WSA - BAYSIDE

NIT

2013

Warwick City Council Sewer Review Commission
Subcommittee Meeting – Archeological
August 29, 2013
5:30 PM
Warwick Sewer Authority
122 Arthur W. Devine Blvd.
Warwick, RI 02886

Attendees: Michelle Komar (Public Rep.), Jane Austin (Save The Bay), Nancy Brown- Garcia (NIT), Janine Burke(WSA), Charlotte Taylor (RIHPHC), Michael Stover (EPA), Doug Harris (NITHPO)

Minutes:

The meeting was called to order by Michelle Komar shortly after 5:30 PM. Attendance was taken and attendees introduced. No members of public in attendance to offer comment.

Agenda items four [Warwick Sewer Authority (WSA) Projects] and five [Archeological Issues] were combined for purpose of discussion.

WSA Executive Director Burke reported that a directional drill estimate for Bayside I project had been requested per discussion at earlier Commission meeting.

Committee members and representatives of the Narragansett Indian Tribe discussed issues including: the sanctity of burial, the deep connection of the Narragansett Tribe to Warwick, the historical significance of the Narragansett Indian Tribe for the city, and considerations involved in evaluating alternative construction approaches.

Charlotte Taylor provided an overview of the three phase process for assessing the archeological significance of a site and addressing those findings: Phase I. Exploration; Phase II. Determination of boundaries and identification of significant artifacts; Phase III. Identification of alternative approaches to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts. The largest component of the cost associated with both the initial archeological exploration and the installation of sewers – which must be undertaken separately - is paving.

The City's cemetery ordinance, possible identification as a historic district, and eligibility for the historical registry were identified as other factors which could shape the discussions. The question of whether experiences in other communities could provide helpful examples was raised and the examples of Jamestown and Warren considered. The Committee acknowledged that the responsibility for reaching agreement with the Narragansett Indian Tribe lies with the WSA; but that the Council Commission might play a constructive role in increasing the recognition of the significance of the Narragansetts' role in Warwick's history, in highlighting the Tribe's willingness to work cooperatively with the Warwick Sewer Authority, and in encouraging the WSA and the Narragansett Indian Tribe to reach agreement in a timely fashion based on their shared stewardship of Narragansett Bay. Nancy Brown- Garcia noted that the Narragansetts were coming to the table in spite of their concerns about

outstanding financial obligations. Mike Stover (EPA) arrived and provided a brief review of obligation to consult with the Narragansett Indian Tribe.

The need to reduce the uncertainty associated with the location of artifacts and the costs of various approaches was identified as an important step in determining project costs. A number of factors that could affect the final cost were identified. These included construction alternatives such as sleeves, berms, pumped systems or vacuum technology. The committee discussed the need to consider the pros and cons of the various approaches (including gravity systems) in terms of long-term life cycle costs, reliability, maintenance requirements and energy costs for both homeowner and WSA, and ease of future system upgrades to deal with emerging issues like pharmaceuticals. Committee members touched on the relative costs of onsite systems which can carry high installation costs, require maintenance, and may occupy significant portions of small lots. Stover noted EPA's support for the sewering project, stating that EPA does not support OWTS because of nitrogen concerns.

The suggestion was made to invite George Loomis, Director of the NE Onsite Wastewater Training Center at URI to give a presentation to the Commission comparing the relative performance, operation and cost of onsite systems in comparison and sewers.

The possibility of alternative routes for various lines was also discussed, but the Phase I assessment is an important factor in the evaluation.

The relationship between the sewer installation and the other utilities in the area was discussed. Committee members encouraged WSA to explore the possibility of coordinating with water and gas utilities to establish an easement for a single trench as a means to reduce the overall disturbance of Indian sites. The possibility of a donation in kind from the city of the services of a skilled excavation operator was suggested as a way to reduce the cost of the initial archeological assessment as well. The question of whether some of the paving expense might be carried by the city was also raised.

The committee briefly discussed two other factors affecting the ability to provide current cost estimates for the extension of sewers: additional engineering needs and the possibility of changes in assessment methods under consideration.

The Committee closed the meeting with discussion of alternative ways to recognize the Narragansett IndiansTribe's part in Warwick's history, including education and outreach.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by Jane Kenney Austin