

TOWN OF MANSFIELD ■ FOUR CORNERS WATER AND SEWER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Special Meeting Minutes ■ August 27, 2013
Town Council Chambers

Members Present: Rawn (chair), Reich, Hart, Ferrigno, Plante, Schaefer

Staff Present: Painter, Hultgren

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by chair Rawn.

Approval of Minutes

June 4, 2013 – Reich MOVED, Ferrigno SECONDED approval of the minutes as written. The motion was passed unanimously; Plante and Schaefer abstained.

Public Comment

- Arthur Smith recommended that the Committee advise the Town Council that there was insufficient information for the Committee to provide meaningful comments on the referral. He noted that the report by the Town's legal counsel did not address the various consent decrees between the University and various state agencies and whether there are third party entitlements as part of those consent decrees that could be affected by the proposed project, including any rights the Town might have. Mr. Smith also questioned how campus was defined as used in the report and what the Town's standing would be in any negotiations.
- Betty Wassmundt expressed concern that one or more members of the Committee might have a conflict of interest under the Town's Ethics Ordinance and suggested that the Town's Ethics Committee be asked for an official opinion. She also questioned the timeframe for comment identified by the Council, and the role of the town in the project and negotiations.
- Pat Suprenant referenced a section of the CWC proposal that indicates advocacy from the Town would be desired/needed as part of the environmental permitting process. She asked for clarification as to what was meant by that section and questioned whether town approval would be required to move forward. She also recommended that further detail was needed on project costs as it is not clear what the Town's obligations would be.

Discussion and Recommendations to the Mansfield Town Council concerning the Connecticut Water Company (CWC) Proposal to provide water to Mansfield

Painter distributed the comments of the Conservation Commission and the draft minutes of the PZC Subcommittee on Infrastructure Needs and updated the Committee on the discussions of the Sustainability Committee immediately prior to the meeting. Rawn suggested that the Committee use those documents as a starting point for discussion. The Committee discussed a wide variety of issues with regard to the CWC proposal, including:

- Routing
- Coordination of construction (timing and pipe location) with sewer project
- Distinction between the University's core campus and outlying properties as well as future land acquisitions
- Need to ensure that sufficient water is available to meet Town needs separate from University
- Impact of new water supply on current wellfields and the potential to reduce groundwater withdrawals during drought periods

- Desire for Connecticut Water to finance as much of the infrastructure for the Four Corners project as possible, including the sewer system
- Status of the sewer system design
- Impact of water lines on property values and the resulting tax implications; need for sewer and water benefit tax districts
- Areas where future water service might be encouraged/discouraged
- Membership and responsibilities of the proposed CWC Advisory Committee
- Location of piping in relation to travel ways
- Concurrence with recommendations of the PZC and Sustainability Committee

Based on discussion, the Committee made the following recommendations to the Town Council:

Reich MOVED, Schaefer SECONDED that the preferred route of the water main be south on Route 195 to Four Corners, west on Route 44 to North Hillside Road and south on North Hillside Road to the University. The motion was approved unanimously.

Plante MOVED, Reich SECONDED, that the proposed water line be constructed simultaneously with the sewer line in the same trench. The motion was approved unanimously.

Plante MOVED, Reich SECONDED, that the following comments be provided to the Town Council in addition to the two previous motions:

- The agreement should include geographical boundaries of the University's core campus as opposed to its total land holdings and address future land acquisitions
- The agreement should ensure that sufficient water supply is available to meet current and future town needs
- The agreement should include a statement of intent as to how the University wells will operate in the future
- The Town should look to Connecticut Water Company to finance as much infrastructure as possible, including the Four Corners sewer project
- The Town should consider the impact of the water project on property values and tax implications in areas where more intense development is not contemplated
- The agreement should establish an initial Four Corners water service area that is identical to the sewer service area and acknowledge that future service area expansions should be approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission as part of the Plan of Conservation and Development
- The agreement should include the scope of the proposed Advisory Committee including providing input on issues such as major capital improvements, proposed future service areas/system extensions, conservation/water efficiency measures and rate increases. Membership should include regional representation as well as major stakeholders
- The Four Corners committee endorses the recommendations of the PZC with regard to development controls and coordination and the recommendations of the Sustainability Committee with regard to water conservation and best management practices for both CWC and water users

The motion was approved unanimously.

Reich MOVED, Plante SECONDED, that the Committee authorize staff to work with the Chair on finalizing a formal memo to the Town Council summarizing the Committee's recommendations. The motion was approved unanimously.

Other Business

Plante expressed for the record that he did not believe anyone on the Committee had a conflict of interest as was indicated during the public comment portion of the meeting and that the Committee is advisory only and has no decision making authority.

Future Meetings

The Committee agreed by consensus to cancel the regularly scheduled September meeting. Rawn asked Hart to work with the Council to identify what would be needed from the Committee as the water project moves forward. Hultgren expects to have more detail on the sewer system design for Committee discussion in October.

Adjournment

Rawn adjourned the meeting at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda M. Painter, AICP
Director of Planning and Development