



## Town of Sherborn Groundwater Protection Committee

### GPC Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, March 8, 2023

**Time:** 7:30 PM

**Location:** Zoom Meeting

1. **Call to Order**, Meeting started with a roll call vote at 7:35 PM. Members present: Tom Trainor, Stef Harrison, Andrea Stiller, Barton Kunstler, Tara Hourihan, David Sossen, Melinda O'Neill, and Steve Constantine (Associate Member). Members not present: None. Also in attendance: Frank Hess, Levi Cass, Brian Moore, Daryl Beardsley, and Courtney Ek. Review tonight's agenda (consider addition of topics not anticipated 48-hours in advance, none added). Agenda items may be taken out of order for discussion.
2. **Minutes** - Review of January 11th, 2023, and February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, meeting minutes, motion to accept (roll call vote - unanimous).
3. **Existing GPC agenda items:**
  - a. **Town well/septic GIS database ARPA-funded project** – Project updates provided by new intern Levi Cass. Levi walked us through his presentation on the project since starting in December of last year. He has moved the project from ArcGIS to QGIS which is an open-source platform that supports editing, printing, and analysis of geospatial data. This system will be used to continue capturing and mapping Sherborn's well and septic data. Levi also provided an update with progress made to the database and showed details regarding the Farm Pond Watershed & Laurel Fields. Stef asked Levi to 1) add to the instructions started by Rebecca (previous intern) for using QGIS and 2) use a different symbol to designate the septic at Farm Pond Reservation. Frank asked when this information will be available or if we must wait for the project to be complete. Tom will share what is available now with GPC members as well as send Levi's slide presentation to the group. In the future, as the project nears completion, we will need to discuss how to make the valuable information available to the Town in general.
  - b. **Planning/logistics for a GPC sponsored webinar on septic maintenance for Sherborn homeowners in 2023.** As of 3/8, 58 folks had registered for the Tuesday March 14<sup>th</sup> event. Melinda will check with Town Clerk Jackie Morris to see about setting up a proper GPC account for the web appl "NextDoor", so that more marketing on this and future GPC events can be accomplished.
  - c. **Request from Select Board – Comments on new 40B proposals.** Deferred to next meeting.
  - d. **MassDEP PFAS Initiatives:** Recent Town Hall well data shows the PFAS levels are trending downward. The exception is the town fire station # 1 well which is most recently at 66 ppt (above the MA MCL of 20 ppt for public water supplies). Andrea noted that a specific PFAS constituent, known as "NEtFOSE" has been found to be associated with groundwater near landfills. She also noted that PFAS have been identified in toilet paper, cardboard, and various paper packaging. Andrea to follow-up with an email on more details. Barton brought up that PFAS has been found in fish at Mass ponds & lakes, in addition to mercury and PCBs for which MA DPH has had an advisory for years.
  - e. **Updates on any MGL 21E hazardous waste release sites and/or new groundwater potential contamination within Sherborn and adjacent towns (General Chemical/Framingham, etc) with potential threats to Sherborn groundwater.** Tom reported that General Chemical PFAS levels for from monitoring wells and from surface samples (Course Brook) in the surrounding area have not changed appreciably over the past two years, per MassDEP posted reports. Barton noted that there was an electrical transformer issue on Morse Rd and that may contain PCBs, although the initial MassDEP 21E filing made no mention of a PCB release.

- f. **Annual Town meeting warrant article # 18 on ground-mounted solar arrays.** Stef reported that Mass towns are trying to ensure Solar bylaws are defensible. The Planning Board is trying to steer potential solar array sites away from the towns' more ecologically sensitive lands. This bylaw would designate the land under the powerline areas for large scale solar by-right, encouraging solar developers there instead of clearcutting forested land. Attorney General's office must approve all zoning bylaws and has been striking down limitations written in by Towns; there is no designated allocation or formula for how much area a town should allow large scale solar by right. Adoption of a town bylaw will require a 2/3 vote at the Annual Town Meeting. There was a question about PFAS in solar, and Daryl stated PFAS can be manufactured in the panels in a way that is encapsulated and not likely to leach. Barton asked how this prevents deforestation. Stef responded that there is no direct connection between the bylaw and deforestation, but it attempts to present more appealing properties that will avert the use of forested properties in building solar. The Planning Board is still in the process of revising the proposed by-law. Stef moved: that the GPC supports the Planning Board in its development of the large-scale ground mount solar warrant article. Tom 2<sup>nd</sup>. David recused himself from the vote. Motion passed (vote of 6-0-1).
- g. **Citizen request to GPC to present and discuss town bylaw inconsistencies on handling the definition of a "watercourse".** Tom had sent to GPC members resident Brian Moore's slide presentation "The watercourse on 53-65 Farm Rd" back in July when the comments to the Select Board on the 40B project at this site were initially being discussed. Brian stated that ConCom did not recognize the watercourse in their past review of development activities at this site. The town approved a building permit for the developer to build a single-house foundation and bring in several tons of dirt fill. Brian is looking to protect the watercourse feature at this site and raise awareness so that the town takes this type of water feature into consideration for future decisions regarding development of the site, and anywhere in Town. Brian was told nothing can be done by ConCom and BOH, and feels the town is being less stringent than the US EPA and MassDEP regulations. Tom asked: is there something missing from current Sherborn BOH or ConCom regulations that has allowed for this situation to come to this point? GPC did draw attention to this specific watercourse feature last summer in the comments provided to the Select Board on the 40B proposed at this site.
- h. Any new Outreach efforts needed? Potential topics on climate change issues, and/or drought situation? Future PFAS public forum event with Water Commissioners? Deferred to next meeting.

#### 4. New GPC agenda items.

- a. MA Drought Management Task Force – any updates on current MA drought conditions. Deferred to next meeting.
- b. Sherborn Climate and Resilience Action Plan – any updates. Deferred to next meeting.
- c. Annual Town Meeting warrant article # 14 – Land Acquisition Committee, proposed a new warrant article that provides for the addition of a new member to be designated by the Groundwater Protection Committee. Deferred to next meeting.
- d. New topics to add to future GPC meeting agendas?
- e. Melinda brought up the recent application to the Holliston Planning Board of an expansion at the asphalt recycling operation at Holliston Lowland Park. Discussion by Holliston board is around whether the operation can be grandfathered. Bogastow Brook runs right behind this property. Daryl stated that a groundwater study was completed at Holliston Lowland Park area many years ago, at the time a large wastewater/sewer treatment plant was envisioned for Holliston. Melinda will invite a knowledgeable Holliston resident to our next meeting to speak about this Holliston application regarding potential threats to both Towns groundwater.

5. Scheduling the next GPC meeting Wed April 12th 7:30 PM.

6. The meeting adjourned at 9:14 PM.