

TOWN OF RYE – CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Monday, September 17, 2018

5:00 p.m. – Rye Town Hall

Present: Chair Sally King, Susan Shepcaro, Mike Garvan, Jaci Grote

*Others Present: Rye Water Commissioners; Art Ditto and Ralph Hickson
Greg Smith from Wright-Pierce Engineering*

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair King called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. WORK SESSION

- Rye Water District Commissioners and Wright Pierce – Water resources in Rye

Greg Smith of Wright-Pierce Engineering explained to the Conservation Commissioners that Rye Water District is looking to develop new ground water sources. The preliminary study has been done to identify potential properties. There are ten privately owned, town and conservation parcels currently on the list, of which, four are conservation parcels. The Rye Water Commissioners are asking for permission to access the four parcels in order to conduct geophysical surveys. This is the assessment phase. Mr. Smith further explained the process by adding that the surveys are about a half day long. Cable is strung out and steel pins are put into the ground about 6 inches deep and about 15 feet apart. Electrical current is then sent through the cables and pins to gather readings on the bedrock. Also, sand and gravel overburden is watched for during this time. At the end of the tests, all the equipment is removed. This phase will identify where the test wells should go. The Water District would come back to the Conservation Commission based upon the results of the survey for permission to do phase two, which is drilling test wells.

Commissioner Ditto stressed that phase one is non-obtrusive. Rye Water District would be coming back to the Conservation Commission with the results to discuss phase two.

Chair King had concerns regarding the impact to the site. She asked if the Water Commission would have the information prior to conservation giving permission to place the test well.

Commissioner Ditto explained that phase one will only identify a potential property. Drilling the test well and doing a pump test will get the yield or volume of water. As part of this process, the area around the test well is monitored for the impact to the area. After a test well is placed, monitoring is done for four to five days. If other wells or a wetland in the area dries up, then the area is eliminated as a potential production well site. Stream flows are also monitored.

Mr. Smith stated that the test well would be converted into a production well in the future, if it passed all the State regulations. The test wells are approximately 350 to 400 feet deep. The only thing that shows above ground is a steel pipe with a cap. He stressed that the Water District is only asking for permission to access the parcels and do the geophysical surveys at this time. Drilling would not happen unless the Conservation Commission gave permission.

He pointed out that there are restrictions within the regulatory frame work for monitoring the wells. The DES has a prescribed protection approach under the “Ground Waters Withdrawal Regulations”. This dictates what, where and how often the monitoring will be conducted. All environmental sensitive receptors are completely assessed. The wells are all permitted by the State.

Commission Ditto explained that this is just a risk management project at this time. The Water District is only trying to identify potential sources of water if the need arises, due to another well failing or a rise in demand requires more capacity.

Commissioner Hickson pointed out that it takes between two to five years to actually bring a production well on-line. He also stated that a test well will not be drilled at every site due to the costs.

The Conservation Commission requested that they be apprised of each step in the process. They stressed that they need to know where the testing will be done, how it will be accessed and when it will happen, due to the sensitive nature of the properties. The Water District agreed.

Of the four conservation parcels identified, the Conservation Commission agreed to allow the Water District access to Wallis Road/Rand Lumber property and Cedar Run/DD Cook property, not the Town Forest or the recreation access to the Town Forest.

Motion by Mike Garvan to allow the Rye Water District to access and initiate the exploratory phase on parcels 16-71-22 and 04-14-02. Seconded by Jaci Grote. All in favor.

Commissioner Ditto committed to return with an update of the project for the Conservation Commission at their December 13th meeting.

III. OTHER BUSINESS – NONE

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Jaci Grote to adjourn at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Mike Garvan. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger