

**CECIL COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
WATER RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

1st April 2009

Elk Room, County Admin Building

Attendance

Member	Present
Eileen Butler (Co Ch)	
Dan Derr	Y
Robert Gell	Y
Ann Jackson	Y
Phyllis Kilby (Secr.)	
Daniel Polite	Y
Vic Priapi	
Rupert Rossetti (Ch)	Y
Henry (Dick) Shaffer	
Chuck Smyser	Y
Tony DiGiacomo (Staff)	Y
Ben Sussman	Audio
Maggie Cawley	

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Joseph DiNunzio	Artesian
Bruce Kraeuter	Artesian
John Leocha	MDP
John Higby	ARRO
Carl Walbeck	COC
Ed Cairns	COC
Vernon Duckett	COC
Pat Folk	COC
John Denver	COC
Jim Majewski	Town of Rising Sun
Henry Burden	Town of Port Deposit

Call to Order 18:35

Approval of Minutes

- Approval of minutes for January were deferred

Meeting Purpose:

- Update on Drinking Water and Waste Water Activities & Plans

Quick Updates:

- Ben is working on the models. During April, he will be preparing a white paper, discussing water resources at full build-out. He'll then turn to the completion of the Water Resources Element.
- Rupert is doing a second sweep through the Municipalities, asking for updates to the Current State document.

Scott Flanigan:

Drinking Water:

- One year ago, we were embarking on an aggressive program to find additional sources of water.
- In the summer of 2008, the County Commissioners made the decision to sell all county-owned water systems to Artesian.
- We continued to complete some contracts for pipe replacement, but our main effort shifted to making the turn-over of all water-related activities smooth and seamless.
- Target date for the hand-over is June 30th, 2009.
- There is nothing in the county's Capital Improvement Plan that is water-related, so essentially, we, the county, are no longer in the water business.

Wastewater:

- In the summer of 2008, the County Commissioners made the decision to sell all but one of the county-owned wastewater systems to Artesian.
- The County will retain Seneca Point, aka the North East Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- Target date for the hand-over is June 30th, 2009.
- We have three active initiatives:
 1. Prepare for a smooth and seamless transfer
 2. Continue with our plans to expand the Seneca Point WWTP, but we now have some breathing room.
 - A year ago, the economy was strong, demand was high and we were living in fear of maxing out our capacity.
 - We were moving fast on the expansion, playing catch-up
 - Today, we are still moving forwards, and are now ahead of the curve.
 - This is good, because we were worried about the need to put a sewer moratorium in place, and that would have meant that any development would go elsewhere in the county (i.e. into the rural areas)
 - We are not at risk of running out of treatment plant capacity. Seneca Point has a 2 mgd capacity, and we are at 1 mgd today
 - Timing of the expansion is critical. From an operating perspective, it is not good to have a plant unused, or underused. From an economic perspective, it is not good to have the investment made with no revenue from connection fees to pay for the investment.
 - The expansion is currently in the CIP in the years 2012 & 2013, and that can change, dependent upon the economy, the housing market and demand.

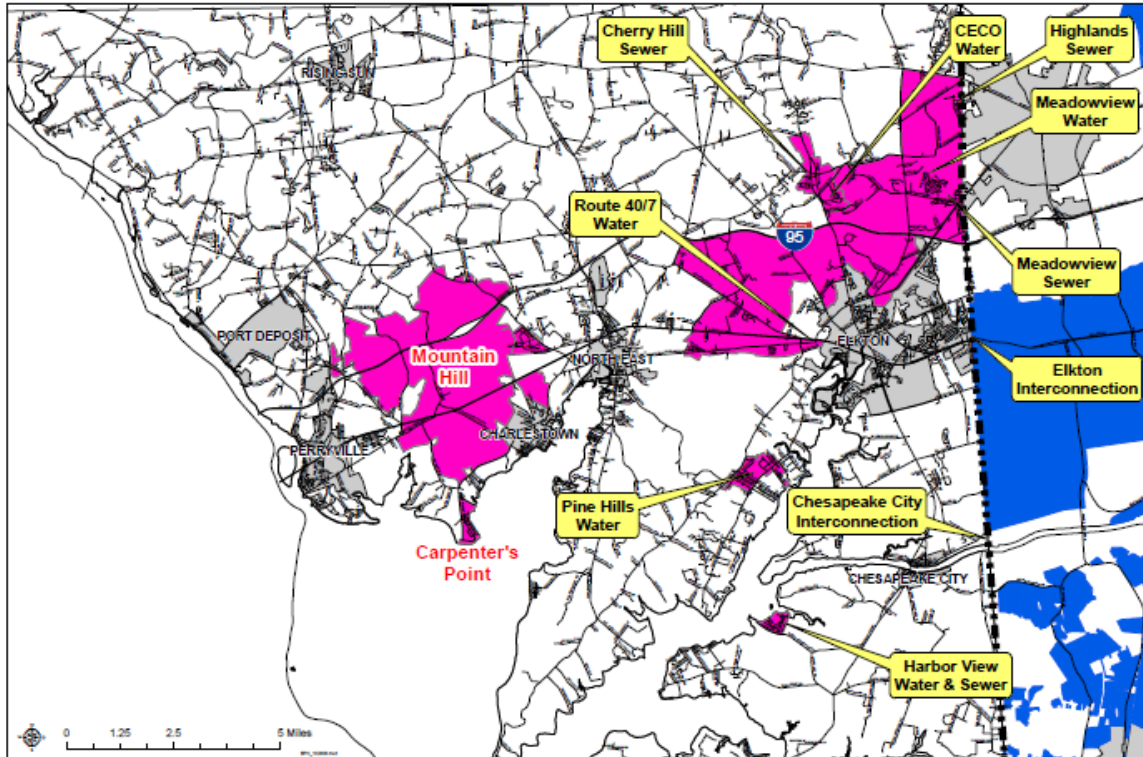
- The ultimate capacity of the plant will depend upon the area that it serves. Earlier estimates were that the build-out demand for this portion of the growth corridor would be 9.1 mgd.
- The initial expansion will be from 2 mgd to 3.7 mgd; the next expansion would be to 5 mgd, as and when demand requires it.
- 3. Explore the options of some sewer joint ventures with Port Deposit and Rising Sun, retiring their WWTPs and pushing the sewage to Seneca Point.
 - In a short term (3 month) arrangement, the County took over operation and maintenance of the Port Deposit WWTP at the end of March, 2009

Q&A:

- What was the recent announcement about the delay of the project to withdraw water from the Susquehanna at Perryville?
 - a. That reflects our no longer being in the business of seeking new sources of drinking water.
- Will you be able to add net effective capacity at Seneca Point by retiring Port & Rising Sun WWTPs
 - a. Yes. That is the expectation. By retiring the minor plants, we'll be able to gain nutrient credits (although MDE takes 5% off the top, and it is uncertain who will get which nutrient credits). It is similar to the way that we gained 5-600,000 gpd capacity through the connection of the 700 homes at Carpenter's Point.
- Will you force people to be connected, and will they have to pay?
 - a. That is ultimately up to the Commissioners. They have the power to require the hook-ups. At Carpenter's Point, the hook-ups are at a much lower connection fee than for new construction.

Joe DiNunzio:

- There is only one constant - Change. What we are speaking about this evening is this moment in time.



- We (Artesian) have five water and sewer service areas
 - Elkton West
 - Pine Hills (water only)
 - Harbor View
 - Mountain Hill (water only)
 - Carpenter's Point (water only)
- We are bringing in water from Delaware because we have it available. We plan to begin with 3 mgd, but have the capacity to go to 5 mgd.
- Q: With both the County and Artesian in the water and wastewater business, will we have two separate sets of infrastructure, or will they interconnect? What about the towns?
 - We will have interconnects among the drinking water systems, for both production and emergency. It is prudent to have the emergency interconnects in case one of the systems goes down.
 - We will not have interconnects among the wastewater systems. The nature of the wastewater process does not lend itself to this kind of interconnection.
- Q: How will the progression of water & sewer up / down the Rte 40 corridor be implemented ... on demand from individual developers? If we build it they will come? PFA by PFA?
 - We will provide infrastructure incrementally. We can see over the demand horizon sufficiently well to keep ahead of demand, and cost of financing is such that we don't want to build and hope that they will come.

- Q: What controls will be in place to keep the water and sewer infrastructure going where we want it (i.e. in an orderly progression down the growth corridor), and not where we don't (out into the rural and transitional areas)?
 - Where and when the infrastructure is built is up to the Commissioners (through the Master Water & Sewer Plan and the granting of Franchise Areas)
- Q: Please explain the role of the Public Service Commission (PSC)
 - Private Service Providers are governed by the boundaries of their Franchise Areas and by the Public Service Commission, which approves the rates.
 - The PSC operates on the principle that existing customers should not subsidize new customers. The Developers will pay all the onsite costs, and a portion of the offsite costs
 - Artesian will be keeping the county's connection fees in place through 2011
 - The PSC reviews cost of service studies to determine the appropriate fees. The private service provider is given the opportunity to earn a certain rate of return on their investment, however, they are typically always raising capital.
 - The private service provider will charge the full cost of service, priced at its real value.
- Q: What is the rough cost for water & sewer ... per linear mile, hook-ups ... for our type of planning purposes?
 - The current range is from \$250,000 - \$750,000 per linear mile, with water tending to the low end and wastewater tending to the high end.
 - The more housing density in the service area the better, from the point of view of cost per unit, since the pipeline cost is shared amongst more units. Less than 1 house per acre generally is not cost effective.
 - We try to avoid long empty spaces in the pipeline, and we minimize laying of pipe under pavement, to reduce the replacement costs.
- Q: Aren't we vulnerable to having our interstate supply cut off?
 - No. Chester Water Authority is not restricted, and Delaware has no say.
 - We will, of course, be developing other sources of supply within the county, and already have some (e.g. Mountain Hill).
 - Our sources of supply are not limited to the Franchise Area. We can go elsewhere in the county and state.
- At end of March 2009, we took over the short term operation and maintenance of the Port Deposit Drinking Water Plant.
 - 400,000 gpd withdrawal, with the potential to withdraw another 700,000 gpd.
- Q: Are there some additional Goals & Policies we should consider for the new Comp Plan (current ones attached)?
 - None offered
- Q: Are there some Goals & Policies that we should reconsider, or that need clarification?
- Goal 1 - 15: Plan growth in a way that allows sufficient time to develop adequate drinking water and wastewater resources and infrastructure.
 - I believe this is somewhat moot, since the economic realities are that development and the provision of infrastructure are tightly linked, timewise.
- Goal 2 - 4: Investigate opportunities to implement water desalinization for public supply.

- I suggest adding: "*as and when it appears it could be cost-effective*"
- Q: Is it economically feasible to run a sewage pipe line from Rising Sun or Port Deposit to the Seneca Point Treatment plant?
 - Answered by Scott in his discussion .. they are looking into the feasibility.

Status of Villages in Designated Growth Areas

- John Leocha recommended that we look at the status of villages that are being encompassed by the Growth Area. - e.g. Cherry Hill - to determine if there are conflicts among the various plans and ordinances. Rural Village PFAs have growth capped at 10% above existing.

Goals & Policies Discussion

- Dan Derr enquired as to whether we had shifted from our extensive and detailed list of goals to the shorter and less specific set that have been included by Diane in her Themes.
 - No, we have not. The New Comprehensive Plan Water Resources Element will be written using our more detailed set. This was confirmed by Ben Sussman.
- Dan further suggested a new policy be added:
 - "County Government should maintain the lead responsibility for overseeing sewer and water infrastructure in the growth area".
 - This proposal was unanimously accepted and will be added.
 - Note Scott Flanigan & Joe DiNunzio concurred that the county will retain the lead responsibility.

Adjournment: ~20:30

Next meeting:

- Wed 6th May 2009. 6:30 pm. Cecil College TC106 (the little auditorium in the Technology Building)
- Guest Speaker: Jay Kirk of CH2MHill - Tertiary Treatment Wetlands - turning wastewater into drinking water.

Questions for the Subcommittee

Questions for Staff

Recommendations/Action Items for Staff and Consultants

Recommendations/Action Items for Oversight Committee