

APPROVED 1/8/08

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
SUDBURY PONDS AND WATERWAYS COMMITTEE

Date: November 29, 2007

Location: Flynn Building (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)

Present: Rob Hershfield, David Blohm, Susan Crane, Frank Lyons and guest, Len  
Curtin

Absent: Michael Fee, Ted Klein, Ted Pickering

The meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

Fertilizers. The first hour was a discussion with Len Curtin, manager of a City of Boston golf course and a Willis Pond abutter, about the effects of fertilizers. If fertilizers are applied properly, their nutrients will be taken up by plants and will not leach into soil or run off into streams or ponds. Phosphorous (P) promotes the fruiting and flowering of plants and is critical to root development and the establishment of seeds/new lawns. It only needs to be applied once or twice a year. Nitrogen (N) is the nutrient that causes green plants to grow. It is typically applied every two to three weeks on well-fertilized lawns. Proper fertilization techniques are often not used by landscapers and homeowners due to numerous issues, including the following: less expensive fertilizers release nutrients very quickly and are highly water soluble, therefore, they have a high leachate/runoff potential if they are inadvertently applied to an impervious surface, if they are applied too heavily or if the fertilized area receives too much rain or irrigation water soon after the fertilizer is applied. Additionally, soil tests measure nutrient levels but do not take into account the type of soil. For example, nutrients will flow quickly through sandy soils, but they will adhere to clay. Adequate nutrient levels in soil as

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determined by testing do not mean that additional nutrients are unnecessary; it all depends upon the type of soil, which these tests do not measure. Ideal fertilizers for the protection of the environment are organic. They are typically N insoluble fertilizers, they cannot leach and therefore cannot harm the environment; however, they work slowly. They depend on organic matter to decay with consumption by microorganisms, whose excrement produces the nutrients. Deer Island provides very high quality organic fertilizer free of charge to municipalities. Len was uncertain as to whether Sudbury would qualify for the free Deer Island fertilizer, since the Town is not within the MWRA system, but the fertilizer can also be purchased at a very low cost. We discussed the possibility of having the PWC provide organic fertilizer to Sudbury residents, if that could be done cost-effectively, as part of a public education campaign. A public education packet from the PWC about lawn care and fertilizers would be very helpful. For more information, Rob will contact Tom Sciacca of Wayland who has spear-headed Wayland Town Center's organic lawn project for the past several years. Finally, we discussed the Webster warrant article, the catalyst for the fertilizer discussion. We feel the article should be studied further. Although the listed exceptions to an outright P-containing fertilizer ban seemed to make sense, we need to be clear about acceptable fertilizer alternatives before promoting such an article. We also should explore whether limitations on N-containing fertilizers should be included. Frank inquired about the number of towns that have adopted regulations with limits or bans on certain fertilizers and the effectiveness of those regulations. He will contact Becky Cutting, who distributed the Webster warrant article model for consideration by Sudbury, to see if she has further information.

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Minutes: The draft minutes from the 8/27/07 and 10/30/07 meetings were unanimously approved, with some minor corrections.

PWC Membership Recruitment: Sudbury cable has run a banner ad requesting that interested prospective members contact the PWC, but there have been no inquiries so far. Dave will coordinate with Sudbury Valley Trustees about including a short blurb in its newsletter about the PWC's work and the need for new members. Rob will contact the Sudbury Newcomers' Club to inquire about recruitment opportunities.

Publicity: Carole LeMonde will interview Dave and Susan in two weeks for a *Town Crier* article about the PWC. Dave will work up an outline of talking points for that meeting. Rob mentioned that his wife Nancy might be interested in drafting a regular guest column/article in the *Town Crier* on water-related topics. That should be explored with Carole.

Framed Maps: Dave confirmed with the engineering department that it is still willing to produce high quality oversized watershed maps at no charge. Before they are printed, we need to clarify the type of mounting and/or framing we will use and seek funding. Dave will explore the mounting/framing issue further and will obtain pricing. Susan will contact Maureen Valente about the possibility of including \$1,000 in next year's budget for miscellaneous PWC expenses, including the framing. She will also inquire about whether CPA funds might be able to cover the framing costs.

Master Plan: Rob and Dave have agreed to assume responsibility for coordinating the Master Plan draft. Drafts of the individual watersheds are in various stages of completion. Frank suggested that we include an introductory section defining watersheds, explaining the significance of the identified nine sub-basins (and the

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extension of some of them beyond town lines), and the fact that most of the Town lies within the Sudbury River watershed, with a small portion in the Assabet.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

*Next meeting date: January 8, 2008*