he has always wanted to do what is best. If he is forced to tie in he said he would defend himself. Bard said Mr. Brown's comments make him think there should be consideration about what to vote on, that the mobile home park residents would be anxious they could not afford the expansion. Bard asked if the Commission wanted to contemplate Phases 1 and 2, make that the vote. June agreed, David agreed saying the expansion of Phases 1 and 2 could be done with the idea there could be expansion at a future time if needed. Fran wondered if we should speak with the Mobil Station and if they are not interested that should be taken into consideration. Kendall thought it should be all three phases, if not he thought there could be opposition to engineering an overbuilt system. Bard said this was territory that had been covered several times and some modest increase should not be an issue. Rod West said he thought Phases 1 and 2 are not a public project but a standalone, a private project. Bard observed that he has had conversations with the Reap's and the Mobil station owners, that the Mobil station has plans to redo their infrastructure and are interested in the expansion even if it ended at their property. He thought the voters could be asked. Peter Brown said the mobile home park has adequate sewer capacity and great water capacity so affordable housing could be added at his location without the expansion.
- that Bard asked if there should be a vote of Phases 1 and 2 that provides pricing for sewer and let the voters in area vote it up or down. June liked that option but wanted a conversation surrounding what would happen if Phase 3 was not done and new homes and/or businesses were built whether the proposed expansion would be adequate. Kendall replied there was a lot involved especially if there was a brewery located at the Reap's then it could take up all the capacity and a study would need to be done. Bard said there are things we do not know about development in any of the phases. We do know what was sized in the engineering plan and thought the Commission should stick to that. Kendall agreed with Bard's suggestion. Virginia Clarke asked if there had been any conversation with other potential Phase 3 users, Josh responded that the Lucky Spot and others have expressed interest. Bard said about two (2) weeks ago there was expressed interest, but the proposed plan did not cost out to them, after six years he said to now have the conversation happen

was difficult. He felt if they were interested they could have an engineering study done and approach the Commission.

- that Fran noted if there was a vote for Phases 1 and 2 it would be only a few people who would be voting, Rod West said seven (7) residents would be voting. Josh clarified, all the users in the current district would also be voting. Rod West said in the article prepared it was not clear, it did not look to him that the current users would be voting. Josh replied the wording was taken from the statute and it was unclear, both the Town attorney and VLCT agreed that it would be both and will be made clear with more details.

- that Kendall commented if the voting was done for only Phase 1 and 2 then the seven voters could be out voted easily, Rod West thought that would not be fair. Bard said if there is a vote to expand the district, and the seven (7) voters are outvoted, there was nothing that said the expansion had to take place because there is no obligation to do so. The voters could vote to have the expansion, then when meeting with the affected persons if it was financially not viable for them, then we would not expand. June thought that process should be defined. Fran felt, the Commission was back where they had been for some time where whether or not the expansion was feasible financially. Peter Brown agreed. Bard thought if the proposed expansion did not go out through Phase 2 it would foretell of the future of development in the gateway and some properties along the way might suffer adverse consequences. Bard did not want to impose expense on anyone who did not want to have the services.

- that Virginia Clarke thought that from a planning point of view taking water and sewer out to the gateway made sense. She thought having a procedure in place before the vote would be important as June suggested. June proposed if the process was in place all three (3) phases could be included in the vote.

- that the expansion was not ready for a vote the scope of the expansion and what the process would be for expansion obligations needed further discussion. It was also decided to contact the Reap's about what their plans were.

b. Discussion of vote to expand the water and sewer district

See above.

4. Adjourn

June moved to adjourn; Fran seconded. Roll Call Vote: Fran, Bard, June, Jay, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:58PM.