

# **SHARON WATER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WMAC) MEETING MINUTES FOR APRIL 7, 2005**

Prepared by Paul Lauenstein

Present at meeting:

WMAC Chairman Michael Birschbach; WMAC members Lealdon Langley, Paul Lauenstein, Richard Mandell, Len Sekuler, Mike Sherman, Jack Sulik and Cliff Towner; DPW Superintendent Eric Hooper; Water Division Supervisor Dave Masciarelli; Selectmen Joe Roach, David Grasfield, and Bill Heitin; Town Administrator Ben Puritz, Conservation Agent Greg Meister, and citizens Alice Cheyer and Richard Kramer

## **Summary of Minutes for the 4/7/05 WMAC Meeting**

### **1. Minutes of March 10, 2005 approved unanimously**

### **2. Open Discussion**

- Relations between the WMAC and Eric Hooper
- Emergency connection to Stoughton
- New well sites
- Memos regarding revised radio meter RFP

### **3. 2004 Annual Statistical Report (ASR)**

- Pumping discrepancy between monthly reports and ASR
- Population discrepancy between Town Clerk and ASR

### **4. Subcommittee report – Planning Board proposal**

### **5. Report of the Water Conservation Subcommittee**

- Revise washing machine rebate policy
- Add rebate for High Efficiency Toilets (HETs)
- Institute water audit program

### **6. Other Business**

- Liaison to the Water Department

### **7. Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, May 12, 2005 at 7:30 PM**

## **Detailed Minutes for the 2/10/05 WMAC Meeting**

### **1. Minutes of March 10, 2005**

The minutes of March 10 were approved unanimously.

## **2. Open Discussion**

Michael Birschbach began the meeting by commenting on the high quality of input from the WMAC members. He said the members passion for protecting Sharon's water supply arises from a desire to fulfill their responsibilities on behalf of their neighbors to see to it that the quality and quantity of Sharon's water supply is not compromised. He said the diversity of professional backgrounds of the WMAC members results issues being discussed from many points of view. He pointed out that the committee works well together, and that differences of opinion are handled with courtesy, respect and professionalism. He said that the best interests of the town are always paramount in trying to reach consensus.

Michael Birschbach then said the committee had requested the presence of the Selectmen to discuss grievances over the unfair and unprofessional treatment afforded to the committee by DPW Superintendent Eric Hooper. Michael Birschbach referred to Eric Hooper's accusations and personal attacks on individual committee members. Michael Birschbach also referred to Eric Hooper's lack of attendance at a number of recent WMAC meetings, and added that Eric Hooper's attendance at WMAC meetings is required.

### **Emergency Connection to Stoughton**

Michael Birschbach commented on a memo from Eric Hooper addressed to the WMAC and Board of Selectmen Chairman Joe Roach dated April 5, 2005 regarding Emergency Connection Specifications, which he said confuses the role of the WMAC with that of technical experts. The memo demands answers from the WMAC to technical questions that should properly be addressed to a professional engineer. He said it is the WMAC's job to identify a need for emergency backup to assure uninterrupted water supply, and the professional engineer's job to delineate the flow rates available at various alternative locations, and provide the WMAC with cost estimates. Then the WMAC can make its recommendation to the Selectmen, who make the final decision.

David Grasfield commented that he had not seen the April 5 memo. He added that the Selectmen had endorsed the three priorities of well site evaluation, emergency backup and water quality. He said it should not take 15 months to drill an exploratory test well.

Eric Hooper said the WMAC's recommendation was to evaluate just one location for an emergency backup connection to Stoughton, Cobb's Corner. He said this is reflected in the WMAC minutes.

Michael Birschbach replied that the WMAC feels that providing long-term emergency backup is the responsible thing to do for the town. The engineers should provide the WMAC with the specifications and costs of all feasible locations for such an emergency backup connection.

Eric Hooper asked what volume of flow the WMAC would deem adequate for a long-term emergency so he could provide that number to the engineer.

Michael Birschbach replied that this is exactly the type of uncooperative response from Eric Hooper that illustrates the difficulty the WMAC has in dealing with him. He said the engineers should provide the WMAC with realistic estimates of flows available at the limited number of potential connection sites, along with the respective costs of those sites. Then the WMAC would have some data to work with in

discussing the issue and making judgements and recommendations. Michael Birschbach then asked for suggestions on how to move forward.

Bill Heitin said the discussion was descending into a “he said/she said” impasse. He recommended a project management approach to moving the town forward with new water sources and an emergency hookup. He said step one is to identify the top priorities. Then Eric Hooper should create a time line to reach the goals. The time line should include progress benchmarks for each project. The WMAC, the Selectmen and the Water Department should agree on the goals and the time line, and then the Water Department should be held accountable for sticking to the agreed-upon schedule to reach the goals.

Eric Hooper responded that the questions asked in the April 5 memo must be answered before an RFP can be issued to investigate alternative emergency connection sites. What is the purpose of the emergency connection? Is it to be a 12-hour connection, a 30-day connection or a 6-month connection? Similarly, he said there were questions about which well sites to explore, and the exact locations of test wells at the Maskwonicut Street, Islamic Center and Canton Street sites. He said that because function determines design, function must be defined before an RFP with design specifications can be generated.

Michael Birschbach responded that he is comfortable with that approach. He said the original intent was for a long-term (greater than 30 days) emergency backup connection, but such a connection could also prove useful for short-term emergencies. He pointed out that the 6-inch connection to Canton at Cobb’s Corner had not been opened or tested for 20-years, and may not be serviceable due to rust or other factors.

Eric Hooper acknowledged that he too was concerned that the 6-inch connection to Canton’s water system at Cobb’s Corner might not be serviceable.

Richard Mandell said a consultant would be better able to assess the kinds of vulnerabilities the town might be exposed to. He added that it is unpredictable what kind of emergencies might arise or how long they might last.

Lealdon Langley said the threat had already been identified by the WMAC as a long-term emergency of 30 days or more. He pointed out that pumps and other parts could be obtained in a matter of days for some kinds of emergencies, but other problems like contamination might take a long time to mitigate.

Eric Hooper said there are technical questions that depend on the length of the emergency. He said a consultant is currently working on a Vulnerability Assessment (VA), and also an Emergency Response Plan (ERP). The consultant shares the concern over a long-term emergency. Eric Hooper said these plans require physical testing of the various emergency connections to neighboring towns. He added that static pressure testing, coupled with flow calculations based on pipe diameters, is not sufficient. The hydrants must be opened to determine actual residual pressure to have confidence that the water will be available in an emergency.

Eric Hooper said he envisioned three kinds of emergency: 0 to 12 hours, 12 hours to six months, and greater than six months. He said an emergency connection to Stoughton might help with the middle category (12 hours to six months), but would not be necessary for a 12-hour emergency, and would not be sufficient for an emergency lasting longer than six months. He suggested that, before spending money on an emergency connection to Stoughton which might not be sufficient to address an emergency lasting more than six months, the town should consider a direct connection to MWRA water that could also fill needs for supplementary water should they arise in the future. He said he needed clarification of these issues before he could issue an RFP for design services.

David Grasfield commented on the greater issue of process. He said it is important for Eric Hooper to attend the monthly WMAC meetings, and memos are not effective. He added that there should not longer be uncertainty about the advisability of a long-term emergency connection at this point.

Michael Birschbach asked what the roles of the Selectmen and Town Administrator Ben Puritz should be in making progress toward the goals that have been identified. He said the lack of progress with respect to well site evaluation and emergency backup indicated a lack of support for the WMAC's recommendations.

Mike Sherman said he endorsed the project management approach to the emergency backup question as well as other issues such as new wells, the iron/manganese filtration plant, nitrate mitigation, etc.

Jack Sulik said he is opposed to an emergency connection to Stoughton costing up to half a million dollars on the grounds of cost/benefit. He added that the cost of achieving all the goals prioritized by the WMAC and the Selectmen would be very high.

Paul Lauenstein responded that whereas Eric Hooper had generated a multi-year, multi-million dollar capital spending plan, it did not adequately address the three priorities identified by the WMAC and endorsed by the Selectmen. He pointed out that Eric Hooper had not responded to the WMAC's request that he generate a capital spending plan that would address these priorities.

Eric Hooper repeated that the WMAC should define the need for an emergency connection and specify the location.

Michael Birschbach replied that Eric Hooper was exactly wrong - engineers should recommend preferred locations for an emergency connection based on cost estimates. The WMAC is not in a position to estimate costs.

Bill Heitin said costs should be put on the table. A timetable should be established, and consultants hired to find out our options.

### **New well sites**

Cliff Towner said that evaluation of well sites was recommended by the WMAC 16 months ago, and again four months ago, and the Water Department instructed by the Board of Selectmen to proceed, yet in all that time no exploratory test wells have been drilled. Bill Heitin made a motion that passed unanimously at a Selectmen's meeting in early January to instruct the Water Department to investigate an emergency connection to Stoughton. Cliff Towner asked Joe Roach why nothing had happened.

Joe Roach replied that a contingent comprised of WMAC members, a Selectman, and Water Department representatives had visited Larry Barrett of the Stoughton Water Department regarding an emergency connection to Stoughton. It was a very good meeting. Stoughton indicated they would never refuse a request by Sharon to connect to their system for backup purposes. It was just a question of location. Joe Roach said the Chemung Street location was recommended strongly. He added that a letter of commitment must be obtained from Stoughton.

Cliff Towner responded that an emergency backup connection is the second priority. The highest priority is a new well. He added that iron/manganese filtration at Well #6 is also a very high priority because that well is already permitted, yet its usefulness is severely limited by iron/manganese contamination.

Ben Puritz endorsed Bill Heitin's time line approach to completing identifiable projects. He said effective communication will be needed, and assured the WMAC that Eric Hooper will be a regular attendee at future WMAC meetings. He commented that He and Joe Roach deserved the blame for Eric Hooper's non-attendance at the March meeting, saying that they deemed Eric Hooper's attendance unnecessary because the Selectmen had been unable to attend. Ben Puritz said that with respect to Well #6, the issues involved in iron/manganese removal are complex. Three alternative filtration options must be evaluated, and field demonstrations organized.

With respect to the Gobbi property, Ben Puritz said David Grasfield had unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the owners to grant the town access. Consequently, the Selectmen authorized \$3,000 to pay for Town Counsel to get a declaratory judgement in court to gain access to the property for exploratory well testing. Ben Puritz added that this matter was being treated seriously, and Town Counsel was actively pursuing it. He added that the Conservation Commission was holding up progress at the Canton Street site while they evaluate the potential impact on the wetlands by the access road and pump house.

Cliff Towner commented that he found it strange that Ben Puritz would say that Town Counsel was working aggressively on a court action to gain access to the Gobbi property. Cliff Towner explained that as recently as that afternoon Town Counsel did not even know whose name the property was in.

Ben Puritz protested that that was not correct, and that Town Counsel was actively preparing the case.

Cliff Towner replied that Town Counsel had that very afternoon telephoned Greg Meister and asked him to go upstairs to the Town Assessor's Office and look up in whose name the Gobbi property's title was listed.

Michael Birschbach said he was extremely disappointed in the poor communication in phone conversations with Ben Puritz. He said he felt like the WMAC was not being taken seriously. He said it shouldn't take nine months to write a memo to the Conservation Commission regarding the wetlands issues at the Canton Street site, and it shouldn't take 16 months to drill an exploratory test well.

Paul Lauenstein said he questioned whether Bill Heitin's time line approach would work in light of past experience with trying to get the Water Department to complete a task with a deadline. He pointed out that on January 4 the Selectmen had voted to instruct the Water Department to investigate an emergency connection to Stoughton at Cobb's Corner by February 1. He said the Water Department had responded by presenting a lengthy memo on January 11 to the Selectmen that was critical of the WMAC's priorities. He said that if Eric Hooper focused on the priorities agreed upon by the WMAC and the Selectmen instead of finding fault with them, progress might be made.

Ben Puritz responded that even though the engineering study and cost analysis had not been completed, two meetings had been held, one with the Stoughton Water Department and one with MWRA on the subject of an emergency connection at Cobb's Corner. He said that there are many complexities with a time line, and suggested that the original deadline of Feb. 1 was unrealistic.

Eric Hooper objected strongly to Paul Lauenstein's characterization of Eric Hooper's behavior as obstructionist. Eric Hooper said he presented his memo to the Board of Selectmen about the priorities

advanced by the WMAC because Eric Hooper was trying to present some of the problems with the priorities. He pointed out that it was the responsible thing to do before spending public money.

David Grasfield said all concerned should focus on producing deliverables. He said that even though he is a fiscal conservative, he advocates getting started with exploratory test wells. He said there is a good chance that some of the test wells will indicate little or no water, but that information is also valuable. He said it is time to shake of the “analysis paralysis” and commence drilling. Rate payers are paying for results, not memos. David Grasfield added that delays caused by a fear of drilling in the wrong place could result in well sites lost to development.

Lealdon Langley asked how to identify steps in the project time line. He commented that variances would be required from DEP Zone I requirements if a well was going to be permitted at the Canton Street site. He said the DEP’s David DeLorenzo would be available to assist in evaluating the site to determine if it has potential for a permit or not.

Eric Hooper said the DEP made it clear that if a site were the only viable site in town that a variance would probably be granted. He said that means all available sites must be evaluated. He pointed out that the Canton Street site would have to be located at least 100 feet into the wetland due to the proximity of a septic system in the front yard of the residence at 80 Canton Street.

Lealdon Langley said that underscores the need to research the other potential well sites in town as soon as possible. He asked what’s standing in the way?

Eric Hooper replied that 2.5” test wells have already been drilled all over town, including the Canton Street site and the Maskwonicut Street sites. He said 8” wells are much more expensive, mentioning a figure of \$45,000 for an 8” test well.

David Grasfield and Michael Birschbach both responded that these issues have already been discussed at length.

Eric Hooper said that if wetland sites are fair game, then the Islamic Center site should be reconsidered. He said he could drill 2.5” test wells at the Gobbi site after gaining access, and the Blair Circle site, but both of these sites had been ruled out by the ESS survey.

Michael Birschbach said drilling these test wells and providing the data was what the WMAC has been advocating for the past 16 months to get a better idea whether or not these sites are viable.

Cliff Towner said that since Town Counsel doesn’t even know who owns the land, it is clear that no action has been taken at the Gobbi site. He discounted the value of the ESS site screening report, saying that ESS merely regurgitated information fed to them by the Water Department and failed to even visit the sites in question.

Eric Hooper said that visiting a site does not provide much useful information regarding its potential as a well site.

Lealdon Langley said the site screening process is designed to help towns avoid the expense of drilling test wells needlessly. He said the site screening is not designed to approve or rule out sites, but rather to be used as a guide to ranking the available sites as the likelihood that they might be approved for a well. He added that there is value in demonstrating that sites are not viable because that may convince DEP to grant

variances at one or more of the remaining sites that may not conform 100%. He expressed frustration that we are getting bogged down by a “can’t do” mentality.

Eric Hooper, saying he could not be faulted for not doing his homework, produced a map of the Blair Circle site. He said there is no room for a 400’ radius Zone I at that location, and the map shows that the town does not own the land. He stated that Blair Circle is not a viable well site, and asked what the rationale was for the WMAC recommending this site.

Cliff Towner said there is about 100’ of permeable stratified drift there with water bulging out on the surface. He said the town already owns the land and access to the site is very good.

David Grasfield expressed his satisfaction that priorities have been collectively agreed upon. He cited the WMAC presenting its priorities on January 4 and Eric Hooper raising his objections on January 11 as positive examples. He said Eric Hooper has a job to do, part of which is raising constructive challenges and part of which is creative problem solving. David Grasfield repeated his call for action with respect to exploratory test wells, both 2.5” and 8”. He said another reason for completing the exploratory test wells is to determine whether nearby areas could be developed for affordable housing.

David Grasfield praised the positive, productive, focused approach of the WMAC, but suggested a need for clarification of what exactly is intended by “emergency backup”.

Michael Birschbach commented that there was a lot of pent up emotion and frustration, and encouraged anyone with a beef to speak up and clear the air.

Bill Heitin said the onus was on Eric Hooper and Dave Masciarelli to come up with a decision tree and start progressing toward the identified goals. He said it is time to do the engineering study to estimate the costs and feasibility of an emergency backup connection, and get going with emergency test wells. He recommended that a representative from the WMAC be appointed to work with Eric Hooper to develop the decision tree.

Michael Birschbach endorsed Bill Heitin’s comments.

Richard Mandell said Bill Heitin was preaching to the converted with his call for action. He asked who should monitor the time line in the decision tree to keep things on schedule.

Bill Heitin replied that that is a role for the WMAC.

Ben Puritz volunteered to work with a representative of the WMAC to keep on schedule. He said once a decision is made, as Town Administrator he will see to it that it gets carried out.

Jack Sulik said he thought the discussion so far was fruitful. He said the Water Department needs to update its Water Master Plan.

Richard Kramer said that although a Master Plan might be a good thing in the long term, at the moment there is no shortage of pressing priorities on the table, and until these pressing priorities are addressed, there is no benefit to a Master Plan Update.

Paul Lauenstein questioned the value of a Master Plan. He commented that the Water Department has produced a Master Plan Update roughly every seven years. He said that the old Master Plans provided

priorities and time lines for various projects. However, in reading them he was struck by fact that some projects that were prioritized in one Master Plan not only were not completed during the seven year interim, they were lower in priority in the subsequent Master Plan.

Bill Heitin recommended doing a Master Plan on a dual track with other projects.

Lealdon Langley said he was hesitant to endorse the idea of appointing a WMAC representative to work on a decision tree with the Water Department, saying that one person could not reflect the diversity of opinion on the WMAC.

Bill Heitin said he agreed, but said it would be difficult to create a decision tree and a time line by committee. He said this was a job to do behind the scenes and then bring it to the table for approval by the committee. He repeated that he thought it was important to appoint a WMAC member to assist Eric Hooper with this task.

Joe Roach said the WMAC clearly has strong opinions. He voiced the need to set feelings aside and work toward common goals while agreeing to disagree. He said sometimes people get hot, but it is necessary to put ill feelings aside in order to make progress.

Michael Birschbach agreed with this 100%.

Richard Kramer said his profession involves consulting in high technology, high risk, high cost situations where emotions run high. He is typically called in when companies cannot execute because of failure to communicate. Negativity from a key person can disrupt the team. Richard Kramer said that because of the critical role Eric Hooper plays with respect to Sharon's water supply, it is important for Eric Hooper to try to wear two hats simultaneously. Richard Kramer said that while it is appropriate for Eric Hooper to act as an aggressive "devil's advocate," which he has demonstrated he can do very effectively, Eric Hooper should also play a "Pollyanna" role, contributing ideas and approaches that could lead to successful implementation of WMAC proposals. For example, if keeping the well at Canton Street out of the wetland requires doing something about a nearby septic system, lay out the options rather than ruling out the site.

Eric Hooper replied that if eminent domain is on the table, then why settle for a marginal well site? If intruding into wetlands and taking homes by eminent domain are acceptable, then there are a host of viable sites in Sharon.

Michael Birschbach said eminent domain is not the way to go if it can be avoided. He asked how we could think outside the box and get something accomplished.

Joe Roach said there must be a better way than resorting to eminent domain.

Cliff Towner suggested using the road alongside the railroad tracks to access the Canton Street site. He said the cemetery owns that land but it is not being used.

David Grasfield said it is important for Eric to feel free to state that a site might involve constraints and possibly fatal flaws. He should put all potential well sites on the table and list their strengths and weaknesses, even if they include wetlands or eminent domain. David Grasfield said he would welcome Eric Hooper's thoughts on where the best sites for a new well might be.



Eric Hooper presented a map of the NSTAR site. He said his strength is that he does his homework really well. The map indicated extensive wetlands at the Canton Street site.

David Grasfield said he is a big fan of both maps and homework. He said that we must not allow hurdles to stop us in our quest for a new well for Sharon. He said there are no easy problems to solve, citing the difficulties of re-developing the Wilber School and saving Rattlesnake Hill. He pointed out that New England is densely developed so it is an enormous challenge to site a new well.

Eric Hooper said Richard Kramer was right – he (Eric Hooper) is more like Eeyore than Pollyanna. He said this is his 17<sup>th</sup> round of looking at this issue, not the first pass. He said his judgements about the available well sites were arrived at after looking at all aspects of each location, and were not off-the-cuff opinions.

David Grasfield said it was more like the 75<sup>th</sup> round and we need to move on to the 76<sup>th</sup> round and beyond. He said we cannot give up until we have a new well. He said the Canton Street site should not be regarded as a red dot on a map, but rather should be looked at from different angles such as Cliff Towner's suggestion of the road along the railroad tracks.

Bill Heitin asked what's the next step.

Michael Birschbach asked Eric Hooper if he was willing to work with the WMAC.

Eric Hooper replied that he was willing, but the WMAC must be willing to do the same amount of homework if they want to be taken seriously. He said he is currently engaged in developing the Vulnerability Assessment and the Emergency Response Plan, and asked how the WMAC would propose to determine the appropriate amount of water for adequate emergency backup.

Michael Birschbach said Eric Hooper's body language was communicating that he (Eric Hooper) was not buying in to the idea of working cooperatively with the WMAC. He asked again if Eric Hooper was willing to work with the WMAC, yes or no?

Eric Hooper said yes, if the WMAC members are willing in turn.

Michael Birschbach said he (Michael Birschbach) had already demonstrated his commitment to cooperating. He asked Ben Puritz if he were on board as well.

Ben Puritz readily agreed.

Michael Birschbach thanked Eric Hooper and Ben Puritz for participating in the discussion and agreeing to work cooperatively with the WMAC.

Joe Roach said he would like to see more frequent joint meetings with the WMAC, the Water Department and the Selectmen.

Michael Birschbach suggested calling a joint meeting on a quarterly basis.

Richard Mandell invited the Selectmen to drop in on WMAC meetings any time.

**Memos regarding revised radio meter RFP**

Paul Lauenstein said he regretted bringing up another sore subject, but he wanted to discuss an email sent by Eric Hooper to Michael Birschbach on January 28, 2005 in which Eric Hooper falsely accused Paul Lauenstein as follows:

*“Please pass this information to Paul Lauenstein who recently tried to get the final document from the IG office, representing himself as a town official from the water department.”*

Paul Lauenstein denied both allegations. He said he has worked very hard to further the best interests of the town’s water supply as a member of the WMAC for the past year and a half, and he did not appreciate being falsely accused in this way by Eric Hooper.

Michael Birschbach asked Eric Hooper to refrain from making false allegations against members of the WMAC in the future.

Joe Roach said in defense of Eric Hooper that a member of the committee had also made statements that were untrue.

Eric Hooper apologized to Paul Lauenstein, who accepted his apology.

Paul Lauenstein then pointed out that Eric Hooper told the WMAC that the Inspector General (IG) was reviewing the revised radio meter RFP, when in fact the Inspector General’s office had not even received the document. Paul Lauenstein said Eric Hooper made these representations in written memos to the WMAC on November 18, 2004 and December 8, 2004. They were also made verbally to a gathering of four WMAC members at Town Hall following a Selectman’s meeting on January 11, and again to the WMAC at the January 13 monthly meeting, as reflected in the minutes.

Eric Hooper denied misleading the WMAC. He said that although the IG office did not have the entire revised radio meter RFP in its possession, it had parts of the document. Displaying a copy of the document, Eric Hooper said it had many sections and read of a number of section titles.

Paul Lauenstein asked which sections the IG had and whether they had those sections as early as last November 18, 2004, the date of the first memo.

Eric Hooper confirmed that the IG office had sections of the document prior to November 18, 2004, but did not specify which sections.

Ben Puritz spoke up and said he had worked with Eric Hooper for many years and knew him to be a man of character and integrity. Ben Puritz said he was not questioning Paul Lauenstein’s honesty, and said the apparent contradiction was probably attributable to a misunderstanding. Ben Puritz said the Inspector General is now in possession of the revised radio meter RFP, and suggested that the committee move on.

Paul Lauenstein then raised the issue of a false claim in a memo by Paul Millett, a consultant hired by the Water Department. The memo states that Paul Lauenstein and Mike Sherman had acknowledged Eric Hooper’s communication protocol between the MRWA and Sharon. The protocol says that all discussions between the MWRA and the town should be routed through Eric Hooper. Paul Lauenstein said that he and Mike Sherman had never acknowledged any such protocol. He stated that WMAC members are free to call the MWRA without going through Eric Hooper.

Michael Birschbach commented that lack of trust is like a cancer, and does great harm to the collective decision-making process. He added that WMAC members have an obligation to independently gather information and verify facts, which does not necessarily imply a lack of trust in the Water Department.

David Grasfield said that while it is fine to point out faults with issues, there is no room for personal attacks.

Dave Masciarelli said that he hopes the WMAC has faith in the Water Department's credibility, and promised to provide information and discuss issues with any WMAC member at any time.

David Grasfield applauded Dave Masciarelli's willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty, such as guiding tours on weekends, and provide others with insights and information about Sharon's water system,

### **3. 2004 Annual Statistical Report (ASR)**

Paul Lauenstein requested an explanation for the 24.5 million gallon discrepancy between annual pumping reported to the WMAC and annual pumping reported to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on the Water Department's Annual Statistical Report (ASR). He pointed out that the lower figure reported to the DEP resulted in unaccounted-for water being 9.3% instead of 13.1%.

Eric Hooper said that a calibration error in the master meter at Well #5 had resulted in more flow being recorded than was actually pumped. He explained that the master meter at Well #5 is a Venturi type meter. A Venturi meter works by measuring the pressure differential on both sides of a narrower section of pipe. Eric Hooper said residues had accumulated in the narrow section, restricting flow and resulting in overstated pumping statistics for Well #5. He said the annual calibration in December revealed a large difference between apparent and actual flow. Since it was unknown exactly when the meter began to overstate flow, Eric Hooper and Dave Masciarelli decided to average the discrepancy over the 12 months of 2004 on a straight-line basis.

Dave Masciarelli reported that all six master meters are calibrated annually.

Paul Lauenstein then requested an explanation for the discrepancy between the population figure of 18,281 reported on the Annual Statistical Report and the 2004 census of 17,739 reported by the Town Clerk. He noted that the Town Clerk's 2003 census of 17,957 had been used on the ASR in 2003.

Eric Hooper explained that the population figure used on the ASR was the census figure reduced by the 458 residents on private wells and then increased by 1,000 to reflect an influx of 2,000 campers in summer.

Richard Mandell said he questioned whether 2,000 campers come to Sharon every summer. He also pointed out that the summer season only lasts three months rather than six, so the adjustment in the population attributable to summer campers should be at most 500, not 1,000. Furthermore, some of the camps have multiple sessions, so that many campers only spend a few weeks in Sharon.

### **4. Subcommittee report – Planning Board proposal**

Cliff Towner reported on a meeting that took place on March 24<sup>th</sup> between Eli Hauser of the Planning Board, Alan Lury of the Housing Authority, and Paul Lauenstein and Cliff Towner of the WMAC. Subcommittee member Rory McGregor was not able to attend. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the potential impact of the Planning Board's proposal for affordable housing on Sharon's water supply. Cliff Towner characterized the meeting as congenial and constructive and indicated that a subsequent meeting would be held.

Cliff Towner reported that thirteen parcels of town-owned and ConCom-owned land were discussed as to their suitability for construction of affordable housing. It was apparent that Eli Hauser had invested a considerable amount of effort in drawing up the plan.

Michael Birschbach asked what the time frame was for input from the WMAC.

Cliff Towner said that given that several positions on the Planning Board would be filled at the May 17 town election, there would be enough time for the WMAC's input.

David Grasfield said he was glad to hear that the WMAC is working constructively with the Planning Board. He said the Conservation Commission has not agreed to allow development on any of the parcels owned by the ConCom. He said the public is entitled to an explanation of the reasons why these parcels are off-limits to development.

Cliff Towner continued by saying that neither Eli Hauser nor Alan Lury had not seen or hiked the sites, and did not understand the hydrogeology or local geography of the respective sites. Cliff Towner commented that one can practically hit a baseball from the site near Sandy Ridge Circle to Well #3. He added that Alan Lury has only lived in Sharon for seven years.

Cliff Towner said he warmed to Eli Hauser during the meeting, and came away with greater respect for his intelligence and intentions than he got from watching Eli Hauser make his presentation on TV.

## **5. Report of the Water Conservation Subcommittee**

Paul Lauenstein presented three motions regarding rebates for smaller washing machines, rebates for high efficiency toilets (HETs) and water audits, as follows:

### **MOTION:**

The Water Management Advisory Committee recommends that the Board of Selectmen authorize the Water Department to contract for water audits and toll-free telephone support up to an amount not to exceed \$15,500 in FY '06. These audits should target heavy water users.

### **MOTION:**

The Water Management Advisory Committee recommends that the Selectmen authorize the Water Department to offer a \$100 water bill credit to any

resident who installs a High Efficiency Toilet (i.e. any toilet that averages less than 1.3 gallons per flush, also known as a HET).

An updated list of HETs is published at [http://www.cuwcc.org/products\\_tech.lasso](http://www.cuwcc.org/products_tech.lasso) under "STANDARDS".

**MOTION:**

The WMAC recommends that the Selectmen authorize the Water Department to offer a \$150 water bill credit for purchasing a washing machine having less than a 3.0 cubic foot capacity and using less than 12 gallons of water per load.

Paul Lauenstein explained that the third motion was designed to provide assistance to seniors and others who don't need a large washing machine, but who would like to help save water. It would supplement the rebate program for washing machines over 3.0 cubic feet that was recommended at the February 8 WMAC meeting.

Michael Birschbach said he liked the idea of providing assistance to senior citizens.

David Grasfield asked if the \$150 rebate is a similar percentage of the cost of a smaller machine as the \$200 rebate is of a larger machine.

Paul Lauenstein said the price of washing machines varies, but there is less water to be saved in homes that use small washing machines, so it is appropriate to offer a smaller rebate.

Jack Sulik recommended that in the spirit of fostering good relations between the Water Department and the WMAC, the words "instruct the Water Department" be replaced with the words "authorize the Water Department" in all three motions. This suggestion met with general approval.

Explaining the second motion, recommending a \$100 rebate for high efficiency toilets, Paul Lauenstein said many homes in Sharon built before 1994 still lack efficient toilets. He said that toilet flushing is one of the highest water uses in a typical home. He said that federal law prohibits toilets using over 1.6 gallons per flush to be sold, so a rebate policy must be set up that encourages even more efficient toilets. He said there is a new generation of high efficiency toilets called "HETs."

Lealdon Langley asked Paul Lauenstein to give a precise definition of a HET.

Paul Lauenstein explained that HETs (High Efficiency Toilets) are toilets that use less than 80% of a standard 1.6 gallon-per-flush toilet (under 1.3 gallons per flush). HETs also perform well according to John Koeller, one of the leading experts on new toilet technology, so consumers will be satisfied with their functionality. A growing list of HET's can be found at [http://www.cuwcc.org/products\\_tech.lasso](http://www.cuwcc.org/products_tech.lasso) for purposes of deciding which toilets qualify for the rebate.

David Grasfield asked what proportion of the cost of a typical HET would be represented by a \$100 rebate.

Paul Lauenstein replied that high efficiency toilets typically cost \$200 to \$300 plus the cost of installation.

Paul Lauenstein said the first motion recommends spending up to \$15,500 (the amount specified in the water conservation budget for FY '06 adopted by the Selectmen) for water audits and a water conservation hotline. He said water audits and the hotline are important components of an effective water conservation program because they stimulate people to take action.

Eric Hooper commented that the DEP Water Loss Prevention Grant he applied for could provide additional funds for water audits. He said the WMAC water conservation subcommittee provided some of the language for the grant application.

David Grasfield asked whether the water audits, which cost about \$110 each, would be available to all residents.

Richard Mandell suggested adding a sentence to the motion specifying that the audits be targeted at heavy users. This suggestion was agreed to by all.

David Grasfield asked if there was any evidence of the effectiveness of water audits.

Paul Lauenstein said he had talked to representatives of Acton, Reading, Concord, and the Dedham/Westwood water district. He reported that there was anecdotal evidence that water audits may reduce water consumption by 20% or so. However, it is difficult to precisely quantify their effectiveness because of uncontrolled variables such as the weather.

Mike Sherman commented that it might be possible to statistically adjust the influence of the weather on the observed reductions in water use.

The committee voted on all three motions at once. They passed unanimously.

## **6. Other Business**

Michael Birschbach offered to be the official WMAC liaison to the Water Department, but that he would need assistance from other members from time to time. Several members volunteered to assist if called upon.

## **7. Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, May 12, 2005 at 7:30 PM**