

Approved Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
October 12, 2010

Attendees: Roger Thompson Christine Thompson
 Jeff Fehrs Spencer Harris
 Steve Revell Denise Johnson-Terk
 Gerry Kittle Justin Willis
 Rodney Pingree Bruce Douglas
 Phil Dechert

Scheduled meetings:

November 16, 2010	1-4 PM	Room 100 Stanley Hall
December 14, 2010	1-4 PM	Room 100 Stanley Hall

Agenda:

Gerry asked for a few minutes about a project the Town of Colchester is working on.

Minutes:

The minutes for the September meeting were accepted as drafted. Gerry asked why Kim Greenwood was not reappointed. It is unknown why but the TAC continues to support her membership. The existing appointments expire in January, 2011, and the next governor might be willing to reappoint her. Steve said he has e-mailed Kim supporting her continued participation as an at-large member.

Retirement

Roger announced that he is retiring at the end of November. He is willing to continue as a TAC member if the group wishes. Chris said that Justin Johnson had authorized refilling Roger's position.

Presby EnviroSeptic:

Roger is working on an update of the Vermont Manual which will include the use of the new Advanced EnviroSeptic pipe. Roger expects to have this completed prior to his retirement.

Colchester project:

Gerry said that Colchester is working on an Interstate Water Resources Management Plan supported by an EPA grant. This will consider the effects on surface water from septic systems. Gerry suggested that UVM might want to do some in-situ studies of the impacts

of leachfields. Bruce noted that the Indirect Discharge Program has a lot of data for many years of monitoring associated with systems that are 6,500 GPD or more in size.

Takings:

There was a short discussion about the concept of takings beginning with Gerry saying that Colchester received an application for a replacement well that that might be a “spite” well. This is a legal issue, not a TAC issue, but the committee is interested in the topic because of the overshadowing work assigned by the legislature. The general understanding in the group is that taking occurs when all or a very large portion of the landowner’s use of the property is encumbered. There does not seem to be much in the way of court rulings in Vermont that deal with the impact of one property owner on a neighboring property owner. This may be clarified in the coming legislative session as legislators review the TAC report.

Overshadowing issues:

Roger reviewed the table of isolation distances for the New England States and New York. Bruce and Marsha Thompson did a study around 1985 and found that there are connections between bedrock wells and septic systems based on nitrate contamination. Justin asked if the nitrate might be from farming operations. Bruce said they worked hard to avoid situations where this might be a factor. Bruce said that based on the chemical testing, and some basic hydrogeologic assumptions, it appears that in situations where there is a less than 2-year time of travel from the septic to the well viruses could travel from the septic system to the well. This study was one of the factors used in the decision to increase the distance from septic systems located upslope of bedrock wells from 100’ to 200’. Bruce is going to look for a copy of this report.

Steve said that his summary of the TAC decisions to this point are that the existing isolation distance numbers will be retained and that anything TAC does will be based on maintaining the existing level of well protection.

Roger said that he had contacted Rhode Island and among other issues learned that the state will not protect wells drilled on lots that can be served by public water systems.

Phil asked if there currently is a good policy for granting reductions in isolation distances between well and leachfields based on a hydrogeologic evaluation. Roger and Steve said yes but the process needs to be better described in writing so that it can be consistently applied.

Justin noted that there are situations where under the current statute a neighbor must be notified, even though there is little potential for any adverse impact. One example is

where the isolation distance extending onto the neighboring property only includes ledge or wetlands.

Rodney suggested that one approach to the problem is to grant the permit for a new well that has an isolation distance extending onto the neighbor's property if the well owner allows the neighbor to also connect to the new well.

Justin said that the impact on the neighboring lot might be considered less of a problem if the neighboring property is already developed with a well and a septic system, provided the new project did not affect the existing systems.

Rodney suggested that in some cases the applicant might chose between getting an easement from a neighbor or building a more expensive system that could be located so that the impact on the neighbor was reduced or eliminated.

The committee spent the remainder of the meeting working on an outline for the report.

Items prioritized for discussion with high, low, and medium ranking

1. Soil identification vs. perc test **medium**
2. Curtain drain with presumption of effectiveness **high**
3. Revisions to desktop hydro chart **medium**
4. Minimum amount of sand under a mound **high**
5. Grandfathered design flow and conversion of use policy **high**
6. Updating of design flow chart **high**

Executive Committee

Steve Revell, Lance Phelps, and Roger Thompson
Alternates – Chris Thompson, Spencer Harris, Jeff Williams

Subcommittees

Hydrogeology - Craig Heindel, Dave Cotton and Steve Revell.

Training subcommittee - Roger Thompson, Dave Cotton, and Barbara Willis.

Drip Disposal – Roger Thompson, Dave Cotton, Steve Revell, Alan Huizenga

Water treatment systems – Gail Center, Jeff Williams, Rodney Pingree, Dave Cotton, Lance Phelps, and Roger Thompson.