



MINUTES

TOWN OF NORTON

Town Clerk Date/ Time Stamp

Board/ Committee: Water Bodies Committee

Meeting Date: March 31, 2015 Time: 7PM

Meeting Location: Norton TV Studio, 184 West Main St, Norton

Members & Staff Present: Dave Lennon, Carol Zwicker, Mark Burgess, Brian Brady, Herb Ellison, Jennifer Carlino, Conservation Commission. Michael Yunitz. Town Manager

Members Not Present: Colleen Ryan, Joe McFarland

The meeting was called to 7 pm 8:45 pm

Minutes from the none Meeting were reviewed & Approved as written.

Meeting Motions / Actions and Summary of Discussions:

Public Informational Meeting with Presentation by Matt Ladewig, ESS consultant.

Question and Answer Session for general public followed.

List of Documents and Other Exhibits used at Meeting:

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Minutes respectfully submitted by: Carol Zwicker, Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved by Committee on: _____

Chairman Signature: _____

DRAFT Summary of Comments Received
Public Informational Meeting
Norton Media Center
March 31, 2015

In attendance representing the Town and project consultant: *Michael Yunits, Town Manager; Jennifer Carlino, Conservation; Several members of the Norton Water Bodies Committee; Matt Ladewig, ESS; Alex Patterson, ESS; Keith Gazaille, Aquatic Control Technology*

Audience Question/Comment	Response Given at Meeting
It is important for the Town to develop long-term management solutions to the AIS issues in the four ponds, so that after the initial short-term solutions decrease the extent and density of weeds in the ponds, the ponds can be maintained at a manageable level rather than returning to their current level of weed growth.	ML acknowledged these comments.
The use of phosphorus-based fertilizers should be a key issue in the long-term solution.	ML acknowledged these comments.
It is important for the Town to recognize that costs associated with the long-term maintenance of the ponds will be incurred every year, and that fiscal planning should incorporate these costs into the Town budget in a similar fashion as other Town services are.	ML acknowledged these comments.
If copper is applied, chelated copper should be preferred over copper sulfate formulations to avoid impacts to non-target species.	ML and KG (ACT) indicated that algaecides would only be used if needed to control a developing algae bloom. KG indicated that both formulations would result in similar impacts.
Can drawdown be used to control AIS in Norton's ponds?	ML responded that drawdown can be a useful tool to control AIS if the necessary conditions are present, including an appropriate outlet control structure and pond bathymetry. Additionally, the success of a winter drawdown is largely dependent on the specific weather conditions that exist during the time of the drawdown. ML indicated that at present, Lake Winnecunnet is not a candidate for drawdown. Norton Reservoir is probably also not a strong candidate for drawdown because of the extensive area of shallow water and minimal deepwater refuge for aquatic organisms. Chartley and Barrowsville Ponds may have potential based on bathymetry and presence of control structures but more study is needed to ascertain whether ownership of dam/water rights and structural features of the dams would allow a drawdown.
Is dredging feasible for control of AIS in Norton's ponds?	ML responded that dredging can be used to control AIS in waterbodies, but that up-front costs are much higher than other treatment options, and permitting is also more complex. He added that based on previous experience with other ponds and the prior attempt to dredge Norton Reservoir, the Town should not expect a dredging project to pay for itself through sale of the dredged material. ML indicated that dredging can be useful for increasing open water habitat, improving water quality and controlling AIS over smaller areas (e.g., key recreational areas) even if pond-wide dredging is not feasible.
Can plant-eating fish be used to control AIS in Norton's ponds?	ML indicated that transport and release of Asian Grass Carp (or other non-native species) is not legal in Massachusetts, and that Asian Grass Carp are not selective in which plant species they consume, leading to unintended effects to native aquatic plants. ML also indicated that there are concerns regarding whether the fish released in waterbodies are in fact sterile.
Are milfoil weevil's feasible to control AIS in Norton's ponds?	ML indicated that milfoil weevil is only useful as a control measure against Eurasian milfoil as the species does not consume variable-leaf milfoil. ESS documented Eurasian milfoil at low densities in Norton Reservoir, while the infestation of variable-leaf milfoil in Norton Reservoir and the other three ponds was more extensive. Therefore, other control methods would be necessary to control variable-leaf milfoil which would also be effective against Eurasian milfoil.
Are loosestrife beetles feasible for controlling purple loosestrife?	ML indicated that loosestrife beetles are a useful control measure for purple loosestrife, however they require large patches of loosestrife in order to be effective. Given the relatively sparse growths of purple loosestrife ESS documented along most of the pond shorelines in Town, ML indicated that it would be more effective to simply hand-pull individual loosestrife plants rather than to attempt a biocontrol program in these areas using loosestrife beetles. Where larger contiguous areas of purple loosestrife occur (e.g., inlets to Norton Reservoir and Lake Winnecunnet), loosestrife beetles may be a good option.
What constitutes an annual monitoring program?	ML responded that annual monitoring programs typically include updating maps of aquatic plant growths, conducting water quality testing at the deep hole of the pond and potentially at the mouths of tributaries, collecting plankton samples for laboratory analysis, and potentially other actions as warranted by the concerns of the interested parties.

Audience Question/Comment	Response Given at Meeting
Can volunteers help with monitoring the ponds?	ML indicated that using volunteer monitors is a good way to collect water quality data but that there should be an entity responsible for coordinating efforts, compiling data, and interpreting results in order to ensure that the data are useful for tracking the health of the ponds and informing management decisions.
How effective and long-lasting are chemical treatments to control AIS?	ML and KG indicated that chemical treatments are an effective tool for controlling AIS, but that depending on the treatment used and the nature of the AIS growths, follow-up treatments are often necessary to gain control of the problem. Frequency of treatment depends on both the extent of AIS growths and the goals and resources of the Town.
Future recreational access improvements should be focused on Juniper Beach in Norton Reservoir. The area has been significantly impacted by stormwater issues.	ML acknowledged this comment.
Are there grant opportunities to fund management of the Town water bodies?	ML responded that the Town may qualify for some grants (e.g., 319, SRPEDD) to address water quality issues, particularly stormwater in the watershed. However, weed control projects are not typically funded through public grants.
Nutrients/pollutants in the watershed need to be controlled.	ML acknowledged this comment. He added that this would be an important component of long-term management at each of the Town water bodies due to presence of significant tributaries. However, achieving effective reductions of pollutants from watershed sources is both costly and requires a sustained effort over a long period of time. Some progress may be made with the implementation of the new NPDES MS4 permit (still in draft form), which will introduce new responsibilities at the Town level.
How long is the permitting for the proposed short-term management plan expected to take?	ML responded that each pond would require a separate NOI through Norton Conservation. The time required to obtain an Order of Conditions depends on the ConComm hearing schedule and other considerations but is typically not too long. Natural Heritage review (required at Lake Winnecunnet) can sometimes add more time. However, Lake Winnecunnet would qualify for a streamlined review under one filing (NOI + NHESP Review).
Would the work at Lake Winnecunnet require filing with MEPA?	ML responded that the MEPA office had been consulted and as long as no state action (e.g., permit) or funding is involved, the MEPA review thresholds are not triggered. Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program review does not count as a state action that would trigger the MEPA threshold.