

Minutes
June 7, 2016

The Wastewater Advisory Committee to the MWRA met at the MAPC offices on Temple Street in Boston

Attendees/Contributors:

WAC: Taber Keally (chair), Craig Allen, James Pappas, Karen Golmer, Martin Pillsbury, Mary Adelstein, Stephen Greene, Zhanna Davidovitz

Guests: Adrianna Cillo (BWSC), Sean Navin, Wendy Leo, Katie Ronan (MWRA)

Staff: Andreae Downs (WAC)

FUTURE MEETING DATES/TOPICS

NEXT: September 15, 2016, 11 a.m., jointly with the MWRA Advisory Board and WSCAC, location TBD

VOTES:

- March & May minutes approved

CHAIRMAN'S REPORTS:

The governor filed legislation to start the process of NPDES delegation—or primacy. In the budget narrative that goes with the legislation, DEP talks of hiring consultants for water monitoring—probably the watershed organizations. Could create a conflict-of-interest for watersheds that accept payments for their work.

Martin: Many other watersheds have no volunteer monitoring groups.

MWRA REPORTS:

EPA has proposed updates to NPDES regulations. The draft (circulated earlier) seems to be intended as housekeeping—mostly reminders to state regulators of things they should be doing already. Not sure how it impacts states without delegation. Among the concerns EPA seems to be trying to address are the quality of state-issued fact sheets. They specify what should be in these, including explaining how the regulators drafted the permit, the public comment and response.

EPA permits are state certified. But if a state makes for stricter permit regulations via the DEP or the judiciary, under the proposed regulations they can modify the permit.

On expired permits in delegated states, EPA in the draft can call the old permit the proposed one to move the process along. Of course, this won't apply to EPA issued permits (the MWRA permits expired in 2005).

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORTS:

New CA regulations requiring industry to warn people if they discharge styrene into water even at very low levels. WAC may want to watch whether this will become an element that MWRA will also have to monitor. Wendy thinks unlikely without a change in permit & either MA or federal regulations.

WAC's accomplishments and other highlights in FY16 were reviewed. (Revised handout attached).

DISCUSSION:

Karen G. noted that she can bring start-up/innovators to WAC meetings as appropriate to talk about other, new approaches to solving water issues.

Dan W. has offered to present on MS4 legal issues that are surfacing since the permit was issued.

WAC focus for next year—possible topics in order of priority:

1. Delegation (DEP, MWRA)
2. Climate change/climate ready Boston & MWRA planning for the “wicked high tide”—vulnerabilities & renovations, plan for flood deployment. & how soon facilities can recover—could also include Boston's plans to use green infrastructure
3. BWSC preventive maintenance efforts—sewer & stormwater and green infrastructure/MS4 legal issues faced by smaller munis/stormwater responsibilities of municipalities vs MWRA
4. Coordination of utility repairs in the street—Presentation at NEWEA on Revere—challenges (Mike H, gas co?,) MEPA/NEPA reviews of projects, particularly new gas pipelines (Maryann?)
5. Security/SCADA/automation & staffing, disaster (flood, Internet meltdown, etc.) recovery
6. Tour—greater Lawrence co-digestion, if the same technology; or valve replacements @DI
7. TV inspections and interceptor maintenance
8. MWRA water monitoring program in Harbor/rivers—now mostly stormwater discharges. Will also be part of CSO monitoring, water quality determinations. Outfall monitoring will change very slowly—still stuck in technologies and worries of 20 years ago and there's a frustration MWRA can't look at using new technologies or ecological process studies instead of before/after the outfall going online.
9. Emerging contaminants & new technologies to remove them from water
10. Biosolids management
11. Draft/Final NPDES permits, should they come up