

Town of Inlet
Clean Waters Committee
June 28, 2005

A regular meeting of the Clean Waters Committee was held on Tuesday, June 28, 2005 in the meeting room of the Inlet Town Hall at 6:30 PM.

Present:

Dayt Cleaveland, Co-chair

John Frey, Co-chair

Matt Cooper, Bernier, Carr and Associate

Amy Santos, Environmental Finance Center, Syracuse University

Kevin Jacobson, Environmental Finance Center, Syracuse University

Mark Lichtenstein, Director, Environmental Finance Center, Syracuse University

Medani Bhandari, Environmental Finance Center, Syracuse University

Brian Mahardy, Town of Inlet Clean Waters Intern

Trevor Tormey, Town of Inlet Clean Waters Intern

Bill Faro, Inlet Councilman

Adele Burnett, Administrative Assistant

John Frey thanked everyone for attending. He pointed out the report brought in by Kevin Jacobson, and suggested that the group take a moment to review the report. Introductions were made.

Brian Mahardy & Trevor Tormey, who will be working for the Town five days a week until mid-August, reported on what they have been doing. They mailed out 45 letters explaining who they were, what they were doing, and asked for a response to schedule an appointment to do the testing. This letter had very little response. They then went door to door with pamphlets of information. They have been able to do some dye testing, septic testing, and other water sampling in a few downtown properties. They stated that Steve Grimm from the New York State Rural Waters Association was able to go onto sites with them and that they were able to learn a lot from him. Unfortunately they discovered that they would need to do the dye testing over again. The group was assured that all water samples taken would go to the NYS Department of Health and that this committee would receive copies of results. JR stated that Susan Kennedy would make sure that those who are required to submit nitrate samples and volunteer for this testing it would be at no cost to the property owner. At some point Trevor and Brian will be sitting down with Chip Sauer to map out some existing septic systems.

The group discussed what happens if while the testing is being done they discover a failing system. Those present agreed that they did not want to see any property publicly flagged as a result of this. It was stated that if everyone that has a problem were forced to put in a new system, then there would be no need for a future project. It was then also pointed out that many might not be able to put in a new system because of existing lot

sizes and setbacks. There was a lengthy discussion on what should happen in the event of a failing system, and what steps should be taken. It was agreed that if a failure is discovered that may have some affect on an existing well, or on a neighboring property, then action should be taken to ensure the health and well-being of the Inlet residents and visitors. It was suggested that most people would want to know if they are at risk of contaminating their neighbor. There was discussion an the possibility of creating a “grace period” while the Town is working on developing a project, and if they Town is not able to come up with a solution by the end of the grace period, the property owner would them have to correct it on their own. The group was then reminded that the reason for the testing is to establish and document a need, if there is one, for a public system.

John Frey and JR Risley will arrange to meet with Ron Miller to discuss what steps should be taken and they meet with Brian & Trevor to discuss this.

Kevin Jacobson then reported on the status of the written survey that was mailed to Inlet property owners who own property on a waterway. He stated that they had received back 47% of the surveys, with no follow-up phone call. This is a tremendous return. Kevin stated that the results of the survey show that Inlet property owners care about the community. Some interesting facts from the survey: 80% of the surveys returned came from seasonal residents, 60% have owned their property 60 or more years, the highest rated public service was the Post Office, many are not happy with the banking & health service, with nature being the biggest draw to the area.

At this time JR asked if there was anything else for the interns. Brian stated that he was concerned that the issue on what to do when a failure happens, and getting this information out to the public should happen quickly, before there becomes the perception that the Town is trying to find failures to close businesses. The group thanked Brian & Trevor.

Kevin went on to say that the survey showed seasonality and infrastructure to be concerns. He pointed out that many understand that the lakes are an asset here and that this creates a great opportunity for education. The area around Seventh Lake accounted for 1/3 of the survey response.

The group thanked Kevin for his report, and stated that they were pleased with the presentation.

Mark Lichtenstein reported that the program that is helping the Town with this project recently lost 50% of its funding. They are still more than willing to help, but some of the things they do may be limited because of this cutback. He also stated that they will gladly help the Town communicate this latest challenge to the community. And suggested arranging a public meeting to help everyone understand what is going on. He suggested that the Town should seek advice from their attorney on any liability concerns

property owners may have, prior to this public meeting. And also suggested having as many experts as possible available to answer questions during the meeting. After some more discussion on who should be there it was decided to hold a Public Outreach & Informational Meeting on July 13, 6:00-8:00 PM at the Inlet Volunteer Emergency Services building. There will be food provided at this meeting. This meeting will be posted in the local papers, in the Post Office, in the Town Clerk's Office and the interns will hand out flyers.

Matt Cooper stated that the interns have been doing a great job, and that Steve Grimm was very helpful to them. He believes they have learned a lot, and will do a fine job the rest of the time they are here.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 26, 2005 at 6:30 PM in the Meeting Room of the Inlet Town Hall.

With nothing else to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectively submitted,

Adele M. Burnett