

**Towns-County Utilities Project Management Team
Minutes
June 17, 2010 -- 7 PM**

Members Attending: See Attached

Welcome and Quick Introductions: A number of new team members were present; the group introduced themselves in turn.

Housekeeping: Eldon distributed a T-CUP membership list and addresses, and asked folks to make corrections and add their names and contact information, if not on the list. That list served as the attendance list (attached).

Service Area Discussions:

A. Discussion on the problems / issues addressed with New Systems:
John Warwick, Hurt & Proffett engineer to the project, made an extensive presentation on the various problems and issues at hand in the County.

The H&P team has reviewed a number of local documents (i.e. the County's Water Supply Plan and the Comprehensive Plan) and other sources of information. John described the population of the County, noting a significant decrease in the 25-34 age group. One reason for the project is to enhance economic benefits to the County. Other issues (very low rate of unemployment) suggest there are more jobs here than workforce.

Other facts – 32% of employment is based in agriculture, fishing and forestry; 15% is based in health care & social assistance. Protecting these employment sources is another reason for the project. A combined central utility can go a long way to helping, John said.

The need to prevent detrimental impacts on water quality are important to the agricultural and aquaculture in the County.

John described the existing fresh water aquifer on the Shore, and the new systems as instrumental in protecting the drinking water supply.

The tourism industry is another source of jobs. Protecting the environment is important to protecting that industry.

The new systems will eliminate groundwater pollution by eliminating many septic systems. Treating the effluent and discharging back to the ground will eliminate nitrogen and fecal coli forms, not treated with traditional septic systems. In addition, the new systems would take over the Shore Hospital's existing and again 70,000 gallon-per-day treatment system.

The cost of septage handling (pumped septic tanks) was reviewed. John noted

that plans include a facility to handle septage disposal for the entire County, bringing costs down for everyone.

B. Outline Proposed Service Areas

The T-CUP was presented with maps outlining the prospective areas where service could be included, as conceived by the engineers and in response to the County's RFP for engineering service. Sue distributed copies of the four maps (2 for the northern node – Exmore and Nassawadox; 2 for the southern node – Cheriton and Cape Charles) that had been drawn up by the County staff for the RFP. John also displayed larger mounted maps that contained preliminary suggestions for system lines, one for the northern and another for the southern areas of the County.

In general discussions, the group gave the H&P team reactions to the various presentations and included practical suggestions for the collection of household surveys within the potential service areas.

Southern Node: The group agreed that "Option 2" of the County's RFP maps was useful for that end of the County. Other general comments:

- The railroad spine may serve as a trail for the line, allowing for future development;
- Look at the crossroads of Rts 184 & 13;
- Tower Hill residents do not want to be included;
- King's Creek area should not be included;
- Bayview will remain a separate system (designed for 136 units; 75 built out; working well);
- Fairview should be included in a system developed for Cheriton

(For a later T-CUP meeting, folks asked for a review of how human waste treatment differs between the new systems and onsite systems.)

Northern Node: For this area, discussion was more general, with John noting that a recommendation was not yet developed regarding the question of one v. two treatment systems in this area:

- Take the lines up Bayside road, closer to more people
- Avoid interference with the new Broadband placement
- Hare valley – up Bayside road
- Cut across Brickhouse Rd
- Should Willis Warf be included? (Probably not)

Household Surveys: Sue led this discussion, beginning by asking folks to "vote" by a show of hands on the which of the issues outlined by John were the most important to each PMT member. Voting resulted as follows:

- 3 Need Economic Opportunities
- 4 Water Quality on the Bay and Sea side

- 4 Groundwater protection
- 1 Failing / expensive / no individual septic systems
- 3 Septage Handling

The group agreed that this representation was likely reflective of the County's residents as a whole.

A. Review of what we have already in hand

Sue reviewed the results of the 39 surveys collected at the 2 community meetings held earlier in the month. In response to the question, "Would you consider hooking up to the public system?" 16 responded "yes", 5 marked "no" and 18 marked "not sure". Sue commented that the results are positive with almost ½ already indicating an interest in participating.

Twenty-six (26) of the surveys indicated low-to-moderate household incomes; 18 indicated elderly residents.

B. Status reports from towns on volunteer recruitment (except Cape Charles)

Sue had emailed members earlier, asking that towns begin identifying volunteers to take the household surveys around locally. She asked today for a point person within each town as her contact point in working with the surveys:

- Cheriton – Larry Lemond
- Exmore – Tom Dodd (Artie to recruit him)
- Nassawadox – Estelle Murphy
- Cape Charles – Bob is handling getting surveys from the 3 or 4 homes/businesses that are not now on the towns wastewater system.

C. Set date for volunteer training

D. Set deadline date to complete

Upon initiating discussion about these topics, members from the Exmore area voice concern that enough information about the project was not out in the community; the results of the surveys would be unsatisfactory in that environment. Sue noted that Arte had already requested another community meeting in Exmore, and that was to be set up. Larry felt that Cheriton was ready to go forward with its survey work.

With that advise, Sue suggested that the survey work would be split between the two nodes. The Southern node would go forward with volunteer recruitment (primarily Town Council members) and the northern node would not follow until additional community education work is completed. The group agreed.

For the northern node area to be surveyed, Sue suggested that a larger area be used, solely for surveying, and that would reach from Nassawadox to Exmore, to include Willis Wharf. In addition, the group asked for "taking points" sooner rather than later. *(NOTE: Since that time, Willis Wharf will be left out of the surveying at this time, to allow for a focus on the Nassawadox and Exmore communities.)*

Town Council Resolutions: Eldon led this discussion. He explained that Katie had requested resolutions from the Towns supporting the submission of the DEQ grant by the County. He had researched the regular schedules of meetings of each Council and worked out dates / times to present to each Council.

- Nassawadox – Wednesday, June 23, 2010
- Cheriton – Wednesday, June 23, 2010
- Exmore – Wednesday, June 30, 2010 (*NOTE: this was set up after the T-CUP mtg*)
- Cape Charles – Not yet set
- Northampton – Tuesday, May 13th (*NOTE: this was set up after the T-CUP mtg*)

In addition to the “talking points,” the group asked that a description of “steps to the final vote” be written for distribution to the Councils during Eldon’s presentation. The need for this item became apparent in discussion about the role of the resolution and what Councils were being asked to do in that vote.

(NOTE: After this meeting, the consultants have recommended that the DEQ funding focus on the southern node, with the USDA RD grant application encompass the entire project (southern and northern nodes). That application will be submitted in late August. The rationale for this recommendation will be shared with the T-CUP at the next meeting.)

The group was also reminded that the public hearing on the changes to the PSA board is scheduled for Monday, June 28th, to be followed by votes by each of the Councils and County Board to endorse the changes proposed.

Questions from “Wake Up”: In the last email announcement for this meeting, Sue attached a list of questions / issues that had been raised on a blog from “Wake Up Northampton County”. Her question to the group, “Do you want to respond?”

After brief discussion, the group agreed that response was not necessary.

Set Date and Tasks for Next T-CUP meeting: Next meeting of this group – Wednesday, July 7th at 5 pm (Sue noted that the time of this group’s meeting would alternate between 5 and 7 pm to accommodate different schedules of members)

Exmore Community Meeting – Thursday, July 8th at 6:30 pm (*After the meeting, Artie secured the Exmore Firehouse for the meeting*)

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at about 9 PM