

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
Public Works COMMITTEE
Town Hall Council Chambers
April 25, 2011- Monday

Present: Ed Harrington, Chairman
Kenneth DiFazio, Vice-Chairman
Arthur Mathews, Council President
Victor Pap, Councilor
Michael Smart, Councilor

Also Present: Jeff Bina, Director, DPW
Michael Chiasson, Water and Sewer Superintendent

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Herring Run Management

Chairman Harrington called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM. This matter was referred by the Town Council after comments by constituent Tricia Pries during the “Resident and Community Comment” portion of the agenda. Jeff Bina, Director of DPW, Michael Chiasson, Water and Sewer Superintendent, and George Loring, Herring Run Warden were invited to the table. Councilor Mathews noted for the record that the Whitman’s Pond Association met on April 21, 2011 and Councilor Mathews advised Ms. Pries that the Herring Run management item was on the agenda for the 4/25/11 Public Works Committee meeting.

Councilor Mathews noted that the information in Ms. Pries address to the council reviewed her concerns with the Herring Run season management, and the lines of communication between the DPW and the Herring Run Warden. There were problems with the flood control gates last year and water level concerns.

Councilor Harrington asked Mr. Loring to review the problems during the 2010 Herring Run season. Mr. Loring reported there were 12” of rain last year. The gate swung open because of the force of the water, and got stuck on a chain. Before the gate could be closed, 10-15,000 fish were killed. 1-2% loss is the usual. The gate functioned correctly, but the extra water caused it to open wider than normal. Since then, the town carpenter has rebuilt the stop logs behind the gate, and placed hardware close behind the gate to prevent reoccurrence. The tunnel runs from Whitman’s Pond and empties out behind Brady’s. Its purpose is to keep water out of Jackson Square. Councilor Mathews asked if the gate is working correctly now. Mr. Chiasson responded yes. He is now in contact weekly with the warden. Councilor Mathews asked if it can handle significant water this year, and asked that the gate be routinely inspected this season to prevent recurrence.

Councilor Smart asked when the last magnitude of storm occurred. Jeff Bina noted that

he has met with Mr. Loring to discuss long term strategy, and that an email chain has been created to keep lines of communication open. Councilor Pap asked if the fish normally appear early as they did last year. There were insinuations that there was negligence last year. The average date the fish appear is 4/22, and it was noted that the fish were, in fact, early last year.

Councilor Smart asked if Tricia Pries could be added as an email contact in her role as President of the Whitman's Pond Association for general correspondence or relevant notifications.

Chairman Harrington also requested the issue that occurred in July be reviewed. Mr. Bina responded that in July of 2010 there was very little rainfall and the pond level began dropping. Mr. Chiasson noted that in the south cove, the sluice gate (which is scheduled to go out to bid for repairs) during the last two days of June last year, the Washington Street pumps were turned on as a result of a contractor hitting the transmission line and puncturing it. This resulted in the water leaking out and then the repair was made. While the pump ran in July to replenish Great Pond, it appears water was being pulled back from the main body. The project will avoid this in the future. Councilor Mathews noted the repair of the sluice gate should address any changes in levels in the main pond. He reiterated that good communication needs to be maintained between Mr. Loring and the DPW. Mr. Bina noted that when the pumps are turned on, Mr. Loring will be notified.

The work on the sluice gate must be completed in a two month period, beginning on June 1st. Councilor DiFazio asked about the sudden drop of the level and how quickly the water can be pumped out. Mr. Loring responded that it appears it may have been vandalism which caused the water from flowing between the two dams and draining. The water runs from South Cove into Whitman's Pond during normal conditions. Councilor Mathews asked that the committee be kept apprised of the sluice gate repairs. There was a brief discussion of the bodies of water which feed the ponds and the direct discharge of storm drains into the pond.

Chairman Harrington thanked all participants in the discussion. He noted that it appears an unfortunate set of circumstances combined to set events in place, it's been addressed and that sufficient protocols have been put in place to avoid this in the future. Councilor Mathews asked that the committee be kept updated on the construction. He also noted that the sluice gate work has been permitted by the Conservation Commission.

Adjournment

At 6:50 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Councilor Pap to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Smart and was unanimously voted.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Ed Harrington, Chair of the Public Works Committee