

For JULY 5, 2022 - UPDATE TO SELECT BOARD from Water Resources Protection Task Force

Chronology

- Authorized by BoS toward end of 2021 - strategies for insuring quality and quantity of drinking water for next 50 years, tenure of 18 months to recommendations for action, budget for start-up expenses
- Spent first two months recruiting members & identifying key issues
- Kick-off meeting late February with 16 members + alternates from SB, Planning, CPC, Open Space, Con Comm, Stream Team
 - Ex-officio Chuck Dam, Nate Desrosiers, Sue Brown; other volunteers (Fred Wales, Randi Augustine); Sue Croft
- In first 4 months, have divided up into 6 Working Teams to tackle, Usage & Demand, Supply & Sources, Climate Change, Quality & Contaminants, Awareness & Engagement, Town Responsibilities, Authority & Accountability

Public meetings on Zoom every 2 weeks with regular status reports from 2 Working Teams each meeting

- Following Open Meeting Law

Key Issues we've surfaced and are working (each looks like it will require a long-term solution, not an overnight silver bullet):

1. Protecting our watersheds - cooperating with neighboring towns, acquiring land, increasing regulatory protection
2. Finding & readying a third source of drinking water
3. Supporting DPW dealing with conventional and emerging contaminants such as PFAs
4. Encouraging real conservation, before it's urgent (e.g., reducing usage of drinking water for lawn irrigation and other outside uses)
5. Informing without alarming our citizens

Progress to report:

1. ATM voted \$80,000 budget for work on WRPTF in FY 2023
2. WRPTF engaged Scott Horsley to pick up where he left off in 1989 Study of Water Resource Protection - initial focus on Gravelly Pond watershed
3. At request of BOH, researched and suggested language for proposed new BOH Regulation to enhance public health with stronger protections from stormwater and septic runoff (delivered to BOH for legal review, circulation, public notice and hearing, etc.)
4. Staying abreast of threats to drinking water supplies from private and public construction projects in Hamilton (Chebacco Road)
5. Began forensics work on rising levels of contaminants in LSW, namely sodium and PFAs
6. Collected and began analyzing 10 years of granular data on drinking water usage by residential and other accounts by quarter.
7. Designed Citizen Survey to gauge (and to build) awareness and interest in drinking water.