

TOWN OF NEW LONDON
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 30, 2006

PRESENT: Cindy Adie, Peter Bianchi, Barbara Brown, Hugh Chapin, Bill Clough, Sue Clough (Selectman), Celeste Cook, David Dunning, Ray Ettenborough, Bob Gray, Paul Gorman, Karen Hogle, Peggy Holliday, Mark Kaplan (Selectman), Bob Lavoie, D.J. Lavoie, Jessie Levine (Town Administrator), Harmon Lewis, Sue Little, Doug Lyon (Selectman), Joe McCarthy, Bob MacMichael, Lois Marshall, Stephanie Wheeler, Barry Wright, Noel Weinstein.

Doug Lyon opened the meeting at 7:30 a.m. The Citizens Advisory Committee addressed 7 areas of business during this meeting.

1. Sewer System

Doug Lyon reported that there has recently been another, smaller spill at the Georges Mills pump station. About 2000 gallons of sewage was released, and the cause was determined to be a break in the PVC pipe below ground outside the valve vault. He noted that that PVC pipe was replaced as recently as six years ago at the time the dry pumps were replaced with submersible pumps. The PVC is a type of pipe approved by DES for that purpose. It is not clear at this time what caused its failure, but it has now been replaced with a pipe of stronger material. They anticipate communication from DES with some questions, and some required actions.

Sue Little asked if there is any way to monitor the system so potential problems can be found in advance. Doug Lyon and Sue Clough said the sewer system does have a variety of alarm systems which did work in this case, but there is really no way to monitor the pipes in which the flow is pressure driven. In the case of something like a storm drain system, it is possible to send a periscope or viewing device through to determine locations of root penetration or other problems, but with the sewer system, there is no opportunity to insert something into the pressurized flow.

Paul Gorman asked if there has ever been an engineering study of the entire system. Sue Clough said there have been upgrades when new substations were put in, but as far as the forced-main pipe system—no. Sewer Commissioner Bob Lavoie concurred with that, adding that monitoring, regular inspection and maintenance are part of the daily operations. Sue Clough said it would be hard to do a study of the whole system without digging it up entirely. Paul Gorman pointed out that this is a 30-year old system, and there have been two incidents in as many years. He said that given that the Town knows that regular maintenance has not been done until recently, wouldn't a whole system study be in the best interest of risk management. Peter Bianchi suggested that two incidents over 30-years is not a large number, especially as they were two different types of problems—one relating to the pump station, and the other to a pipe. Jessie Levine said that a comprehensive study of the gravity-feed part of the system might be possible, but there is really no way to do that for the pressure-driven part of the system. Note was made that the Georges Mills pump station is the most fragile part of the system, not least so because it is so close to the lake, and Doug Lyon said that as a result of the 2004 spill, there has been exhaustive study of that part of the system. At the last town meeting, voters did approve the bond for making necessary upgrades to that station.

Noel Weinstein asked about responsibility. Doug Lyon said that right now, legal authority belongs to the Sewer Commission. The only change that has been made so far is the placement of day to day operations under purview of the Highway Department. Fines and other results of problems are the responsibility of the Sewer Commission and sewer users. Harmon Lewis referred to a note in the most recent *QuickLink* regarding the Town absorbing some of the administrative costs for the sewer system. Jessie Levine explained that refers only to her time. The time spent by the Highway Department on sewer system work is billed to the Sewer Department. Sue Clough noted that day to day operations for the sewer department average 4.1 hours, not including training time. Jessie Levine added that they have just hired another Highway Department employee who will be dedicated to sewer department so that daily average may go up. All of this will be part of the Town's budget process.

Peggy Holliday asked how many homes are on the sewer system. Doug Lyon said that 700 bills are sent out, but of those, some, such as the one which goes to the Seasons, are for sewer service to multiple units. Peter Bianchi explained that the Seasons has a private pump station, and that involves no cost to the town. Sewer users are billed according to amount of water they use. Paul Gorman asked who oversees private pump stations. There are a number of private pumps in Town, and Doug Lyon said it is really the owner's responsibility to maintain those. Jessie Levine added that in the case of the larger private pumps, the State has some oversight. Hilltop has a private pump also, and there, each unit receives an individual sewer bill. In response to question about the College, Doug Lyon said only two of its buildings use forced pressure mains to tie in with the sewer system, and the rest are gravity fed.

Cindy Adie expressed concern about whether or not people in the area of the spill were adequately notified. Doug Lyon said there is no regulation requiring public notification, and New London really does not have any way to notify Sunapee or Newbury residents. Sue Clough said that in the case of the recent spill, Sewer Commissioner Betsy Boege immediately contacted Lake Sunapee Protective Association, and they did contact people around the lake—some of whom use lake water seasonally (though they do not think anyone is using the lake water for drinking at this time). D.J. Lavoie asked why it would be New London's responsibility to notify Sunapee residents. Doug Lyon said it was the pipe outside the New London station that caused the problem, but the real issue is putting into place some system that would allow public notification of a potential health hazard. Jessie Levine said there is currently consideration being given to a mutual aid type of reverse-911 notification for this or any other type of emergency. The intention is to notify everyone in this kind of emergency.

Doug Lyon concluded the discussion with two positive notes: The most fragile point on the sewer system—the Georges Mills pump station, has at this point in time, been thoroughly examined. The recent spill that occurred was caused by a break in a pipe that was relatively new, indicating that that break was an aberration rather than an indication of weakness in the whole system.

2. Planning Board

Sue Clough reported that the Planning Board's work on updating the Master Plan is underway. The Board will schedule a visioning session for sometime in spring to allow summer residents an opportunity to participate. Anyone interested in working on a particular chapter or section should contact Jessie Levine or Ken McWilliams.

3. Recreation Department

Jessie Levine briefed the CAC on recent discussions among Recreation Director Chad Denning, the proprietors of Norsk and Pine Hill cross country skiing programs, and herself, regarding a Town cross-country ski program. In an effort to get more people especially children out on the trails in the winter, the Town has proposed reimbursing 50% of the membership fee for New London residents. (Resident is defined as one who owns a seasonal or year round house.) In that way, the town will be subsidizing the individuals, not the place. She said the response from Norsk and Pine Hill have both been generally positive. Unlike at the beaches, there will be no "guest passes" issued—though non-residents can certainly use the trails for cross-country skiing or snow-shoeing, but would pay full membership. She and Sue Clough clarified that this year will be a one-year pilot project, and at this early stage, there are no plans for vendors or equipment rental, though if the year turns out to be successful, that may be a possibility in the future.

Peter Bianchi asked if there is any concern that this will lead to enthusiasts of other activities such as tennis or swimming requesting reimbursement for their memberships—to Hogan, for example. Doug Lyon said there is always that possibility, but he pointed out that there are always more people engaged in summer recreation activities than in winter ones. New London is really trying to keep cross-country skiing in Town, and this may be one way to do it.

Bob Lavoie asked for an estimate of the cost to the Town. Jessie Levine said that the annual membership fee for Pine Hill is \$85, and for Norsk is \$100. People who wish to ski at Dexter's can pay an additional \$50, but that will not be eligible for the 50% reimbursement by New London. She went on to say that based on last year's use of Pine

Hill, they are estimating that the cost to the Town for the 50% membership reimbursement will be about \$4300, and that takes into consideration that the half reimbursement offer will increase the total number of skiers. Doug Lyon explained that this money will come out of the Recreation Department's revolving fund—that is, it will be funded by program fees. Jessie Levine added that Chad Denning is looking into a number of ways that the Town can use the trails. Celeste Cook suggested the possibility of some scholarship assistance for families that cannot afford the fee. Jessie Levine and Sue Clough agreed that they should look into that. The Town does that for the summer camps. The major concern is to get kids active outdoors.

Paul Gorman asked about insurance and liability to the town. Jessie Levine said that the Town learned last year that it could insure the ski trials at no additional cost to itself, and originally considered doing that in an effort to help keep the program open in New London, but withdrew that idea when it arrived at this new proposal.

Noel Weinstein asked if the Town has a policy for dealing with non-profit groups. Jessie Levine said the Budget Committee will be looking into that. Sue Clough said that historically, the Town has had a needs-based policy regarding non-profits. They are required to submit annual budget reports if requesting Town funding. Doug Lyon said the critical question in addressing financial requests from non-profits is, what is the benefit to the Town.

Harmon Lewis opened some discussion of Bucklin Beach, suggesting that the Town could create an exit at the end of the beach between the two large pine trees. Cars would exit onto Route 114 at a 45-degree angle. That would alleviate people going in and out of the same driveway. Bob MacMichael reminded everyone that that would be an egress onto a State road, and a state driveway permit would be required. Jessie Levine said she will get Richard Lee to take a look at that. Sue Clough said parking at the town beaches is a critical summer time problem, and must be addressed in the master plan. Sue Little asked if Bucklin Beach can be made longer. Sue Clough said the property at either end of that beach is privately owned.

4. Budget

Doug Lyon reported that this year, the Budget Committee has taken a subcommittee approach to the budget process, and their work on the 2007 budget is well underway.

5. Round-about

Doug Lyon reported that they are at the beginning of the final design stage for the roundabout planned for the County/Newport Roads intersection. A couple of driveway issues—at Jakes and Sugar River, will have to be resolved. There will be a public information session, or some other means of publishing the final proposed design, and then it will be up to voters at Town meeting to approve. Joe McCarthy suggested they take a look at the roundabouts on Route 10 in Lyme. Several CAC members concurred that those are not terribly successful, and Doug Lyon said the engineers do not even consider one of them to be a true round-about. David Dunning asked about snow plowing on the round-about. Jessie Levine said Richard Lee and the highway department have practiced this, and feel it is no different than plowing a cul-de-sac. There is a video on the Town's web site showing how the roundabouts are plowed.

6. Solid Waste

Doug Lyon reminded everyone that the Town's twenty-year contract with the Claremont incinerator facility will expire in July of 2007. As Claremont's tipping fee will be \$91 a ton next year, and New London hauls approximately 3000 tons of trash annually, that is a cost of \$290,000 a year. Mark Kaplan has been researching alternatives, and the Town is looking at two seriously. There is the possibility of New London hauling its trash to Haverhill MA, a trip that is about one hour longer than the trip to Claremont, but is all highway, rather than stop and go. Haverhill's tipping fee is \$79/ton. More recently, Jessie Levine has opened some discussion with Meredith regarding the possibility of New London hauling its trash to that Town, from which a private contractor will haul it to a municipal landfill in Berlin. Berlin's tipping fee is \$48/ton, and she calculates that with the shared cost of the private hauler, the total cost to New London would be about \$65/ton. Bob Lavoie asked if the Highway

Department's equipment is consistent with that used by the private hauler. Mark Kaplan said they think so, but Richard Lee will check that out. Jessie Levine said to make this efficient—that is to allow New London to drop off a full trailer in Meredith, and bring an empty one back, New London will have to buy one more trailer, but that can be done with the savings. Bob Lavoie asked if this will require a long term contract. Mark Kaplan said the State requires a plan, but it will not be as long as twenty years. It will probably be a three to five year contract.

Bob Lavoie asked if the Berlin pit is DES approved. Jessie Levine said it is a municipal landfill on about 4000 acres, and they have a long range permit from DES. This led to some expressions of concern from a number of CAC members regarding the environmental impact. Bill Clough asked if choosing a landfill over incineration is a tenable position for the Town to take from an environmental standpoint. Jessie Levine said that both are regulated by DES, and Doug Lyon said both incineration and burying trash in a landfill have an environmental impact. The only way to reduce that impact is to reduce the amount of solid waste. To that end, New London is looking at a number of means for increasing recycling, including a "pay as you throw" program (that is, requiring residents to purchase special trash bags and using only those bags at the transfer station), and providing paper recycling bags, and recycling bins and composters. Several members expressed concern about the "pay as you throw" option, and suggested increasing efforts to make recycling mandatory first. Jessie Levine said that statistics show that the pay as you throw programs do not necessarily (as originally assumed) result in more roadside trash or overweight bags. The Town would have to figure out a way to deal with commercial trash. Peter Bianchi pointed out that New London already does a good job of recycling and reducing its solid waste flow. This is evidenced by the fact that despite population growth, the number of trips the Town makes to Claremont has not increased over the twenty-year contract period.

Karen Hoglund asked if the number of Hazardous Waste days could be increased. Selectmen agreed that the last Hazardous Waste day included too many towns, resulting in long lines and wait times. They are looking at doing it differently this year.

Peter Bianchi asked how much of the crushed glass the Town is using in road building projects. Jessie Levine said it has used a lot; none of it gets wasted. They have given some to other Towns, and as an experiment to one private driveway. New London is one of four regional sites in the New England Resource Recovery Co-op. The Co-op provided the grinder, and pays for New London's personnel time. In turn, the Town pays the Co-op \$10 for every ton of crushed glass produced, and the Town gets to keep the product. Right now, they do have 1000 yards of it on hand, and are looking at the possibility of selling it.

7. Other

Doug Lyon said Reed Clark has approached him with some ideas regarding the changing nature of New London's business scene, and has been invited to an upcoming CAC meeting.

Bob Gray asked about the street light conversion status. Jessie Levine said it is in progress. PSNH is still completing its inventory, and is finding lights that were missed on New London's own inventory.

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The meeting adjourned at 9 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S.A. Denz
Recording Secretary