

Joint Meeting of the Sunapee Conservation Commission, Sunapee Water & Sewer Commission, & Sunapee Energy Committee

June 9, 2022 Meeting Notes

Present: Shannon Martinez, Town Manager

Conservation Commission members; Tim Fleury, Mark Reynolds, Van Webb, Terry Mattson, Barbara Chalmers

Water & Sewer Commission members: Ted Gallup, Charlie Hirshberg, Wayne Stoddard, Doug Gamsby, Jim Williams, David Bailey superintendent

Energy Committee: Keith Chrisman, Bette Nowack, Doug Hanson

Those noted above met at Town Hall to discuss the land parcel at the Sunapee sewer treatment plant that is also town forest.

Call to order at 5:00 PM

1. Shannon thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She noted that we are meeting to reach consensus regarding what portion of the approximately 42-acre parcel should be removed from the Town Forest by means of a 2023 town meeting warrant article to separate out the land used by the treatment plant now and for its future needs.
2. Ted Gallup noted that his understanding is that the 42-acre parcel was bought for the exclusive use of the sewer treatment plant.
3. Mark Reynolds asked where future plant expansion would occur?
Response: The flat area north of the utility right-of-way. This area is being considered by the Energy Committee for a ground-mounted solar array.
4. Shannon reported that she has spoken with the town's attorney who needs more information about when and how the Sunapee Region Archers Inc. lot of 1968-9 and Ray Barrett parcel of 1970, that make up the land under discussion, came into the town's ownership. If either parcel was gifted to the town, this adds another layer of complexity. Hours have already been spent to date examining files at town hall. No information has yet been found regarding:
 - a. Any agreement between land sellers and the town for use of land at the plant
 - b. Any agreement between the town and the W&S Commission for the use of the land at the plant,
 - c. If the parcels were specifically and exclusively purchased for the treatment plant,
 - d. whether the Barrett land was purchased or gifted.
5. Ted noted that state and federal grant funds were involved with the building of the plant, which also impacts limitations placed on the use of the land for the plant.
6. The land was surveyed and bounds are marked in the field. Barbara Chalmers noted that in 1973 land surveyor Walter Breckenridge checked the bounds in response to a request by the selectmen.
7. Terry asked about the plant's future planning. Charlie Hirshberg noted that it is a "moving target" because of changing regulations for chemicals and phosphorous levels in the plant's discharge and sludge. Sludge is presently being trucked to Merrimack for handling, but that may change in the future. Sunapee may need to establish a sludge drying area on site. Regulatory requirements continue to change and will impact plant infrastructure and space requirements.
Dave Bailey noted that although the plant currently operates at under 50% capacity, New London is responsible for 75% of the plant's operation with Sunapee at 25%. Once use increases to 65% of capacity, regulations will require treatment improvements. Charlie noted that going to advanced treatment could double the size of the plant. The Water & Sewer Commission does not want to give up any future flexibility regarding use of the property.
Terry noted that this discussion of future plant changes should be part of the Town Master Plan Update being conducted by the Planning Board. She asked what part of the upland forest area northeast of the plant is considered usable for future plant use given

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- the steep slope east of the plant. Charlie suggested that the W&S commissioners walk the site to familiarize themselves with the topography to answer that question.
8. About 22-acres are designated wetland and about 12-acres are upland forest. Ted noted that the wetland is of no value to the W&S department and could remain in the town forest. Van commented that the wetland is already protected under state wetland statutes, and since it is not forest, need not be part of the town forest. Van further noted that in 2002 when the town voted to establish town forests and included this land, a mistake was made then by not separating out land for the treatment plant. He feels this error should be rectified.
 9. Charlie noted that the treatment plant is the town's largest energy user and with future sludge drying this will only increase. Bette Nowack commented that the solar array proposal, requiring approximately 4-acres, only addresses current plant electrical use. Flexibility for land use and more space would be required to offset energy use of possible future sludge drying operations. Terry wondered how joint New London-Sunapee ownership of the treatment plant effects the benefit to Sunapee of solar array energy savings? Bette noted if the town of Sunapee owned the array, it could sell the power to the W&S Commission. The array must be located within 500-feet of the plant. Locating the array on a slope is prohibitive due to installation cost.
 10. All agreed the next steps were for the W&S Commission to look in their files for documentation on the purchase of the two parcels at the treatment plant, its exclusive use, where purchase funds came from, and if any gifts were involved. W&S Commissioners will also walk the property to review determine likely and unlikely areas of plant expansion.
 11. Another meeting will be setup after item 10 is completed. No date was set, but Terry offered time at the next Conservation Commission meeting on July 6, 2022.

Next Meeting: to be determined.

Meeting adjourned 6:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Chalmers, Conservation Commission secretary