

**Lake Water Quality Study Group Meeting
May 3, 2023**

APPROVED: 6/7/23

AGENDA: LAKE WATER QUALITY MATERIALS REVIEW

- **Sewer Service to the Lake - USDA Environmental Assessment**
- **Newfound Lake Watershed Assessment – 2013**

ATTENDING: Carroll Brown, Jr. (Conservation Commission Chair), Richard Batchelder (Conservation Commission Vice-Chair), Rebecca Hanson (Newfound Lake Region Association - NLRA), Mary Gebhart, Kane Lorah, Janet Cote (Conservation Commission), Liz Miller (Conservation Commission), Ken Milender and Jeff Chartier (Water & Sewer Superintendent - **via Zoom**), and Christina Goodwin (Town Administrator)

Prior to the start of the meeting, video was shared of some of the Newfound Lake and Fowler River flooding currently in progress due to excessive rain. The Fowler River flooding was in the area of the Town Well off West Shore Road. Some photos of a past Hemlock Brook Road flooding episode were also viewed.

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order with a roll call at 5:14 pm.

MINUTES:

The meeting minutes for April 5, 2023 were reviewed. Mr. Batchelder motioned to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Milender seconded. The motion carried by roll call vote 8-0-1.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Brown shared the updated Document Review Record Spreadsheet noting information reviewed and comments recorded to date.

LAKE WATER QUALITY MATERIALS REVIEW:

Sewer Service to the Lake - USDA Environmental Assessment

Mr. Brown opened the discussion for review of the USDA Environmental Assessment Report used for the Sewer to the Lake proposal.

Ms. Gebhart stated that she found this document troubling as a viable Environmental Assessment because there was no indication of any public input and it disappointed her that it seemed to be driven by the funding aspect rather than the environmental need aspect which in her experience would be the reason an Environmental Assessment would be contracted to define and drive a project and decision. She also felt that some of the data used was from 2002 and too old for decision making and should only be used to indicate trends.

Mr. Brown asked if there was an actual definition for what an Environmental Assessment should be. Mr. Milender commented that he understood that there are ASTM – American Society for Testing and Materials standards for real estate assessment but he was unaware of any real definitions or standards for environmental assessment.

Ms. Gebhart stated in her experience with environmental assessments economic issues were not considered unless a comparison was necessary. She felt that this one was cost driven as if budget lead

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Sewer Service to the Lake - USDA Environmental Assessment -continued

the way. She stated that there were illogical conclusions listed when data showed Lake to be in good shape and the conclusions included needs based on facts not supported by that data.

There was some more discussion about the assessment being a requirement of funding and the funding sources pursued being economic development sources and not environmental sources.

Mr. Milender and Ms. Gebhart indicated that summer folks were not included in communications or process. Ms. Hanson commented that there was no official process, but she talked a little about a structured Federal process and public comment process.

Additional discussion followed regarding the inclusion and accuracy of septic system failure statistics and how this might have been determined from a previous survey sent out some years ago. Ms. Goodwin shared that there are some locations that are required to have scheduled pumping but that they only know of failed systems if someone complains. Septic System inspections would not be an option due to private property rights and no provisions or statutes to allow preemptive inspections.

Mr. Lorah brought up the Project Narrative and stated it not only mentioned the protection of Newfound Lake but also the Town's drinking water. He stated that he had not been aware of this until he read the narrative and was surprised it was not communicated with the discussion and presentation of the Sewer to the Lake Project Proposal. Mr. Chartier stated that his only goal was to protect the wells and aquifer when it comes to any development or concerns.

Ms. Cote noted that consideration may be needed to address Watershed, Wells and Newfound Lake. Mr. Brown stated that it comes down to time and money to protect resources and balancing the problem to be solved with the money that it might cost or would be available to solve the problem. In this case, it is possible that the Environmental Assessment was geared to the parameters of the grant proposal.

Mr. Brown continued discussion highlighting his notations to the spreadsheet. Ms. Goodwin stated she could provide more information about Septic Systems for the next meeting. Mr. Chartier directed the group to the Consumer Confidence reports on the Water/Sewer pages of the Town Website. Ms. Goodwin will update any links to the materials pages for the group.

Mr. Brown stated that the group will pick up where it left off at the next meeting, finishing up with the Environmental Assessment and discussion of the Newfound Lake Watershed Assessment – 2013.

NEXT MEETING: June 7, 2023 – 5 pm

ADJOURNMENT: With no further discussion, Mr. Milender motioned to adjourn. Mr. Batchelder seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Cote
Land Use Associate