

JEFFERSON COUNTY WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING (WAC)
Minutes
March 15, 2004 - 3:00 p.m.

Meeting was held in the Old Charles Town Library County Meeting Room at 3:00 PM in the afternoon.

In attendance were Carol Boughton-United States Geological Survey, Joseph Hankins-The Conservation Fund (Freshwater Institute), Peter Vila-Shepherd College Environmental Stream Ecologist, Dr. Oscar Stine, representative of the Eastern Panhandle agricultural community, Brad Reed-West Virginia Department of Health, Sherry Kelly-Charles Town Chief Planner, Lisa Dunn-Jefferson County Department of Health, Lee Snyder-Jefferson Utilities, and Robert Schnably – USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Commissioner Al Hooper, JCC liaison was also present.

Chairman Hankins opened the meeting at 3:05 PM. Chairman Hankins noted the absence of a recorder for the meeting and indicated he would take notes for the minutes. Hankins noted that all WAC minutes, agendas and information resources were now available at www.wvnet.org.

Correction and acceptance of draft 11/17/2003 meeting minutes, correction and acceptance of draft 1/19/04 minutes were opened for discussion. No changes to minutes from either meeting were proposed and the minutes were accepted. The notes from the 2/16/2004 meeting were reviewed. As the 2/16/2004 meeting had no quorum, the notes will be simply recorded and posted.

Dr. Oscar Stine was welcomed as a newly appointed member of the committee. All members provided introductions and quick backgrounds. (Chairman's note: I am assuming that Dr. Stine will complete Janet's two-year term appointment, expiring at the end of 2005, see August 2003 meeting notes for appointment terms.)

There was a brief discussion on the PSD Cattail Run project, it was unclear where the PSD was on the issue although informal information suggested that the plan was still alive and being reworked by the PSD engineering staff. Hankins indicated that he would have more information by the next meeting in his new role as PSD Board member.

Commissioner Hooper reported that Ranson had committed \$5K to help support the USGS groundwater and fracture trace study. Charles Town had not made a commitment yet. MOU's with USGS had been moved forward. Boughton also mentioned the need for public communication at the point when wells need to be identified for testing. The project will be looking first for volunteers to allow access and

pumping of their wells. There may be a need to specifically seek well locations inside the municipal boundaries to complete the county-wide picture.

The remainder of the meeting continued earlier discussions surrounding priorities for action for WAC in the coming year. One of the roles identified for WAC is to act as a data and statistical repository for water resource information. Currently there is no effectively available GIS resource that would allow county level data to be viewed, analyzed or stored. This creates a problem for future work, as there is no real common platform for information display and for public access. One of the priorities for WAC should be the encouragement of JCC or other responsible institutional entity to immediately begin to explore GIS capacity for the county as a shared resource across county agencies and interested community organizations. The Cabell county assessor's office was held out as an example of a very useful site and an example of what could be done with tax and parcel mapping.

See: < <http://maps.cabellassessor.com/index.php> >.

A key priority is still a well and septic system inventory tied to a geospatial database as a critical step to private source water protection and for targeting on-site systems that are most likely failing due to age, soil type or lack of maintenance. In general discussion Stine asked questions about the ability of the County Health Department epidemiologist, Judy Rice, to track possible water-borne illness spatially and the value of that capacity. Dunn indicated that the on-site septic system database was likely over 14,000 paper records. Commissioner Hooper indicated that new building inspectors would be locating foundations spatially. There were several observations that key information opportunities for new growth were being lost even though capacity for collection existed at the agency level in several places. Funding resources for staff, training and a coordinating collection platform were limiters. It was noted that the State Health Department was still coordinating a "seal" program that could offset data collection costs with a rebate of funds from the state.

Vila expressed an interest in following up with Dunn and Reed to assess what the actual data challenge is and what role Shepherd College might play in assisting the data mining of the paper records. It was recognized that there would be a potential conflict between the need for transparent information on infrastructure, particularly drinking supplies, and the need for infrastructure security and personal privacy.

Discussion continued around the observation that the Berkeley County SWAP report suggested that all septic systems are pumped and inspected at least every five years. Potentially, systems that no longer met current standards would have to be upgraded, even if they were operating properly according to standards in place at installation. Dunn indicated that health department permits for septic approval are not revocable or time limited, once issued. Also replacement area regulations were not established until 1998. At this point it is not possible to estimate how many "perc-ed and approved" lots are still undeveloped or have been picked up by central sewer.

Key data layers suggested by the group included sinkholes, all permitted injection wells, any injection points used for storm water disposal along transportation corridors, public

drinking water supplies (source water protection) and private drinking water wells. In general all utility infrastructure should be identified as-built.

Hankins expressed concern that the missed meetings in the last 90 days had caused some momentum loss and the WAC would have to look at making progress in between meetings through small groups and sub-committees. In particular work on land use and planning should incorporate water resource protection zones. This should be a priority to engage in this discussion.

Hankins provided some background and a progress update for the ongoing WV Potomac River Tributary Strategy Plan Development process. There was general discussion about the implications of the Bay watershed effort. Hankins indicated that all Eastern Panhandle County Commissions had received a briefing on the plan process and that a draft of the document would be available for public comment March 15th.

Hankins informed the group that he had been appointed to the Jefferson County PSD as a Board member, effective in April. Subject to time and ability, he would like to continue as a member of WAC and to act as a liaison between the PSD and WAC. However, he asked to relinquish the WAC Chair position as it presented a potential conflict to be in a leadership position for both groups. Effective with the April meeting, the group should consider as an action item the appointment of a new Chair. Peter Vila is the current Co-Chair and would assume leadership in the interim.

The next meeting was scheduled for April 19th at the Old Charles Town Library County Meeting Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.