



Minutes

November 3, 2023

Remote via zoom

Attendees:

WAC Members: Kannan Vembu (Chair), Dan Winograd (Vice Chair), **Adriana Cillo** (BWSC), **Craig Allen**, Wayne Chouinard, George Atallah, **Karen Lachmayr**, **Martin Pillsbury**, **Stephen Greene**, **Taber Keally** (NepRWA), **Alfredo Vargas**, Jim Ferrara (Members in attendance in **bold**)

Guests: Wendy Leo (MWRA) Bruce Berman (retired from Save the Harbor/Save the Bay), Charles Jewell (BWSC), Juliet Simpson (MIT SEA Grant, OMSAP), Judy Pederson (OMSAP), Sally Carroll (MWRA)

Staff: Andreae Downs

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Meeting on Combined Sewer Overflows on the Alewife/Mystic Nov. 15, 6 pm

VOTE: October Minutes approved 7-0-1

DISCUSSION

Deer Island Draft NPDES Permit

VOTE: to approve the draft, 8-0

Changes: clarifying language at the top of the comments to remove "ill-crafted" wording.

Members liked the structure of the comments, with thanks first, and most serious

concerns last.

Members wanted to ensure that monitoring for Harmful and Nuisance Algal Blooms continue, and if MWRA isn't doing it, it may not happen. But understand that rapid-response reporting is not feasible yet for *Pseudo-nitzschia*.

Blending—in the 2000 permit and again in the new draft, EPA does not allow blending, and yet without it the upstream consequences are nasty. While originally, WAC was concerned about blending and its impact on the ecosystem, the watershed organizations and WAC have agreed that it is better than either SSOs or CSOs upstream, or overwhelming and ruining the secondary treatment facilities at Deer Island. Committee members remembered that the plant only blends in storm situations when the bulk of the wastewater is stormwater.

Visual inspection of the outfall: A member asked for some modification of the statement that hydraulic modeling is the most accurate measure.

Copermitees

I/I—Members felt the graph and the paragraph above the quote from MWRA's I/I report were confusing. After discussion, the committee decided to delete both.

Discussion of why sewer flows are lower now than in 2000. Some is due to lower-flow toilets, sewer separation, but also the millions invested in I/I removal.

Climate change sections—added a section at a member's suggestion on needing watershed-level planning to suggest a solution to EPA.

Stormwater planning has already started in the watershed organizations with MAPC, mostly in the three rivers that feed Boston Harbor. There are various stages of planning

in all three, mostly for stormwater to meet the MS4 permits, but all the funds have come from the state, not EPA.

Charles and Neponset have put together hydraulic models that estimate the impact of climate change. Well beyond what other watersheds have.

Andreae thanked the committee for their intense work and attention on this draft, and noted that we all learned a tremendous amount about MWRA's system and the NPDES process.

Committee members thanked Andreae for her hard work.

Wendy Leo noted that EPA might issue a revised draft. That would mean WAC could be making another round of comments on the revised draft.

That process played out around the Clinton draft and the MS4 draft.

Next Meetings:

- Thursday, Nov. 16, joint with AB & WSCAC on MWRA energy efficiency programs (Advisory Board start time of 10 am usually rules for these joint meetings)
- Thursday, Feb. 15, joint with AB & WSCAC on MWRA budgets