

Tisbury Water Resources Committee Meeting
Hybrid Meeting
Friday May 12, 2023
Meeting Minutes

Committee Members: Ben Robinson, Chris Scott, Nancy Gilfoy, Dr. Michael Loberg, Sheri Caseau, John Best, Gerry Hokanson

Environmental Partners Engineers: Kate Roosa, Robert Rafferty

Staff: Jared Meader, Melinda Byers

Guest: Anna Eddy

Ben Robinson: Calls the meeting to order at 3:30pm

Sheri Caseau joins the meeting at 3:36pm

John Best joins the meeting at 3:37pm

Kate Roosa: The goal of this exercise was to narrow down the scope of what alternative combinations town wide in the watershed, will get us to the nitrogen removal goal. All the information has been posted to the town website, so if people are concerned as to what the process was for evaluation, it's all there.

Bob Rafferty: When presenting your rankings, we normally present your primary solutions, the high rankings that will give you the most nitrogen removal. Remember, the TMDL is very focused on septic systems and wastewater. The other ones we are discussing like fertigation and composting toilets, are not in widespread use. All those things can remove nitrogen, but not at the same level. We need to present the biggest bang for removing nitrogen and class them as primary alternatives and supporting, secondary technologies.

Sheri Caseau: We need to mention those not as primary but pose them to the public as green infrastructure. They don't remove as much nitrogen, but they are smaller amounts of money and we are often able to get grants for them. It is very similar to the grants we received for storm water removal and PRB's. Aquaculture will be very big on this island as we lean to a greener island.

Bob Rafferty: Yes, leave it in if that is what the town wants. Don't remove anything just because it removes less nitrogen.

Jared Meader: We need to present a plan that will work. Those types of systems won't meet the TMDL if we don't use the primary systems. If you choose to remove more, then that is a personal choice and on your own dollar. The town taxpayers should pay for is what guarantees meeting the TMDL. We don't want enough people taking those options and then miss meeting the goal for the TMDL.

Ben Robinson: All we can be certain about is where are we sewerage. The market will determine the rest. When development happens, how we subsidize etc.

Jared Meader: Would the CWMP accept green technology as a higher load, or would you have to use the traditional technologies and use the green technologies as bonuses?

Kate Roosa: The CWMP requires that you demonstrate how you are going to remove nitrogen from the loading sources in the watersheds. Show the calculations for what you plan to do over a 20-year period to remove these loads and future loads. We also need to have a conventional backup. What Mass DEP defines as a conventional back up is a traditional sewer system or Innovative and I/A general use approved systems either individually or together need to be the backup for the full TMDL removal. They require you do an updated Linked Embayment model to demonstrate those technologies will meet the criteria of the TMDL. The DEP looks at it in two categories, conventional and everything else.

Anna Eddy: Composting toilets are valid and an inexpensive way to remove nitrogen. The best way to remove nitrogen is water the plants with it.

Ben Robinson: You can't overload the ground with nitrogen.

John Best: Composting toilets are great for the right person. The co-housing is a good example. They have a controlled community with someone who comes in and maintains it twice a year. The public cannot be trusted to maintain it correctly. We would be depending on people to do things that are too complicated for some. Any number of homes in Vineyard Haven are used for short term rentals. We cannot count on those tenants to treat the composting toilet application correctly. It won't work.

Chris Scott: We can include any of these alternatives for homeowners to use down the road as part of the process, but we have our core of technologies that we present to get the most nitrogen removal.

Gerry Hokanson: We are concentrated on the community plan, on a community level. As we move forward, if some choose to use composting toilets, or other secondary options, we help make it available to people.

Ben Robinson: We need to stay focused on the top technologies, the most realistic and practical. In addition, keep the secondary alternatives around, to allow for innovation for the future.

Jared Meader: We must keep in mind the management and monitoring of whatever we pose to the public. Whether it is through the Wastewater Dept or the BOH. We must have the policy and staffing in place.

Kate Roosa: I will present why this is important, where we are in the process, where we are with the targeted TWMP plan and then these technologies. Innovative alternative systems, traditional sewer, cluster treatment systems., stormwater BMP's, aquaculture, turf fertigation, composting toilets, compact and open space development and PRB's.

Nancy Gilfoy: motion to adjourn.

Michael Loberg: Seconds

Vote:

Nancy Gilfoy: (aye)

Michael Loberg: (aye)

Chris Scott: (aye)

Ben Robinson: (aye)

Sheri Caseau (aye)

John Best (aye)

Gerry Hokanson (aye)

Motion passed: (6-0-0) meeting adjourns 4:38pm

Next meeting is a hybrid public meeting scheduled for Thursday May 18, 2023 @ 6:30pm